

'Agustina Antonia', a Basque Ballad of the Warrior Maiden

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The musical score is written on four staves. The first two staves are labeled 'I' and the last two are labeled 'II'. The music is in a single system with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes. The lyrics are: 'Gaz - ti - ak kan - tu - an ta za - rrak e - ra - gu - si - an', 'o - ri da pa - sa - tzen da - na ber - din mun - du gu - zi - an', 'E - txet - tik ur - ten ne - ban Ma - ria - tze .. - ko i - lli - an', and 'a - ma - sei ur - te - re - kin neu - re txo - ra - me - ni - an.'

1
Gaztiak kantuan ta
zarrak eragusian
ori da pasatzen dana
bardin mundu guzian.

The young a-singing and
The elders a-talking,
This is what betides
In equal measure the whole world over.

2
Etxetik urten neban
Mariatzeko illian
hamasei urterekin
neure txoramenian.

I left my home
In the month of May,
At the age of sixteen;
I was a scatterbrain.

3
Soldadu sartu nintzan
Agorraren bostian
Kabo ero sarjento
izateko ustian.

I listed for a soldier
On the fifth of September,
In hopes of becoming
A corporal or sergeant.

4
Ni lako fortuna
notu arrapatu?
Hamaika illabeteko
sarjentu nonbratu.

Has anyone ever had
Such good fortune as I?
In my eleventh month
I was promoted to sergeant.

5
Urtebete baiño len
nintzan teniente
rejimentutikan be
nintzala ausente.

Before the year was out,
I was a lieutenant,
Although I was
Absent from my regiment.

<p>6 Rejimentu bi izan ditut amar urte onetan: Angel de Ondasetan Buenas Airasetan.¹</p>	<p>I have been in two regiments In these ten years: Angel de Ondasetan's And the Buenos Aires.</p>
<p>7 Nerau emakumia ofizialia letrarik eskolarik batere gabia.</p>	<p>Behold me a woman And an officer, Despite being illiterate And wholly unschooled.</p>
<p>8 Agustin Antonio izan da neure izena. Ori aitu dezutenok ezta neure izena.</p>	<p>I went by the name Of Agustin Antonio. You who hear me, know you now That it is not my name.</p>
<p>9 Oraintxe da denboria izena murtzeko, Agustina Antonia naizela esateko.</p>	<p>The time has come To change my name, To say I am Agustina Antonia.</p>
<p>10 Batetik lau balazo, bestetik enfermo, Jaunaren abixuak oixek ditut klaro.</p>	<p>I have had four bullet-wounds And I have been ill. Warnings from the Lord I have clearly had.</p>
<p>11 Moja sartzera noa komentu batera, Jesus-aren esposa betiko izatera.</p>	<p>I will become a nun, In a convent, Forever to be The bride of Jesus.</p>
<p>12 Amar urtian errege serbitu detalako, dotia gertu daukat moja sartutzeko.</p>	<p>I have served the King For ten years, And so I have a dowry Saved to become a nun.</p>
<p>13 Adios, ama neuria, probintziana, ongi lastimatzen naiz zu despeditzia.</p>	<p>Farewell, dear mother, From our province, [Gipuzkoa] It makes my heart full sore To take my leave of you.</p>
<p>14 Baiña oraindik ere bizi naizen artian gogoan izango zaitut neure biotzian.</p>	<p>But for as long As I shall live I will keep your memory In my heart.</p>

Singer: Maria Barrena
Collector: Bitoriano Gandiaga
Published: *Arantzazu* magazine, June 1969

Location: Araotz, Gipuzkoa
Date: unstated

¹ As Villasante suggests, the last two lines of the verse seem to have become garbled in transmission (Villasante 1969, transcribed in Zavala 1998: 530). Version A of this ballad (see below), from Urdiain, has what is likely to have been the original form: 'Arjelen onduan / eta Buenas Airesetan' ['Near Algiers / And in Buenos Aires']. Cf. Satrustegi 1972: 81.

Résumé:

An unlettered maiden dresses in man's attire, enlists in the army and quickly rises to the rank of lieutenant. Years later, weary of military life, she openly declares her womanhood and resolves to become a nun. At the close of the song she takes her leave of her mother forever.

