

# Past Perspectives

Like the classic three-act play or the ideal essay, the history of Basque sheepherding in the American West has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The story commences in the 1850s when a few Basque Argonauts in the California gold fields became disillusioned with the miner's lot and turned their hand to sheep raising. The middle period began in the 1870s as Basque sheepmen spread throughout the American West; this period lasted into the early twentieth century, when crowding on the range and federal legislation controlling access to it effectively halted the expansion. The final phase was ushered in by the Taylor Grazing Act (1934) which banished the itinerant sheepman from the western scene

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## Iraganeko ikusmirak

Hiru ekitalditako teatrolan klasikoak bezala, edo saio idealak bezala, euskal artzainen historiak Iparrameriketako Mendebaldean hasiera bat dauka, Erdiko aldia eta bukaera. Kondaira 1.850aren inguruan hasten da, Kaliforniako urremeatzetan lan egiten zuten euskal argonauta batzuk, meetako lanarekin aserik, beren eskuak artzantzan jartzen dituztenean. Erdiko aldia, berriz, 1.870an, euskal artzainak Iparrameriketako Sartalde osoan zehar zabaltzen direnean. Aldi hau XX. menderarte heltzen da, gizaldi honen hasieran populazioaren ugalketak eta Estatu Batuetan sarrera kontrolatzen duten lege federalek zabal-kundea geldierazten dutenean. 1.934an, *Taylor Grazing Act* (Taylor

and converted herding into a low-paid, dead-end occupation rather than an avenue of opportunity for an entrepreneur aspiring to build his own sheep outfit.

The early Basque settlers of the American West encountered a frontier. In the vast coastal valleys, deserts, and foothills of southern California they found ideal range conditions. Prior to their entry, the region was controlled by the famed Dons, holders of the original land grants from the Spanish Crown. Accustomed to a leisurely and extravagant life-style and committed to cattle raising on a grand scale, the Dons were unable to adapt to the new economic realities. Prone to chronic mismanagement, deserted when their employees were smitten with gold fever, harassed by the influx of squatters, and confronted by an Anglo-dominated officialdom hostile to their culture and class, the Dons were beleaguered on all sides. Years of drought followed by devastating floods all but destroyed the herds, driving land values down to ridiculous lows.

alakuntza-legea) delakoa argitaratzeaz, azken aldia hasten da. Lege honek artzain ibiltaria desagerrera zuen mendebaldeko agertokitik, eta artzantza bere artalde eta entrepresa osatzeko prest dagoenarentzako aukera barik, oso guti ordainduriko eta irteerarik gabeko lanpostua bihurtu zuen.

Iparameriketako Sartaldeko lehen euskal kolonoek muga bat aurkitu zuten. Hegokaliforniako itsasaldeko haranetan, desertuetan eta mendixketan alapide ederrak idoro zituzten. Berak sartu baino lehen, herrialde osoa *Don* famatuen eskuetan zegoen, Espainiako koroak emandako lurraldeen jabeak ziren handikiak. Bizikera eroso eta bitxiari ohituak, eta abeltzantza handitan sartuak, jauntxo horiek ez ziren gauza izan errealitate ekonomiko berrietara ekantzeko. Era kronikoaz kudeakuntza txarraren jopu, haien langileak urrearen elgaitzak hartzen zituenean guttiz baka-rrik, etorkin usurpatzaileen eragipenaz irainduak eta beren kultura eta klasearen etsai zen ofizialtasun ingelesarekin burrukan, *Don-*

Sheep raising offered a viable alternative. Ovines proved resistant to the periodic droughts and generally arid conditions of the region. Compared with a cattle herd a sheep band needed little capitalization. Unlike a cattle operation—which required a home base, extensive deeded acreage, and a large labor force—a sheep outfit was potentially a landless, one-man concern. Given the flocking tendencies of sheep, a herder could handle a thousand animals or more, moving them from place to place in easy fashion. Sheep demanded constant supervision and protection from predators, so the herder remained with his band permanently, living in a tent and transporting his few belongings on the back of a burro.

If the herder's life-style was the very antithesis of the opulence of the landed Don, it eventually proved more lasting. To be sure, some of the Dons attempted the transition to sheep husbandry themselves, converting former cattle properties to sheep runs. However, the majority were either too disillusioned or too wedded

eak alde guztietatik zeuden erasota. Horrela, agorte-urteen ondoko uholde ikaragarriek ia abeltalde guztiak desegin zituzten eta lurraldeen balioak halako prezio merke barregarriak lortu zituen.

Artzantzak hautakizun bideragarria eskaintzen zuen. Ardiak oso ondo ekantzen ziren herrialde hauetako aldizkako lehorte- eta idortasun-baldintza orokorrekin. Abeltaldeekin gonbaratua artalde batek kapitalizazio txikia eskatzen zuen. Abeltzantzak ez bezala—oinarrizko etxe bat, zelai oso banatu eta eskrituratuak eta behargintalde handiak eskatzen dituen—, artalde bat potentzialki pentzerik gabeko gizon bakar baten arduraren entpresa izan zitekeen. Taldetan egoteko ardiak duen joeragatik, gizon bakar batek mila animalia edo gehiago zuzen ahal zitzakeen modu errazaz, toki batetatik bestera joaten zelarik. Ardiak piztien kontrako defentsa eta gainbegiraketa eskatzen du etengabe, beraz zainak iraunkorki egon behar du artaldearekin, kanpaindenda txiki batetan bizi izanez eta beraren ondasun apurrak asto baten gainean eroanez.

to cattle ranching to make a success of the new venture. They ultimately either sold or leased their ranges to the increasingly ubiquitous herder/entrepreneurs.

The Basque contingent among the cosmopolitan ranks of the gold-seekers was particularly sensitive to the new opportunity. Most were drawn from rural districts of the Basque Country and had first-hand knowledge of animal husbandry, some (but not all) with sheep. More importantly, a number had come to California from southern South America where, by the 1830s, Basques were established as the major ethnic element in the expanding sheep industry of the pampas. For these men California offered the opportunity to replay the South American scenario, with the added advantage of a ready and inflated market for meat products in the nearby gold camps.

And so it began. Basques established themselves in the new economy and quickly acquired a reputation for skill and dedication

Artzainen bizikera *Don*-en bizitzearen oparotasunaren antitesia bazen ere, azkenean iraunkorragoa zela geratu zen ageriko. Noski, *Don* batzu artzantzarako aldaketa egiten saiatu ziren, aurreko abeltzantza-zelaiak arditako jarriz. Gehiengoa, ordea, etsirik zegoen edo eta abeltzantzarekin ondoegi lotuta mentura berrian arrakasta ukan ahal izateko. Azkenekoz, gero eta gehiago toki guztietatik agertzen ziren artzain-entrepresalariei beren jabetzak saldu edo alokatu egin zizkieten.

Euskaldunen saldoa urrebilatzaile kosmopoliten artean guztiz sendikorra izan zen aukera berrirako. Gehienak Euskal Herriaren baserri-eskualdeetakoak ziren eta bazeuzkaten animalien hazkuntzari buruzko lehen eskuko ezagumenduak, eta batzu (ez ordea denak) baita ardienari buruzkoak ere. Are gehiago, haietako batzu Kaliforniara Hegoameriketatik etorri ziren 1.830aren inguruan; izan ere, euskaldunak ziren panpetako ardi hazkuntzaren zabal-kundean elementu etnikorik garrantzitsuena. Gizon hauentzat, be-

in caring for the flocks. As the original pioneers expanded their operations they sent to Europe for kinsmen and fellow villagers. The new arrivals first worked as herders, but few were content to labor for someone else indefinitely. Most used their savings to buy sheep or simply took their wages in ewes, running them alongside those of their employer before eventually hiving off to seek virgin rangeland.

