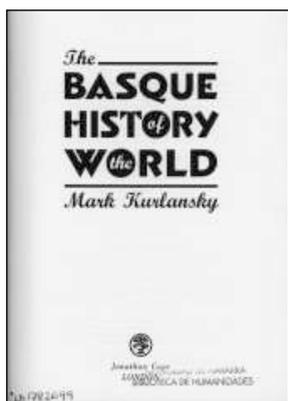


Irizpide zientifikoak erabiltzen dituen lan guztietan bezala, zehaztasun zientifikoaren mesedetan hain zuzen, honetan ere goi maila lortzeaz gain gaia sakonduz eta argi finkatuz, galderak plazaratzen dira geroago gisa honetako lanak egiten diren heinean konpon daitezkeenak. Konparazio baterako, antroponimoak izan litezkeen *Balketz*, *Koskot(e)*... edo oraingoz enigmatikoak diren *Gelaren zelaia*, *Gentze*, *Txangoa*... toponimoak. Normalizazio linguistikoaren zailtasunak direla eta, oraingoz eztabaidagarria da egokia den ala ez *Beikorralea* normatibizatzea eta ez *Bikorralea*, *Buarroia* eta ez *Guarroia*, eta abar.

Hau bezalako lan oso eta zehatzek, horrelako dokumentazioz eta azterketa linguistiko hain zorrotzez egiten badira behintzat, zalantzarik gabe argituko dute Nafarroako euskal ondare onomastikoan orain arte ilun dagoen izen asko.

Azken batean, bi adituen lan baten aurrean gaude. Bertan bi egileek maisuki bateratu dituzte ikerkuntzaren bi alor desberdin eta osagarriak: historikoa eta linguistikoa. Batetik, José María Jimeno Jurío historialariaren artxibo lan zorrotz eta zaindua, bere sorterriko lur eremuaren ezagutzarekin osatua eta, bestetik, Patxi Salaberri Zaratiegi filologoak euskal onomastikaz orokorrean eta Nafarrokoaz bereziki duen ezagutza zabalaren aplikazioa, zehaztasun zientifiko egina. Egileak berak gogobetetzeko eta artaxoarrak harrotzeko moduko lana da hau eta beren herriko onomastikaren sustraia, bilakaera eta esanahia ahalik eta sakonen ezagutu nahi dutenentzat eta, azken batean, beren ondare kulturalaren historiaren ezagutza handiagoa izan nahi dutenentzat jarraibide imitagarria.

Andres Iñigo



**KURLANSKY, Mark**

**The Basque history of the world**

New York : Walker & Company, 1999. – 387 p. ; 24 cm.

– ISBN: 0-22406-05-54

I would begin with a necessary caveat. Were I reviewing Kurlansky's work for, say *The New York Times Review of Books* (i.e., for a reasonably well-educated, heterogeneous audience, largely ignorant of things Basque) my comments would differ considerably from those provided to this issue of RIEV (i.e. a largely academic audience, well informed in Basque matters).

My review of *The Basque history of the world* for a general readership would underscore Kurlansky's skill in relating tales that, while oft-told, remain as obscure (in

a world largely defined by nation-states) as their subject matter – the Basque people and their history. Kurlansky leads his reader through the (predictable) maze of the Basques's origins mystery, the uniqueness of Euskara, the somatological and hematological evidence for Basque ethnic difference, paganism, folk beliefs, witchcraft, Terranovan whaling and codfishing, Basque personages in the Voyages of Discovery and the subsequent emergence of the Basque diaspora and the fierce defense of Basque independence since antiquity (and particularly since the Middle Ages as expressed in the *fueros* and foralism).

Such are the subjects of Part One, subtitled “The Survival of Euskal Herria”. Part Two, “The Dawn of Euskadi,” details the past two centuries of Basque political and economic history. The central theme here regards the emergence of the modern Basque nationalist movement out of the ashes of (and as a response to) the Basque defeats in the Carlist conflicts of the nineteenth century, the role of its (unsympathetic) founding figure, Sabino Arana y Goiri, that of the tragic (thoroughly sympathetic) José Antonio de Aguirre as first president during the Spanish Civil War of a doomed Euskadi, and the creation of ETA (both as a response to the oppression of the Franco dictatorship and the relative timidity of the then clandestine Basque Nationalist Party in confronting it).