Commentary:

European ballads of cross-dressing maidens are very numerous and have generated a number of sub-genres, one of which is often known as The Warrior Maiden or The Soldier Maid, in which the girl dons uniform, concealing her gender and identity, and joins the army or navy. There seem to be two types of Warrior Maiden.² In one, the maid loves her soldier- or sailor-boy so well that she feels compelled to don uniform herself and accompany him or, not having heard from him, set off to find him. A second type concerns the maid who for other motives masquerades as a man and enlists in the army.³ Her beauty generally arouses the suspicions, and more than the suspicions, of a comrade-in-arms. Traps are set for her, which she usually manages to evade.⁴ These stories are packed tight with action and the outcome almost always involves the revelation of the maid's true identity. In Dianne Dugaw's study of the Warrior Maiden songs in English, the material is analysed in terms of its two principal themes, love and war, Venus and Mars, which the author sees as being held in a fine balance by the narrative. Although comic or tragic variants of the tale occasionally occur, these ballads are generally success stories in which the intrepid protagonist achieves her objectives. As Dugaw has it, she 'proves herself deserving in romance, able in war, and rewarded in both'.⁵

The vigour of the Warrior Maiden sub-genre is ultimately not surprising. Women in man's attire are obviously a staple of European drama. Indeed, they are very far from being confined to fiction: over the centuries there have been very many more documented cases of woman-officers than we might imagine.⁶ Interestingly for the present song, perhaps the most famous of them all was a seventeenth-century Basque, Catalina de Erauso, a teenage nun who cut her hair, dressed as a man, jumped over the wall of her San Sebastian convent and embarked on her extraordinary cross-dressing career. The adventures she recounted in her autobiography earned her the name of 'La monja alférez', 'The Lieutenant Nun'. Her story has inspired several biographies (including a very unreliable account by de Quincy, *The Ensign Nun*, in the early nineteenth century⁷), stories, analyses, polemical treatises, plays and even films. The peculiar unblended admixture of Venus and Mars in her life-story seems to have exercised a special fascination over women in recent years, and several studies of her life have been published in English alone.

Given her colourful life, we might ask whether Catalina's autobiography has served as the inspiration for stories or songs in the Basque oral tradition. In his article 'Romance vasco de la doncella guerrera', José María Satrustegi observes that until he discovered two examples of a Warrior Maiden ballad in Urdiain, Navarre, there had

² Cf. Biguri (1991: 553), who follows François Delpech in distinguishing these two strands of the Warrior Maiden tradition.

³ In many French and Hispanic variants the girl's family must provide a soldier for the king's army; but she has no brothers; in order to save the family she dresses as a soldier and enlists. Cf. Smith 1880: 6-7; Menéndez y Pelayo 1944: 242-244; Biguri, op. cit., 554; Lorenzo 1997:40-41.

⁴ Entwistle 1951: 79-80. Cf. Ramon Menendez Pidal 1967: 179-182. This ballad has been collected in France, Italy, Castile, Portugal, Dalmatia and Serbia, as well as in the Anglophone countries.

⁵ 1989: 1 & passim

⁶ Dugaw, op. cit., 126-134. Cf. Mendieta 2009: 167-168, and Lloyd 1975: 212.

⁷ Fitzmaurice-Kelly, op. cit., xxxiii-xxxvi

been no evidence for such a relationship.⁸ Although he goes no further than to hint at the link between Catalina and the ballads he collected, he does assert that these songs are so different from those of the rest of Europe that they constitute an endemically Basque version of the genre. He cites three pieces of evidence: (a) the Basque names of the characters in the songs, (b) the unique femininity test imposed on the soldier-maid and (c) her ultimate decision to become a nun. Since a femininity test appears nowhere in the text of 'Agustina Antonia' or any of the other versions, its status and nature must first be clarified here. Lucas Zufiaurre, who gave Satrustegi one of the versions, also told him a contextual story about the character:

Neskitx bat soldado sartu emen zan eta ezin zain ezagutu neskitxa zan edo mutila. Oficaliek esan zain, 'Orai ikusko diau!' Ba emen zan liyo soro haundi bat eta agindu zain, sobré, soro baztarretik liyoan pasatzia. 'Emakumia balin bada, ez dik liyorik zapalduko!' Bai konturatu re! Beste guziak baztarretik eta hura erdiz t'erdi ... 'Eztuk emakumia!!' esan zuten orduan. Gero etxera etorri zenien bertsu hauek kantatu emen zituen.

A lassie enlisted in the army and they weren't sure if she was a lass or a lad. The officers said: 'Now we shall find out!' There was a great field sown with flax and they ordered her to cross the field sown with flax. 'If she's a woman she won't step on the flax.' But, realising their trick, she walked through the middle while the others went round the edge. 'That's no woman', they said. Later, when she went home, she sang these verses.