In this fashion the sheep outfits expanded quickly beyond the confines of the original, mainly coastal, land grants. And it was in the arid interiors that a new complex developed. The lowlands were far too dry for conventional farming or year-round livestock operations. However, in the wetter winter months they provided adequate feed for the hardy sheep. For summer pasturage the bands were trailed into the high country of the Sierra Nevada and San Bernardino mountains.

Thus there emerged a pattern of sheep transhumance involv-

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raz, Kaliforniak Hegoameriketako agertokia berreskuratzeko abagadunea eskaintzen zuen, ondoko urremeatzek osatzen zuten haragi-merkatu prest eta puztuaren gainerako abantailarekin.

Eta horrela hasi zen. Euskaldunek ekonomia berriaren ardura hartu zuten eta laster trebetasun eta artaldei emandako begirakeragatik fama lortu. Aurrenekoek beren lanesparrua zabaldu ahala Euskal Herrira bidali zuten abisua herkide eta herrietako lagunak eramateko. Heldu berriek lehendabizikoz artzain bezala egiten zuten lan, baina gutxi ziren beste batentzat luzaroan lan egiteko prest zeudenak. Gehienok aurrezkiak erabiltzen zituzten ardiak erosteko, edo bestela alokairuak bildotsetan jaso. Horrela, bada, lanemailearen ardiekin batera hazten zituzten, alapide berrien bila beren ardiak batu eta alde egin baino lehen.

Era honetan ardi-entrepresak bizkor zabaldu ziren jatorrizko eskualdetik at, alapideak zeuden itsasaldetik kanpo. Izan ere, barnealde idortuetan aitzineratu zen ekonomia berria. Herrialde be-

ing an annual trek between summer and winter ranges. An outfit might have to traverse as many as five hundred miles during the course of the year; but by moving slowly and feeding along the way, the sheep were not affected adversely. This arrangement between man, animals, and environment proved so adaptable to conditions in the American West that by the end of the century transhumant sheep bands were common throughout the region.

The spread of open-range transhumant sheep outfits was not, however, without its consequences and conflicts. Theoretically, most of the rangeland was in public domain and hence open to anyone on a first-come basis. Practically, there were strong counterforces at play. The activities of the nomadic sheep outfits conflicted with the interests of both the advancing ranching frontier and the national desire to settle small farmers on homesteads. Cattlemen and large sheep outfits laid permanent claim to scarce creeks and mountain springs. Homesteaders claimed, fenced, and plowed the

herak idorregiak ziren nekazaritza edo urte osoko abeltzantzarako. Haatik, negu hezeko hilabeteetan aski bazka ematen zuten ardi gogorrentzat. Uda-alaguneak, berriz, San Bernardino eta Sierra Nevada-ko herrialde goietan aurkitzen zituzten artaldeek.

Horrela, bada, ardi-lekualdaketa-eredua sartu zen, urtero uda eta negu-alaguneen arteko ibilaldia bezala agertzen zena. Artalde batek bostehun miliataraino kurri zitzakeen urte osoan zehar; baina oso astiro ibilita eta bidean bazkatuz ardiek ez zuten larregi pairatzen. Gizon eta animalien arteko egokitzea eta orobat ingurugiroa hain gertatu ziren moldagarri, ezen mendearen amaieran artalde ibiltariak oso gauza amankomuna baitzen herrialde oso honetan.

Artalde ibiltarien zabalkundea, haatik, ez zen arazorik gabe gertatu. Teorikoki alapide gehienak publikoak ziren eta beraz edozeinentzat irekita, "nor lehen, hura nagusi" erregelaren arauera. Praktikoki, baina, indar asko zegoen kontrakarra eginez.

better bottomlands. For both, the nomadic sheepmen—"tramps" in the pejorative parlance of the day—were anathema. The rancher and homesteader alike viewed the public domain adjacent to his private holding as a natural extension of it—an integral part of his overall operation.

That the nomadic operator was likely a "foreigner" and scarcely conversant with English made it all the easier to dismiss and even despise him as an interloper. While protecting a personal claim that rested upon a dubious legal base, it was possible to become sanctimonious about "little dark men," quick-buck artists who planned to return to Europe with their savings. Such persons were sometimes depicted as just as detrimental to the settlement and development of the American West as the region's natural vermin. Consequently, they were not to be dealt with any less gently than were the Indians or the predators. Add to this the convenient myth that sheep were intrinsically injurious to the

Ardi nomaden iharduera gatazkan zegoen zabalduz zoan arrantxarien mugarekin, eta orobat baserritar ez oso aberatsek lur libreak koloniatzeko zegoen nahi nazionalarekin. Abeltzainek, eta ardi-entrepresak, halaber, herrialdeko erreka apur eta menditurrietako jabetza-eskakizun iraunkorrak egiten zituzten. Nekazariak, berriz, hartu, zedatu eta goldatu egiten zituzten lurrik onenak. Bientzat, artzain ibiltariak—arloteak (*tramps*) orduko hizkera ezezkorrean—anatema ziren, eta biek, hala arrantxariak nola laborariak, beren lurren ondoko jabetza publikoa lur horien zabalgunen naturala bezala zekusaten—beraren ekintzaren parte ezinutzizkoa.

Langile ibiltaria "arrotza" zelarik gehien bat eta ingelesez oso guti egiteko gai, hainbat errazago egiten zuen bera sarkin bat bezala egotzi eta arbuiatzeko joera. Hain legezko oinarri zalantzarrez egindako jabetza-eskakizunak defendatuz, oso erraza zen horrelako "gizon txiki beltzaranez," Europara egin aurrezkiez itzultzea pentsatzen zuten artista dirugileez ponteigelak bihurtzeko. Halako

range—scientifically unverifiable but given almost universal credence—and it is easy to imagine the passions in the breast of the permanent settler as he contemplated the unwelcome band entering “his” range.

Harassment of the tramp operators, then, came to be regarded as economic necessity and legitimate sport. It took many forms, ranging from the subtle to the violent. Large cattle outfits might maintain a sheep band that could be purposely driven towards any encroaching tramp operator. Separating the bands on the open range was an arduous task. A day or more was lost preparing makeshift corrals and the agitated animals suffered weight loss. Rancher-dominated town councils and county commissions legislated unconstitutional ordinances prohibiting tramps from approaching within specified distances of settled livestock operations. Few of the two- or three-mile-limit laws stood the test of legal challenge, but all served to create a climate in which simple in-

pertsonak Iparrameriketako Sartaldearen koloniakuntza eta aurrerabiderako, herrialde horietako “ziringiloak” bezain kaltegarritzat pinta zitezkeen. Horregatik, ez ziren indiarrek edo piztiak baino hobeki erabili behar. Gainera bekio horri, ardi alapidetarako funtsez txarra zelako mito komenigarria eta zientifikoki ezin frogatzekoa, baina fidagarritasun unibertsalaz onartua. Orduan, oso erraza da ulertzea kolono iraunkorraren amorrua “bere” alagunetan artaldeak sartzten ikusten zituenean.

Langile ibiltarien esestaldia, beraz, behar ekonomiko bat bezala eta orobat kirol legezkoa bezala ikustea oso gauza amankomuna bihurtu zen. Era askotan egiten zen, hala zimarkunkeriaz nola indarrez. Abeltalde handiak artalde baten kontra jar zitezkeen, gero inguruan zebilkeen beste artalde batetarantz apropos bultzatzeko. Artaldeak banatzea oso lan neketsua zen. Egun oso bat edo luzeago gal zitezkeen behin behineko ezkortak egin bitartean, eta animalia urduriek pisua gal zezaketen. Arrantxariak nagusi zireneko udalek

timidation flourished.