Part Three “Euskadi Askatuta,” discusses the seeming anomaly of continued Basque resistance, including the persistence of ETA activism, within both a democratic Spain and an increasingly integrated European Union. Of the three major sections of the book, this is (inevitably) the roughest, a function of its very contemporaneity in which the “evidence” becomes more anecdotal rather than resting upon syntheses and reflections informed by the benefit of hindsight.

The leitmotif throughout the book is the interplay between Basque parochialism and Basque cosmopolitanism. That is, according to Kurlansky, the very survival of Basque culture (against many odds) is tribute to their traditionalism as expressed in loyalty to their culture and its language. At the same time, that very legacy has been shaped in response to the external world. Basques have remained partial masters of their own destiny by accommodating, both through compromise and manipulative skill, the demands of superior outside forces (notably the Spanish and French states) while recognizing and seizing opportunities (engaging in international trade, becoming handmaidens of the imperial enterprise, developing the fisheries of the North Atlantic, etc.).

This is also a quaint book. Kurlansky's literary ploy throughout is to introduce a major theme through a dish (including its recipe) of the famed Basque cuisine. The very first chapter, “The Basque Cake,” transports the reader through the looking glass and into the exotic world of rural Basque society (and its mentality) by considering the (reverential) mysteries surrounding *gateau Basque*. Basque involvement in European New World imperialism and colonialism is framed partly in terms of their culinary novelties. We enter the realm of the First Carlist War by considering invention of “Bacalao al pil pil” by Bilbao's besieged Liberals. If that dish became a cornerstone of Basque cuisine, “Bilbao Cat,” invented a century later (1937) out of necessity by the once again besieged Bilbainos, is decidedly not! While such literary idiosyncrasy might appear frivolous, it provides this particular text with both insight and charm. Indeed, given the scope of the author's purview – nothing less than the attempt to

condense within the confines of a single book the most salient points of a people's entire cultural legacy – the ploy is a necessary antidote to what would otherwise be the danger of oversimplification and excessive remoteness from the lives of real human beings.

While Kurlansky brings to bear the considerable talents of both a master story teller and synthesizer (he began his career as a foreign correspondent assigned to cover Franco's Spain), *The Basque history of the world* cannot be said to contribute to serious Basque scholarship. Substantively, to use the Spanish term, it is a *refrito* fashioned almost entirely out of secondary sources (and not even the most obvious or best ones in every instance).

Indeed, the text lacks even a modicum of scholarly trappings. There are no citations, rather the reader is provided with a bibliography, arranged topically rather than alphabetically by author, with no indication as to which entries actually informed Kurlansky's text and which are "Recommended Reading" for anyone interested in further pursuit of a topic. I find this cavalier attitude towards scholarly convention to border on the disdainful, an approach which will only allow Kurlansky's critics (as in those outraged by the overwhelming Bascophile tone of the text) unnecessary grounds for dismissing his work. In the same vein there are sloppy editorial errors, such as the spelling of a place name as Fuenterrabía (p. 218) and Fuenterrabía (p. 247), the correct Spanish rendering, but then as Hondarribia (p. 247) in its Basque form – neither Spanish nor Basque use a double b.

Possibly the text's biggest vulnerability from a scholarly standpoint is the advertisement on its banner *THE* (rather than *A*) *Basque history*, which then makes the global claim to be... *of the world*, is either intentionally parodic or naively anachronistic at this postmodern moment in which any attempt to provide a text about a whole people is suspect. Given Kurlansky's training, one fears the latter.

