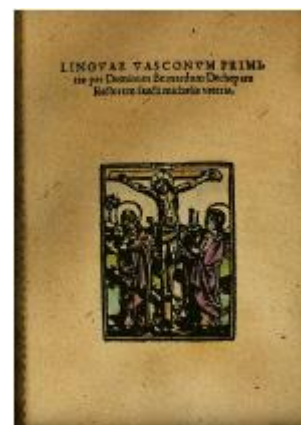


2.- "...Abantoko mendiak, Gallartako lur eta gizon gorriak."

AGIRRE, Txomin. "Garoa" (XIX. mendearen azken aldia)

The first book that was written in Euskara is the '*Linguae Vasconum Primitiæ*' (Firsts of the Vascones language, Bordeaux 1545), which consists of a collection of religious and erotic poems written by the priest **Bernard Etxepare** (Bernard d'Etchepare). He was born in Sarasketa (a town near Donibane Garazi / Sant-Jean-Pied-de-Port, the capital of Lower Navarre) in 1470 or 1480, and he was a priest. It is no coincidence that the first writer in Euskara was a priest since the clerics had to preach to the people, and it was necessary to cultivate the popular language for this purpose. The language concerned was, in this case, Euskara.



Ecen iaunec estu nahi mutil gaiçtoa eduqui, eç pagatu soldataric cerbitcatu gaberit

(No master wants a bad servant, nor to pay a wage without being served)

Vicenta Moguel (1782-1854) is the first Basque woman writer. She belonged to a family of writers (Juan Antonio and Juan José), but her stay in Azpeitia (Gipuzkoa) influenced the language she used in her works, due to the dialect spoken there. Her '*Ipui onak*' (Good tales) are written in an easy way and with a refined vocabulary. Thanks to her, the arrival of the women in the Basque literature was done successfully.

Basque Literature Nowadays

Bernardo Atxaga, whose real name is José Iratzu Garmendia, was born in Asteasu (Gipuzkoa), in 27th July, 1951. He holds a degree in Economics, as well as in Philosophy and Letters from the University of Barcelona. He wrote his first works in Euskara under the pseudonym of Bernardo Atxaga. He is the author of several poems, tales and novels as well as about twenty books for the children. Atxaga was awarded the 'Xabier Lizardi' in 1983 for his book '*Sugeak txoriari begiratzen diorean*' (When the snake looks at the bird). Later in 1989, he won the 'National Literature Award' for his work '*Obabakoak*' (Stories of Obaba), which has been translated into more than ten languages and brought to the big screen by the film director Montxo Armendariz through the film 'Obaba', nominated for an Oscar in the category of Best Foreign Language Film.