The alien tramp operator, freshly arrived in a particular district, was in a poor position to contest the claim of the cowboy sent out to inform him he was in trespass. In the resulting confrontation he was doubly handicapped as he struggled to plead his case in broken English. Most moved on, perhaps dawdling as long as possible in order to take some advantage of the available feed. Occasionally, however, tempers flared and reason was replaced by violence. More than one herder was roped and dragged behind a horse, just as more than one buckaroo fell to a herder's .30-30 rifle.

Such nasty and tragic events heightened tensions but did little to solve the problem. Developments at the federal level were of far more importance to the regulation and ultimate demise of the open-range tramp operator. Near the turn of the century Congress legislated the national forest and national park systems, placing most timbered areas of the American West under direct federal

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eta konderribatzerdeek ordenantza ilegalak egiten zituzten, artzainei abeltaldeak zeuden tarte mugatu batzuen barruan hurbiltzea debekatuz. Bi edo hiru milietako muga-legeak ezin zuzenets zitezkeen legez, baina denek larderia nagusi zen giroa sortzeko balio zuten.

Artzain arrotza, berriki barruti batetara heldua, oso egongune desabantailatuan zegoen berarengana halako tokietatik ezin igaro zitekeela esteko zetorkion unainaren baiezpina zalantzatan jartzeko. Gertatu burrukan bi bider zegoen elbarriturik, bere kasua halako ingeles gaizto batez defendatu behar zuelako. Gehienak aurrera zoazten, ahal den luzeen bertan egonez, esku zegoen bazka ahal zen modu guztiaz erabiltzearren. Inoiz, halaz ere, aldarteak berotzen ziren eta arrazoiak indarkeriaz ordezkutzen ziren. Artzain bat baino gehiago zaldi baten atzean lotu eta narraz izan zen eramana, betzain bat baino gehiago artzain baten .30-30 fusilaren amorez egotzia izan zen bezala.

management. Henceforth access to the former high-country summer ranges was to be restricted. Grazing of cattle or sheep was prohibited within the national parks, but since they comprised only a small portion of the total affected area this did not suppose a great hardship for the livestock industry as a whole. Access to grazing on national forest land was to be determined by an allotment system under which local boards comprised of settled ranchers made the allocations. In order to qualify for a permit a man had to be a U.S. citizen and own ranch property. Not surprisingly, most ranchers supported the plan and the region's press headlined the news "Basque Sheepmen are Excluded from Reserve."

Ironically, the apparent victory quickly proved ephemeral since the legislation actually exacerbated the problem posed by the tramp operators. Excluded from much of their former range, the itinerants became more concentrated in certain districts. Many of the mountain ranges in the interior of the western United States

Horrelako gertakari nazkagarri eta tragikoek tirandura gogortzen zuten baina ez arazoa ebazten. Maila federaleko bilakaera askozaz garrantzitsuagoa izan zen eskualde libretako artzain ibiltariaren arautzerako eta azkenez gertatuko zen beraren heriotzerako. Mendearen amaieran kasik Biltzarre Nazionalak (*Congress*) baso eta parke nazionalen sistemak legezatu zituen. Iparrameriketako Mendebaldeko zuhaiztirik gehienak kudeakuntza federalaren pean ezarriz. Harrez gero, herrialde goietako alagunetarako sarrera askozaz mugatuago egonen zen. Parke nazionalen barruan abelgorri eta ardi alaldia galerazi zen, baina berauek ikuturiko eskualdeen sail txiki bat baino ez zirenez, ez zen hau animalien hazkuntza-industriarako lar eragozpen latzik izan. Baso nazionaletakoko alagunetarako sarrera halako banaketa-sistema batez eginen zen, non herrialdetako arrantxariek osatzen zuten batzordeek banaketa egiten baitzuten. Baimen bat eduki ahal izateko, pertsona batek iparrameriketar hiritarra izan behar zuen

were too thinly forested to qualify for inclusion in the national forest scheme, and yet were sufficiently alpine to support summer grazing. In 1909 the Caldwell (Idaho) *Tribune* reported:

The sheepmen of Owyhee countee [*sic*] are sorely beset by Biscayans, Bascos as they are commonly called, and trouble might result most any time. These Bascos are coming in great numbers and are driving the other sheepmen from the range.

The sheepmen are now thinking of trying to get their range taken into the forest reserve. This is the only method by which the Bascos can be kept out. Even then the sheepmen will have to wage a boycott in order to accomplish anything. The Bascos can buy sheep from men who have range allotments in the reserves and thus get on the range, reserve or no reserve. The scale and the methods of doing business of the Bascos are on a par with those of the Chinamen.

eta arrantxu bat bere jabetzaren pean ukan. Ez da harritzekoa, arrantzaririk gehienek plan berriari eutsi zioten eta herrialdeko prentsak honelako izenburuz argitaratu zituen berriak: "Euskal artzainak erreserbatik baztertuak."

Ironikoki azaleko garaipen hau oso laburra zela ikusi zen, legeria berriak artzain ibiltarien arazoa zorroztu baino egiten ez baitzuen. Aurreko alagunetatik baztertuak, artzain ibiltariak eskualde batzutan bakarrik bildu ziren. Mendietako alapide askok, Iparrameriketako Mendebaldearen barruan, zuhaitz gutiegi zeukan baso nazionalaren izendapena jaso ahal izateko, haatik aski alpetar ziren udaldietako alaldiak jasan ahal izateko. 1.909ean *Tribune* zeritzon Caldwell-eko gunkariak (Idaho) honela zioen:

Bizkaitarrek Owyhee konderriko artzainak (*Bascos* erizten ohi zaienez) erasotzen dihardute era gogorrez eta istiluren bat gerta daiteke edozein unetan. *Basco* hauek kopuru handitan heltzen

In a similar vein a 1920 issue of the *Nevada Stockgrower* stated:

The tramp farmers, the old name for the Basques, are on the summer range the twentieth of March, this year, until an early snow ran them off. We are just run out with them. They run right to a man's fence. If something is not done we will have to quit running stock. It is hard to say a resident American has to quit business on account of aliens . . .

Such, then, was the situation during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

By 1930 the livestock industry of the American West was in desperate straits. Vast stretches of the public domain were seriously overgrazed and the Great Depression was bankrupting many operators—tramps and settled livestockmen alike. To make matters worse, in 1934 parts of the Great Basin experienced one of the worst droughts ever. Desperate sheepmen sent their bands to west-

ari dira eta beste artzainak alagunetatik botatzen.

Artzainek orain beren alapideak baso-erreserben barruan ezartzeaz gogoeta egiten dute. Hau da *Bascoak* albora uzteko modu boikota ezer lortuko bada. *Bascoek* erreterbetan baime-nak dauzkaten gizonengandik ardiak erosten dituzte eta horrela alagunetan sartzen dira, erreserba izan zein ez. *Bascoen* neurria eta metodoak dirua egiteko, txinatarren parekoak dira.

Antzeko era batetan 1.920.ko *Nevada Stockgrower* delakoaren ale batek zioen:

Baserritar ibiltariak, euskaldunen izen zaharra, uda-alapidetan Martxoaren 20an daude aurten, elur goiztiarrek handik jaurtikitzen dituen arte. Gu ere leporaino gaude haiekin. Norberaren hesiraino heltzen dira. Zeredozer egiten ez bada, animalien hazkuntza utzi beharko dugu bertan behera. Latza da, iparrameriketar hiritar batek negozioak utzi behar dituela arrotzak direla bide . . .

ern Colorado in search of relief. Alarmed Colorado ranchers and homesteaders pressured their congressional delegation for protection. Consequently, Senator Edward Taylor successfully introduced legislation which was to bring the remaining public lands under the control of what was ultimately to become the Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the Department of the Interior. This landmark legislation was consonant with the earlier national forest management scheme, excluding alien, landless graziers from the public domain. This ended the era of the itinerant Basque sheepman.