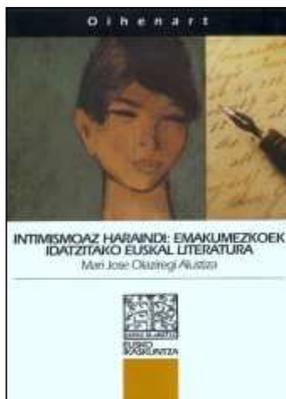
All such quibbles aside, this book is what it is – a largely successful attempt to communicate exceedingly complex material to the broadest possible audience. In this regard, Kurlansky is a consummate popularizer (in the laudatory sense of the word). He is also an advocate of what he clearly perceives to be the Basque cause. Because of this, if I were to situate him within anglophone contributions to Basque studies it would not be as heir to Rodney Gallop (whose classic work *A book of the Basques* does not, in any event, appear in Kurlansky's bibliography), despite their many commonalities. Rather I see him as successor to George Steer, correspondent for the London Times assigned to the Basque front during the Spanish Civil War. In writing sympathetically of Basque nationalism during the Franco era and beyond, including a treatment of ETA that attempts to transcend the narrow and sterile rhetorics of terrorism discourse, Kurlansky has produced a text that I can easily imagine Steer having written had he lived to do so.

Given the foregoing one might legitimately ask why RIEV is reviewing *The Basque history of the world*? After all, there are hundreds of Basque books published annually, most with greater originality than this one, that are never reviewed in these pages. I strongly suspect that had this work been published in Spanish (or Basque) by a Bizkaian journalist, neither I nor anyone else would have been given this assign-

ment. But herein lies the book's real contribution, for above all else it is a consummate translation. Not one of sources in other languages (primarily, Spanish, French and Basque) into English, although there is an element of that, but of a narrative languishing in the shadows of relative obscurity into a contemporary discourse by the simple fact of its framing within the quintessential vehicle of international communication in our globalized world – the English language. Like it or not, there is a sense in which only a Kurlansky was likely to achieve such a result.

And what is the magnitude of his success? To date *The Basque history of the world* (August 2000) has been through five editions and sold nearly 40,000 hardback copies. It is scheduled to come out in paperback shortly (Penguin). It has been highly promoted by its publisher and has resulted in many public book signings, lectures, and interviews throughout the United States, Great Britain and Canada. It has been translated into German and Dutch thus far, and will appear shortly in Spanish, Catalan and Basque. (Personal communication with the author). To place this in perspective, *The Basque history of the world* will have sold more copies than the more than forty titles of the Basque Book Series of the University of Nevada Press, produced over the past thirty years, combined. For those of us working in the anglophone corner of the vineyards of Basque Studies, and often frustrated by the difficulty of getting across the message, publication of this work, then, is most welcome. Indeed, in this divulgatory regard, all of Basque Studies owes a great debt of gratitude to Mark Kurlansky.

William A. Douglass



**OLAZIREGI ALUSTIZA, Mari Jose**

**Intimismoaz haraindi: emakumezkoek idatzitako euskal literatura**

77 orld. : ir. ; 24 cm. – Non: Oihenart. Cuadernos de Lengua y Literatura / Eusko Ikaskuntza. - Donostia. – N. 17(1999). – ISSN: 1137-4454. - ISBN: 84-8419-986-X

*Intimismoaz haraindi: emakumezkoek idatzitako euskal literatura* izenburupean M.<sup>a</sup> Jose Olaziregi Alustizaren azken liburua kaleratu berri da, liburua 1998.ko Angel Apraiz Bekari esker burututako ikerlanaren emaitza izanik. Egileak liburu horrekin “euskal literaturaren munduan ahaztuxeak dauzkagun emakumeek idatzitako lanetara” hurbildu nahi izan duela adierazten du. Asmo horretarako Olaziregik bi euskal emakume idazleen lanak begiratu ditu, literatur-egile bakoitzari kapitulu bana eskainiz. Bi idazleak Mariasun Landak eta Arantxa Urretabizkaia dira. Ez ditu berak ordea soilik emakumeak direlako aukeratu, baizik eta beraiek eskaintzen dizkiguten munduak irakurle moduan estimatzen dituelako.