While the long-standing competition between the tramp sheepmen and their rancher antagonists, and its resolution in favor of the latter, provided spectacular copy for the region's newspapers, there were other facets of Basque history in the American West. By the end of the nineteenth century, Basques had a group reputation as the best and most dependable herders and were preferred by

Halakoa zen, beraz, hogeigarren gizaldiaren lehen hiru hamarkaden egoera.

1.930an Iparrameriketako Sartaldearen abelazkuntza estualdi gogorretan zegoen. Jabetza publikoaren eskualde zabalak larregi zeuden ala izanda, eta Jeistaldi Haundia (*The Great Depression*) entrepresalari asko desegiten ari zen, artzainak bezala, hala abeltzainak ere. Gauzak gaitzago jartzeko, 1.934an *Great Basin* (Sakana Haundia) delakoak inoizko idortarik txarrenetako bat jasan zuen. Artzain desesperatuek Koloradoko Sartaldera igorri zituzten beren ardiak erremedio bila. Koloradoko arrantxari eta baserritarrek, kezkaturik baina, beren Biltzarreko ordezkariak presionatu zituzten laguntza eske. Horrela, bada, Edward Taylor senatoreak, arrakastaz, lege berriak proposatu zituen jabetza publikoaren menpe zeuden beste eskualdeak, azkenez *Bureau of Land Management* (Lurkudeakuntzarako Bulegoa) bihurtuko zenak, Barneministergoaren agentzia bat, kontrolatuak izan zitezten. Legeria garrantzitsu hau

Basque- and non-Basque-owned outfits alike. A Basque penchant for honesty, frugality, and hard work elicited the kind of grudging admiration reflected in the verses penned in 1912 and published in one Nevada newspaper. Called *Luck a la "Basco,"* the author, C. C. Wright, wrote as follows:

Some "Basquos" came from Spain last week  
 And all went out to herding sheep;  
 They passed some loafers on the way,  
 Who had some unkind things to say  
 About the country—how it's run—  
 To what dire end it's bound to come,  
 And how the poor man stands no show—  
 He might as well to Hazen\* go.  
 And went o'er and o'er that time-worn gag

\*A hot, dry Nevada town.

aurreko baso nazionalen kudeakuntzarekin oso ondo egokitzen zen, arrotzak eta zelairik gabeko alataileak bazter uzten baitzituen. Honetara, beraz, euskal artzain ibiltariaren garaia amaitzen zen.

Artzain ibiltaria eta arrantxari etsaiaren arteko luzaroko burrukak eta azkenekoen garaipenak herrialdeko berrikarietarako mamia eman bazuten ere, bazeuden euskal historiaren beste alde batzu Iparrameriketako Mendebaldean. Hemeretzigarren gizaaldaren bukaerako euskaldunek, talde bezala, zainik onenak izatearen ospea bazuten, eta ardiabeek, hala euskaldunek nola erdaldunek gainerakoen artean nahiago zituzten. Euskaldunaren zintotasunerako joerak, urritasunerako jauginak eta orobat lan gogorak, 1912an Nevadako egunkari batek argitaratu zituen bertsoetako mirespen herratsu bezalakoa sortera zuten.

Euskaldun batzu Espainiatik igaro zen astean etorri ziren eta denak joan ziren artzantzara;

About dividing up the wealth,  
 When each could travel for his health,  
 And as their cigarettes they smoked  
 They all about sheepherding joked,  
 And wished, meantime, some easy gink  
 Would come along and buy a drink.  
 Five years the Basque will follow sheep,  
 And every cent he gets he'll keep,  
 Except what little goes for clothes.  
 And then the first thing someone knows  
 He's jumped his job and bought a band  
 And taken up some vacant land,  
 And then the fellows who still prate  
 About hard luck and unkind fate,  
 And wail because they have no pull,  
 May help the "Basquo" clip his wool.

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bidean txorigaldu batzuk  
 gauza zakarrak esan zieten  
 herrialdeari buruz—nola aurrera egiten duen—  
 helduko garen negargarrizko azkena,  
 eta nola gizon behartsuak ez duen ezelako erarik—  
 Hazen-era joan daiteke.\*  
 Behin eta berriro kontatu zuten  
 aberastasunen banaketari buruz esaniko kontu zaharra,  
 bakoitza bere onaren bila zebilenean.  
 Eta beren zigarrotxoak erretzen zuten bitartean,  
 artzantzari irri egiten zioten  
 eta gizon inozo bateren igaroketa irrikatzen zuten  
 haren gonbiteaz zurrut egiteko.  
 Bost urtean euskaldunak artaldeari jarraituko dio,  
 eta azken zentimoa ere gordeko du,

\*Hazen Nevada-ko herri lehor eta beroa da.

The realization that the Basque sheepherder and operator had emerged as the indispensable backbone of the sheep industry was slow in coming. Certainly by the 1920s there was a glut of Basque herders in the American West, and the unemployed in their ranks took other menial employment or tarried in the many Basque boarding houses, awaiting the call of a potential employer. However, the decade was one of restrictive U.S. immigration policy, and the exclusion of Southern Europeans acquired particular emphasis as Congress sought to stanch the influx of the world's "huddled masses." In 1924 a new immigration act set the quota for Spanish nationals at 131 persons annually. This measure effectively curtailed the legal entry of significant numbers of herders from Vizcaya and Navarra, the two areas that formerly provided the bulk of the Basque sheepherders found in the American West. French nationals were afforded a larger quota, but the French Basque area, with a total population of less than 200,000 (compared to about 2,000,000

jantziak erosten gastatzen duen diruapurra izan ezik,  
 eta orduan jendeak bat-batean jakingo du  
 hark lana utzi eta artalde bat erosi duela  
 eta jabe gabeko lurren bat beregain hartu duela,  
 eta orduan zorte txar eta halabehar gogorragaitik  
 arranguratzen direnek  
 eta indarrrik ez dutelako hileta jotzen ari direnek, euskaldunari  
 lagunduko diote artilea mozten.

Euskal artzaina ardi-industriaren premiazko oinarria bihurtu zelako kontzientzia oso astiro aurreratu zen. 1.920, urtearen inguruan, jakina, bazegoen pilo bat euskal artzain Iparrameriketako Sartaldean, eta haien arteko langabeek beste eskulanak egiten zituzten, edo bestela han hemenka zeuden euskal jatetxeetan lane-maile baten deia itxaroten zuten. Haatik, hamarkada hartan, Iparrameriketako emigrazio-politika murrizgarria zen gehien bat, eta

Spanish Basques), remained a less important source of labor for the American sheep industry.

Abolishment of the itinerant operators in the mid-1930s temporarily alleviated a growing shortage of herders, for many of the displaced entrepreneurs sought employment with the larger, landed sheep outfits. However, by the 1940s the general shortage of manpower during the World War, coupled with attrition in the ranks of the herders as some retired and others returned to Europe, precipitated a labor crisis of serious proportions. Most outfits were undermanned, and desperate sheepmen pirated one another's employees.

The concerned ranchers pressured their congressional delegations for modification of the immigration statutes to exempt Basques from the stringent national-origins quotas. Initially the lobbying resulted in a series of "private bills," individual legislation introduced to legalize the status of particular aliens who had

Biltzarre Nazionalak munduko "masa ezkutatuena" eragipena mugatzen saiatu zenean, Hego europarraren bazterketak are gorago jo zuen. 1.924.eko inmigrazio-lege berri batek espainiar hiritarren kopurua 131an uzten zuen urteko. Neurri honek, Bizkaiko eta Nafarroako artzainen sarrera legalen kopurua txikitu zuen benetan, herrialde bi hauek baitziren Iparrameriketar Mendebaldeko artzainen muina ematen zutenak. Frantses hiritarren kuota handiagoa zen, baina Ipar Euskal Herriak, 200.00 pertsona baino guttiagoko populazioarekin (Hego Euskal Herriko ia bi milioekin erkaturik), askozaz iturri apalagoa iraun zuen Iparrameriketako ardiindustriaren langiletan.

Artzain ibiltarien abolipena 1.930en erdian, handiagotuz zozainen beharra erremediatu zuen apur batez, hainbeste desplazatutako artzainek lana bilatu baitzuen zelaiak bazeuzkaten ardi-entrepresa handiagotan. Hala eta guztiz ere, 1.940etan mundugerrak sorturiko gizaindarraren murrizketa zela bide, eta orobat

jumped ship and made their way to the sheep-raising districts. Between 1942 and 1961 some 383 men received permanent residency under "Shepherd Laws." However, this piecemeal approach proved to be a mere palliative for the industry's growing labor shortage.

Throughout the 1940s there were dire predictions of the imminent collapse of the sheep industry. By the end of the decade it could be stated that the numbers of breeding ewes in the western United States had declined by 40 percent. With their very survival at stake sheepmen began to organize for the sole purpose of implementing herder importation programs. In 1942 such organizations emerged in both western and eastern Nevada. The Wyoming Woolgrowers' Association likewise addressed the problem as did the California Range Association.

Initially it was proposed to recruit herders from among Basque refugees of the Spanish Civil War resident in Mexico. However,

artzainen kopuruaren laburtze geldoa, batzu erretiratzen zirelako eta beste batzu Europara itzultzen, halako langile-krisi izugarri bat sortu zen. Artalde gehienek ez zeukaten behar beste artzainik eta etsiriko ardi-jabeek batak bestearen langileak piratatzen eta lapurtzen zituzten.

Arrantxari kezkatuek beren biltzar-ordezkariak presionatu zituzten, euskaldunak jatorri nazionaletako kuota-sistema gogorretik libratzeko. Hasieran, eragipenaren gertatua halako "erabaki pribatuak" izan ziren, h.d., atzerritar batzuen egoera legeztatzeko lege indibidualak, itsasuntzian sartu eta artzantza-eskualdetara beren bidea egin zutenak. 1.942. eta 1.961. urteen bitartean, 383 gizonak erresidentzia iraunkorra lortu zuen "artzain-lege"en bidez. Haatik, erabilkera puntual hau ez zen lagungarri bat baizik izan industriaren lanindarraren beharretan.

1.940 inguruan, bazeuden ardi-industriaren hondamendi izugarriaren aurreanak. Hamarkadaren bukaeran Mendebaldeko

when this proved unworkable the effort shifted to the Old World. The congressional champion of the beleaguered sheepmen was Senator Patrick McCarran of Nevada. McCarran wielded enormous influence in the Senate, was a former sheepman himself, and, ironically, an outspoken opponent of a liberal immigration policy. The apparent contradiction notwithstanding, McCarran argued that Basque herders should be afforded special treatment.

In 1950 he successfully sponsored Public Law 587 permitting 250 herders to enter the country. In 1952 Public Law 307 provided for the entry of an additional 500 men. It also authorized the California Range Association to effect recruitment for the whole industry, thereby converting it into a national organization. Its officers were all established Basque sheepmen. Representatives were sent to Europe to secure herders under the program.

From the outset the effort was plagued with difficulties on both sides of the Atlantic. Wary U.S. federal officials emphasized

ardi emankorren kopurua %40 txikiago zela esan zitekeen. Superbizipena kolokan, ardiabeak artzain berrien inportazio-programak aurrera eramateko antolatzen hasi ziren. 1.942an horrelako erakundeak sortu ziren bai Nevadako sartaldean eta bai sortaldean. *Wyoming*-eko *Woolgrowers' Association* delakoa eta halaber *California Range Association* ere arazoaz hasi ziren axolatzen.

Hasieran Mexikon Espainiako gerla zibilagatik zeuden euskaldun herbesteratuen artean saiatzea proposatu zen. Baina ahalegin hau burutezin gertatu zenean, saioak "Mundu Zaharrera" (Euskal Herrira) aldatu ziren. Erasotako ardiabeen defentsari nagusia Nevadako Patrick McCarran senatorea izan zen. McCarran-ek eragipen handia zeukan senatuan, bera ardiabe ohia eta, ironikoki, inmigrazio-politika liberalen kontrari agerikoa. Kontraesana eta guztiz ere, McCarran-ek euskal artzainek erabilkera berezia ukan beharko zuketela defendatzen zuen.

1.950ean, berak *Public Law 587* (587. Lege publikoa) delakoari

that the plan was a temporary expediency. Before aliens could be imported into a particular area its state employment service had to certify that no American citizens were available for the work. Also, the candidates were to be charged against the annual national quota of their country of origin, which in the Spanish case was pathetically low. Finally, the men were to be screened in Europe to ensure that they were knowledgeable about sheepherding and in good health. For their part, the Spanish authorities insisted that all Spanish nationals qualify for the program. Reluctant sheepmen often exercised their right of refusal when the applicant turned out to be a non-Basque Spaniard.

By 1956, 893 men had entered the United States under the program. A decade later there were 1,283 herders under contract to the Western Range Association (a national sheepmen's organization that evolved out of the California Range Association). By this time virtually all open-range sheep outfits were members and

etsi zion arrakastaz, 250 artzainen sarrerarako baimena ematen zuena. 1.952.eko 307 Lege publikoak beste bostehun artzainen-tzako sarrerabaimenak ematen zituen. Horrez gain, *California Range Association* delakoari kargua ematen zion industria osorako bilketa egiteko, era horretan erakunde hori nazionala bihurtuz. Beraren ofizialeak ondo erroturiko euskal artzainak ziren. Ordezkarriak Europara bidaltzen ziren programaren peko artzainak segurtatzeko.

Hastapenetik ahalegina eragozpenez beterik zegoen Atlantikoaren bi aldetan. Estatu Batuetako ofiziale federal arretatsuek plana behin behineko baizik ez zela egiten zuten ageriko. Inongo eskualdetan atzeritarrak inportatuak izan ahal baino lehen, beren *State Employment Service*-k (Enplegu-zerbitzu estatala) zertifikatu egin behar zuen ezein iparrameriketar hiritarrik ez zegoela prest lana egiteko. Gainera, etorkingaiak, zetozten estatuen kuoteetan zenbatu behar ziren, Espainiako Estatuaren kasuan saminki

depended upon the association for their labor. Officials of the WRA met periodically with representatives of the U.S. Immigration Department, the Department of Labor, and negotiators for the Spanish government to work out details. The agreements set wages and working conditions, while fixing the length of the herders' stay in the United States. After a number of the first recruits abandoned herding for other occupations, to the chagrin of the sponsoring sheepmen and the U.S. labor officials alike, it was decided to give each herder a temporary visa for three years, subject to revocation if he left the sheep industry. Upon termination of his contract he was required to depart the United States, thus precluding the five-year continuous residence that would qualify him for permanent residency and the freedom to choose other employment. However, he could later sign a new contract and return for another sheepherding stint. Some of the herders completed as many as three or four contracts, interspersed with stays of several months or even years

txikiak zirelarik. Azkenez, gizonak Europan bertan etsaminatuak izan behar zuten, artzantzaz bazekitela erakusteko eta halaber osasun onean zeudetela argi uzteko. Bestaldetik, espainiar agintariak beren hiritar guztiak zirela gauza lanbiderako defendatzen zuten. Ardijabe batzu ez zeuden prest, baina, euskaldunak ez ziren espainiar artzainak hartzeko eta beren errefus-eskubidea erabiltzen zuten.

1.956.eko 893 gizon sartuak ziren Estatu Batuetan programa honen bidez. Hamarkada bat beranduago 1.283 artzain ziren *Western Range Association* delakoaren hitzarmenen pean zeudenak (*California Range Association*-etik sorturiko elkarte nazionala). Garai honetako ia ardi-entrepesa guztiak elkarte honen kideak ziren, eta langileak erdiesteko beraren menpeko. Elkartearen ofizialeak era erregularrez Estatu Batuen inmigratio-bulegoaren ordezkariekin biltzen ziren, lan-ministergokoekin eta espainiar gobernuaren mandatariekin zertzelada guztiez hitz egiteko. Egiuneek alo-

back in their homeland.

In sum, the final phase of Basque sheepherding in the American West encompassed a period lasting from the 1930s to the early 1970s. Its central character was the wage-earning herder. His circumstances differed from those of his predecessor in that it was all but impossible for him to establish his own sheep band. His presence in the American West was due more to bad conditions in Europe than to favorable ones in the United States. The disruptions of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the privations of World War II (Spain remained neutral but was prostrate in the aftermath of its own recent conflict), and the economic consequences of the international ostracism of Franco's government during the immediate postwar period all conspired to make the herders' wages attractive.

If the salary was modest by American standards it still represented several times the going rate in Spain. Furthermore, isolated from the temptations of town life by both the nature of the occupa-

kairuak eta lanbaldintzak mugatzen zituzten eta artzainen egotaldien luzeerak markatzen. Beste lanbide batzuetan aritzearren, lehenengoan bilduriko zenbait langileen artzantza uztearekin ardiabeen eta orobat Estatu Batuen lanofizialeen nahigabeez, artzain bakoitzari hiru urtetarako bisa denborala ematea erabaki zen, artzantza utziz gero baliogabetua izan zitekeena. Hitzarmen honen bukaeran Estatu Batuak utzi behar zituen, beraz egotaldi iraunkorraren bost urtetako egotaldi jarraituaren bete beharreko baldintza ezinezkoa eginez, eta halaber lanpostua hautatzeko askatasuna deseginez. Halaz ere, gero beste hitzarmen bat izenpe zezakeen eta beste artzantza-lanaldi batetarako atzera itzul. Artzain batzuk hiru edo lau egotaldi egin zituzten, bitartekoetan herrian hilabete edo urte batzu eginda.

Laburtuz, beraz, Iparrameriketako Sartaldearen euskal artzantzaren erdiko garaiak 1.930tik eta 1.970. etako lehen urtetararte iraun zuen. Ezaugarririk oinarrizkoena alokatutako artzaina

tion and his language handicap, and provisioned by his employer, the herder could save as much as \$5,000 during the three-year contract. This was sufficient capital to buy a small farm or business upon his return to the Basque Country. Ironically, then, involvement in one of the most menial and lowest-paid occupations in the American economy was, for the Basque herder, a means of socioeconomic mobility.

The arrangement rested, however, upon pronounced disequilibrium between the American and Spanish economies. As such it was tenuous at best and destined to be short-lived. The anti-Franco measures retarded but did not halt Spain's economic recovery. By 1970 industrial wages in the country were about on a par with herders' scales in the United States. Furthermore, the Basque Country was one of the most highly industrialized regions of Iberia with one of its highest per capita incomes.

Consequently, by the late 1960s it became increasingly diffi-

zen. Beronen baldintzak eta aurreko garaiko artzainenak guztiz desberdinak ziren, hauek ezin baitzezaketen beren artalde propioa sor. Horrela, bada, Iparrameriketako Mendebaldean egin egotaldiak Europako baldintza txarrei esker gertatzen ziren gehiago, Estatu Batuetako baldintza onei esker baino. Espainiako gerrate zibilak (1.936-39), II Mundugerraren gabetasunek (Espainiak neutral iraun zuen, baina guztiz jota zegoen burruka bukatu berriaren poderioz), eta gerraren ondoko garaietan Franco-ren gobernuari egindako nazioarteko isolamenduaren ondorio ekonomikoek, denek lagundu zuten artzainaren alokairua erakargarriago egitearren.

Alokairuak txikiak izan arren ameriketar bizimailaren ikuspegitik, oraino ere Espainiako alokairuen parean handiak ziren. Are gehiago, kalebizikeratik hurrundua, lanbidearen ezaugarriengatik bezala, hala hizkuntzaren mugarengatik, eta gainera lanemaileak berak hornitua, artzain batek 5.000 dolarretaraino aurrera zitza-

cult to secure Basque herders for the American West. Initially the Western Range Association broadened its efforts to other areas of Spain—swelling the numbers of Asturians, Leonese, Castillians, and Andalusians in the herder ranks. However, it quickly became apparent that Iberia was no longer a dependable source of supply, so the association diverted its attention to Latin America—notably Mexico and Peru.

In part due to the labor shortage, but beset by a number of other problems as well, the open-range sheep industry of the American West declined markedly during the decade of the 1970s. Poor wool and lamb prices, a growing problem with predators (federal poisoning programs were outlawed), and incessant fighting with environmentalists and government agencies (who challenged stockmen's access to the public lands) all resulted in abolishment of many sheep outfits and reduction of sheep numbers in others.

Consequently, during the decade of the 1970s there was a

keen hitzarmenaren hiru urteren buruan. Kopuru hau nahikoa zen, Euskal Herrira itzultzean, baserri edo negozio txiki bat erosteko. Ironikoki, beraz, ameriketar ekonomiaren gutien ordainduen eta eskala beherakoenetariko postu batetan lan egitea mugikortasun sozioekonomikoaren iturri bihurtu zen euskal artzaintzat.

Egiunea, baina, ameriketar eta espainiar ekonomien desoreka zorrotzetan oinarritzen zen. Horregatik, makala zen eta kasurik onenean denbora laburrerako. Franco-ren kontrako neurriek atzeratu zuten baina ez gelditu Espainiaren zuzperraldi ekonomikoa. 1.970.ean industrialokairuek Estatu Batuen artzainenak bezalakoak ziren. Are gehiago, Euskal Herria penintsula iberiarraren herrialde industriatuenetariko bat zen *per capita* sarrera handienetariko batekin.

Horregatik, 1.960.aren hamarkadaren amaieran gero eta zailago bihurtu zen euskal artzainen erakarpina Iparrameriketako Sartzalderantz. Hasieran, *Western Range Association* delakoak bere

decline in the number of herders in the American West and also in the percentage of Basques within their ranks. In 1970 there were approximately 1,500 men under contract to the Western Range Association, about 90 percent of whom were Basques. By the end of 1976 there were only 742 herders left, and only 106, or 14 percent, were Basque. There are no indications that the situation will be reversed in the foreseeable future. Indeed, all signs point to the ultimate demise of the open-range sheep industry. Clearly, the era of the Basque shepherd in the American West is over.

In retrospect, then, for more than a century the Basque has been the stereotypic shepherd of the American West. In the guise of loyal employee he was the unsung hero of the region's sheep industry; and as small-scale itinerant operator, it's bane. To be sure, there were certain areas where his presence was felt lightly if at all. In most of Utah herding was a family affair and Mormon elders called upon their sons to tend the flocks. The Navaho Indians

ahaleginak Espainiara zabaldu zituen—artzainen saldoak asturiar, leondar, gaztelau eta andaluziarrekin betetzen zutelarik. Haatik, bertan behera gertatu zen ageriko Iberia ez zela jadanik lanindarraren iturri fidagarria. Horrela, bada, elkarteak ahaleginak Ameriketara jarri zituen—Mexikon eta Perun bereziki.

Langileen gabeziagatik, baina beste arazoengatik ere, ardi-industria oso makaldu zen 1.970.aren hamarkadan. Artile eta bildots-prezio txarrak, gero eta handiago bihurtuz zolan piztiekiko problema (pozoaduraprograma federalak ezlegaldutik ziren), girozaleekiko etengabeko burrukak eta orobat gobernu-agentziekiko liskarrak (alapide publikoetan sarrera-eskubideak zalantzatan jarritzen zituztenak), denek, hainbeste artalderen desagerketa erakarritu zuten batzutan, eta bestetan ardi-kopuruaren urrimena.

Horrela, bada, 1.970.eko hamarkadan bai artzainen kopurua eta bai artzainetan zegoen euskaldunena urritu ziren. 1.970.ean bazeuden 1.500 gizon inguru *Western Range Association*-en hitzar-

developed their own sheep-based economy on vast reservation lands. In most of New Mexico the herders were Hispanics, pursuing a life-style established several centuries ago. Then there were little pockets like Lakeview County, Oregon, where the open-range sheep industry was Irish-dominated. However, viewed broadly from a regional perspective, to say "shepherd" was to mean "Basque." Surely no other ethnic group remained as closely identified with a single activity.

When Basques entered the American West in the mid-nineteenth century, sheepherding was the region's most denigrated occupation. In the words of one wag,

You could not fire a shotgun into the average crowd in the range country without hitting a man who at some time herded sheep, but it would probably take the charge in the other barrel to make him admit it. About the only person who isn't ashamed to

menen pean, eta %90 euskaldunak ziren. 1.976.eko amaieran 742 artzain zegoen bakarrik, eta haietarik 106, hots, %14 ziren euskaldun. Ez dago egoera hau etorkizun hurbilean aldatuko delako markarik. Izan ere, seinale guztiek alapide zabaletako ardi-industriaren desagerketa aldarrikatzen dute. Argi dago, euskal artzainaren garaia Iparrameriketako Sartaldean joan egin da.

Atzera begira, beraz, gizaldibete baino luzeagoko, euskalduna Iparrameriketako Mendebaldeko artzain ereduak izan da. Langile leialaren gisaz, bera zen herrialdeko ardi-industriaren kantatzen ez zen gizaurena; eta maila txikiko langile ibiltari bezala, berriz, herrialdeko hondamendia. Hain segur, bazeuden eskualdeak haren presentzia oso guti igarri egin zutenak, edo bat ere ez. Utah gehienez artzantza senitarteko arazoa zen eta mormoi zaharrek beren semeak deitzen zituzten artaldeak zaintzeko. Navaho indiarrek ere bere ardi-ekonomia propioa aurreratu zuten erreserbetako zelai amaigabeetan. New Mexico-ren zatirik handie-

admit having herded sheep is a sheepman, and he refers to it merely to show how far he has come.

Persons of all stripe herded sheep at one time or another. In the nineteenth century there were Chinese herders, for herding was one of the few occupations afforded willingly to them. Indians and Mexicans herded sheep as both a way station in their assimilation and as a symbol of their inferior status. Anglos served as guardians of the bands as a last resort. The sheep camp became a refuge for the failed individual, a place of repose for the alcoholic, a hideout for the desperado, a self-imposed purgatory for the masochist, an escape for the introvert. For many it was the final thin line of defense against assuming the hobo's lot. An occasional Greek, Italian, or Portuguese immigrant followed the woolies to gain a first foothold in a new land before moving on to a more sedentary life. Only the Basques came to regard herding as a vehicle for advancement.

nean artzainak "hispanic" (hispanikoak) ziren, zenbait mende lehenago sorturiko bizikerari eusten ziotela. Gero, bazeuden toki txiki batzu, Lakeview konderrria bezala Oregon-en, artzantza irlandarrek gobernatua zeudenekoa. Halaz ere, ikuspegi erregionalez begiratu, "artzain" esateak "euskalduna" esan gura zuen. Hain zuzen, inongo talde etnikok ez zuen iraun hain era estuaz lanbide batekin lotua.

Euskaldunak Sartaldean sartu zirenean XIX.mendean, artzantza lanbiderik gutietsiena zen. Adar jole baten berbetan:

Eskupeta bat ezin desarra zenezake alapide-eskualdetako banaz besteko jendeketan noizedonoiz artzantzan ibilitako gizon bat ikutu gabe, baina beste kanoiairen tiroa beharko zenuke horrelako zerbait berari onarterazteko. Artzantzan ibilia delako lotsatzen ez den bakarritariko ardiabea da, eta berak onartuko du hori zein urrun heldu den erakusteko.

The inevitable question is: Why Basques? The facile answer revolves around a presumed Old World familiarity with sheep husbandry. Unfortunately, while apparently logical, such an explanation is not entirely accurate. Sheep husbandry in the Pyrenean homeland has declined sharply over the past century. More tellingly, few of the experienced Old World herders elected to emigrate. Thus, the majority of Basques entering the American West lacked personal sheepherding experience.

*Of greater importance was the Basque penchant for hard work, dedication to task, and entrepreneurial activity. Within Old World Basque society physical labor is more highly esteemed than intellectual activity. Persistence in his chosen occupation determines a man's personal worth, which is, in turn, both manifested and ratified by his economic progress.*

Given the foregoing history it is easy to lionize the Basque shepherd. Today the popular press depicts him as possessed of

Mota guztietako pertsonak zaindu zituzten ardiak noizpait. XIX.gizaldian bazeuden txinar artzainak, beraiei borondate onez emandako lanbide bakarretarikoa zenez gero. Indiarrek eta mexikarrek ardiak zaintzen zituzten, asimilapenaren bide bat bezala eta orobat beren beheragoko mailaren marka. Besterik ezean *Angloak* artaldean zaindari bihurtzen ziren bakarrik. Artzankanpamendua lur jotako gizabanakoen abaro bihurtu zen, alkoholikoaren atsedentoki, desesperatuen ezkutaleku, masokistek autoderrigortutako purgatorioa, barnerakoiarentzako itzurpidea. Askorentzat arloteen saldoan sartu baino lehenagoko azken defentsahesi txikia zen. Lantzean behin greziar batek, italiar edo portuges etorkin batek dohakabeak jarraituko zituzkeen herri berrian lehen urratsa egiteko, bizikera egonkorragoetara igaro baino lehen. Euskaldunek bakarrik ikusi zuten artzantza aurrera joateko bide bezala.

Nahitaezko itauna da, zergatik euskaldunak? Erantzun erraza Mundu Zaharraren ardi-hazkuntzarekiko trebantzia izan ohi da.

an almost mystical capacity for the solitude and privations of life on the open range. This is to deprive him of his right to human frailty. The reality is that many Basque herders failed and abandoned the sheep camps. Those who persisted succeeded at great psychological cost. Many herders recount crying themselves to sleep at night in the unrelenting solitude of desert and mountain. Then, too, there was the ever-present danger of a man adjusting only too well to his circumstances. Basques have a unique vocabulary for referring to an individual who has become "sagebrushed" or "sheeped" to the point that he shuns human contact. The "crazy Basco" as well as the occasional suicide were characteristic of the sheep districts. Other herders died at their posts unattended in an illness, untreated for snake bite, or frozen in a blizzard. As early as 1908 Boise Basques formed a mutual aid society to provide mentally or physically broken individuals with money for their passage home.

Furthermore, to emphasize the successful herder who parlayed

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Zorigaitzez, nahiz eta azalez logikoa, azalpen hori ez da guztiz zehatza. Ardi-kazkuntza Pirinietako herrian oso gutitu zen joan den mendean. Are esangurakorrago, Mundu Zaharreko artzainetan gutik aukeratu zuen emigrazioa. Horrela, bada, Iparrameriketako Mendebaldera heltzen ziren euskaldunen artean gehienak ez zeukaten artzantzaren esperientziarik.

Garrantzi handiagoko zera zen, lan gogorretarako euskaldunaren joera, betebeharrerako ardura eta entpresalaritzarako jitea. Mundu Zaharreko euskal gizartean lan fisikoa gehiago goraipatzen da lan intelektuala baino. Aukeraturiko lanbidean irauteak gizonaren balio pertsonala mugatzen du, izan ere, aurreramendu ekonomikoaren bidez erakutsia eta berretsia izaten dena.

Aurreko historia ikusita oso erraza da euskal artzaina goraipatzea. Gaur egungo prentsa herritarrak, alapide amaigabeetako bizikeraren bakartade eta gabetasunei eusteko, ahalmen ia mistikoarekin jabetua marrazten du. Hau, baina, euskal artzainari be-

his sacrifices into something better is to ignore the many for whom the occupation proved a dead end. Whether a loyal employee who spent his entire youth in the service of one outfit or a malcontent who jumped from employer to employer, the herder who never abandoned the sheep camps renounced the comforts of family life and practically guaranteed himself a lonely old age. For such men infrequent visits to town became the sole release—an occasion to dissipate a year's wages on liquor, gambling, and prostitutes. Clearly, the triumphs of some mask the personal tragedies of many.

The saga of the *artzainak* or Basque sheepherders, then, is the story of one of the prime architects of the settlement pattern and economy of the American West. Yet to this day surprisingly little is known about these pioneers. While Basques were present throughout the open-range sheep-raising districts of all eleven western states, the nature of their activities precluded intensive settlement. Nowhere did they come to constitute a majority (or even a signifi-

raren gizahultasuna kentzea da. Egia dena zera da, euskal artzain askok huts egin zuela eta bere artzankanpamendua utzi zuela. Zirautenek gastu psikologiko handiaz lortzen zuten arrakasta. Anitz artzain nigarrez hartzen zuela loak gogoratzen da, ilunez desertuaren eta mendiaren urrikibageko bakartadean. Gainera bazegoen ere inguruneari ongiegi ekantzeko arrisku etengabea. Gizon bat "basatia" eta "ardigaldu" bihur zitekeen eta giza-harreman guztiei itzuri egin. "Euskaldun zoroa" eta lantzean behingo buruhiltzailea berarizkoak ziren ardieskualdeetan. Beste artzain batzu, beren tokietan hiltzen ziren, ondo ez zaindutako gaixotasun batengatik, edo bisuts batetan hoztua. 1.908an jadanik Boise-ko euskaldunek elkarren laguntzarako elkarte bat sortu zuten, mentalki edo fisikoki desegindako gizabanakoei etxerakoan uzgaizteko.

Are gehiago, arrakastadun artzainaz berba egitea bakarrik, damu eta sakrifizio guztiak zeredozer hobe bihurtu zituenaz min-

cant minority) of the total population. Thus, even in areas of considerable Basque settlement, many of their Anglo neighbors were but dimly aware of their presence.

Furthermore, life in the sheep camps evolved at the margins of public awareness. Pursuing a denigrated occupation in the solitude of little-inhabited districts, until recently the Basque sheepmen rarely captured the journalist's attention—and then only in a cursory and negative fashion. Similarly, the Basques themselves were slow to chronicle their activities or create their own literary spokesmen. Drawn from peasant villages the herders were often semiliterate at best. Few recognized in their struggles in the American West a story worth the telling. It was not until 1957, when the Basque-American Robert Laxalt published his father's biography (*Sweet Promised Land*) that there was a comprehensive account of the sheepman's existence.

To this general myopia may be added confusion over the ques-

tzatzea, beraren lanbidean ezer erdietsi ez zuena ahanztea da. Gaztaro osoa empresa baten zerbitzuan sarturiko langile leiala izan, zein ugazabagandik ugazabagana jauzika ibilitakoa izan, artzakanpamenduak uzten ez zituen artzainak, eta senitartekoaren bizikeraren plazerei uko egiten zienak, zahartzaro bakartia segurtatzen zion bere buruari. Halakoentzat, noizean behin kalera jaistea zen irtenbide bakarra; urte osoko alokairua pattarraz xahutzeko abagadunea, jokatzeko eta emagalduetan ibiltzeko. Argi dago, gutiren arrakastak askoren tragediak estaltzen ditu.

*Euskal Artzainen* saga beraz, Iparrameriketako Mendebaldearen koloniakuntza-eredu eta ekonomiaren eraikitzaile garrantzitsuenetako baten kondaera da. Horregatio, gaur egun oso guti ezagutzen da aitzindari hauez. Euskaldunak sartaldeko hamaika Estatu etako alapide ireki eta artzaneskualdetan egon arren, haien ekintzaren ezaugarriek bere koloniakuntza intentsiboa ezinezkoa egiten zuten. Ez ziren inongo tokitan populazioaren gehiengoa

tion of what a Basque is. Basques have long been regarded as Europe's mystery people, speaking a language unrelated to any other and maintaining a strong sense of their distinctiveness. Imbued with ethnic pride, most of the herders refused to be regarded as "Frenchmen" or "Spaniards," and the uninitiated American accustomed to thinking in terms of nationalities was hard-pressed to locate a "Basque Country" on his mental map of European geography.

Finally, the Basques themselves maintained a low ethnic profile. As conflict over range rights made them objects of hatred and discrimination, Basques were prone to downplay their ethnic uniqueness. It is only in recent years, after the Taylor Grazing Act effectively abolished the itinerant sheepmen as a source of controversy, that they have engaged in public display of their heritage. The spectacular Basque festivals, held today in many communities throughout the American West, are part of a growing general

bihurtu (ezta ere gutiengo esangurakorra). Horrela, bada, euskaldun asko zegoen eskualdetan ere, auzoko *angloak* oso era ilunez ziren beraien presentziaz jakitun.

Are gehiago, artzankanpamenduetako bizikera kontzientzia publikotik aparte bilakatu zen. Lanbide gutietsi bati eutsiz oso populazio txikiko eskualdetan, oraintsurarte euskal artzainak bakanka hartua zuen kazetarien kasua. Era berean, euskaldunak oso geldo izan ziren beren iharduerak kondatzeko edo eta beren literaturgizonak sortzeko. Baserrietatik ekarriak, artzainak maiz erdi analfabetuak ziren kasurik onenean. Oso guti izan zen gauza Iparrameriketako Sartaldean aurreratutako gduetan konda zitekeen istoriorik ikusteko. Ez zen 1.957arte izan, Robert Laxalt-ek, iparrameriketar euskaldunak, bere aitaren biografia argitaratu zuen arte (*Sweet Promised Land: Aginduriko herri gozoa*), artzainaren bizikeraren kondaketa bat egon zenik.

Miopia orokor honi zera gaineratu behar zaio, euskaldun

tendency in America to celebrate one's "roots." The festivals afford a forum for an emerging consciousness and sense of pride that is providing Basques with a strong identity in America today while preserving much of their cultural heritage.

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izateaz dagoen ezulerpen eta nahasketak. Euskaldunak, luzaro, Europako herri misteriotsua bezala begiratu dira, inongo hizkuntzarekin loturik ez dagoen mintzaira bat erabiliz eta desberdin izatearen kontzientzia zorrotzaz jabetuak. Harrotasun etnikoaz jantzita, artzain gehienek ez zuten ez "frantses" ezta "espainiar" deituak izan gura, baina ameriketar ezikasiak, hiritartasunez (nazionalitate estatalez) pentsatzen ohiturik, estu eta larri zeuden Euskal Herri bat Europaz zeukan mapa mentalean sartzeko.

Azkenez, euskaldunek berek ez zuten beren etnikotasuna larregi erakutsi nahi. Alapide-zuzenei buruzko gatazkek berek gorroto eta bereizkeriaren gai egiten zituztenez, euskaldunek bazeukaten joera beren etnikotasun berezia sobera ez erakusteko. Azkeneko urteotan bakarrik da, "Taylor alakuntza-legeak" era argiaz artzain ibiltaria desagerrera zuenean eztabaida-iturri bezala, euskaldunek beren ondoretasun etnikoa publikoki erakusten hasi zirela. Euskal besta ikusgarriak, Iparrameriketako Sartaldeko herri askotan gertatzen direnak gaur egun, uzta berria dira. Izan ere, Iparrameriketan hazten ari den joera orokorraren parte dira, nork bere *erroak* goraipatzekoa.