Koldo Biguri, in his article 'El tema de cambio de sexo en la literatura vasca de tradición oral' (1992), challenges the three criteria offered by Satrustegi.⁹ The Basque names prove nothing, he says, the flax test of femininity is also found in other cultures and the outcome of the girl choosing a life in a convent is due to the influence of Spanish nineteenth century broadsides, where it was a common ending to stories. He suggests that, far from being uniquely Basque, this soldier-maid ballad is a comparatively recent confection put together in Urdiain itself. As evidence for his case he states that, significantly, all other stories of cross-dressing girls in the Basque oral tradition are in prose. He goes on to cite diverse narrative elements relating to the Warrior Maiden genre that Satrustegi had noted separately in Urdiain during his researches on the ballad: two Spanish-language ballads on the theme were known in the village, as well as Basque-language stories of a girl who served in the army and later became a nun and another of a girl who used a ruse, including dressing as her supposed husband, to avoid the amorous attentions of troops billeted at her farm during the Carlist wars. Further, the tale of the flax test was also in circulation in the village without being associated with the ballad. He also cites a verse in the other version of the ballad, collected from Zufiaurre's sister Juana María, in which a comrade-in-arms becomes aware of the soldier-maid's gender. The confluence of all these elements, he suggests, has resulted in a new ballad composed in the Zufiaurre family through the interweaving of the narrative strands, by a kind of osmosis.

Certainly, Biguri is right in claiming that none of the three hallmarks adduced by Satrustegi for the ballad - the proper names, the flax test, the to-a-nunnery ending - is evidence of a unique Basque identity. But his case for a ballad of recent confection in Urdiain is on shakier ground. First, though he prints them in his article, he ignores the other two versions of the ballad, one of which is the 'Agustina Antonia' of this article. Both these versions were collected by Bitoriano Gandiaga in Araotz, Gipuzkoa. Their close relationship to the Urdiain versions cannot be doubted. The distance between Urdiain and Araotz is about 60 kilometres by road, or 40 kilometres over mountain tracks. There are no (extant) versions in any other locality. The Araotz ballads have been in circulation long enough to have developed quite unrelated tunes, whereas the Urdiain texts were collected without music; and at least one of the Araotz versions (Version C, below) must have been learnt by the singer in the early years of the twentieth century. Furthermore, both Araotz versions are rather longer than either

⁸ This and the following references are taken from Satrustegi 1972: 73-78.

⁹ Biguri 1992: 557 et seq.

Urdiain text. It is possible that a Zufiaurre family ballad could have been composed from the conflation of other oral narratives and have travelled 40/60 kilometres to Araotz, where by the date of collection, 1969, it had generated two longer texts and two different tunes, while the 'original' had either never had a tune or had lost it. But for this to happen it would have needed to have been in the Zufiaurre family for several generations, which is a longer period than Biguri is suggesting. Besides, the hypothesis seems less plausible than its reverse: longer and more detailed texts are in principle better candidates for an early date than shorter. To all this we must add that, although Biguri asserts that all Basque folk narratives of cross-dressing girls are in prose, there exists a Warrior Maiden ballad of the classical type, called 'Soldado sartu nintzan', which is unrelated to 'Agustina Antonia'. The fact that it was present in the oral tradition of Araotz side-by-side with 'Agustina Antonia' suggests that the community distinguished clearly between the two types of ballad. 'Soldadu sartu nintzan' is discussed in 'Affinities Within the Basque Tradition', below. And if the existence of one Warrior Maiden ballad in Basque is allowed, then there is no need to explain away the other.

Biguri has shown that the Urdiain versions of 'Agustina Antonia' were influenced by themes borrowed from other folk narratives, to wit, the contextual flax text and the verse in which the maid is unmasked by the soldier. Whether these refinements were the work of the Zufiaurre family is impossible to know, though their being exclusive to Urdiain may be significant. It may also be relevant that María Juana's two-verse text shows an uncommonly poor aptitude for rhyme even by the generous standards of the other versions. Apart from the recognition verse in this single version, the 'Agustina Antonia' texts abstain from using the narrative themes common to other Warrior Maiden ballads and tales. In their prosy matter-of-factness they are so remote from the rest of the pan-European tradition that it seems Satrustegi is right and that they constitute an endemically Basque variant of the song. And if this Basque variant is unique, might it not have been inspired, at least in part, by elements filtered into the oral tradition of the life of Catalina de Erauso?

In attempting to answer this question, we may begin by looking at a brief summary of the most salient events in Catalina's life. Having left the convent, she assumed a male identity and had some minor adventures. Then she sailed to South America, got into several scrapes, enlisted in the colonial army and saw action in Chile, where her bravery distinguished her. She fought and gambled with the best, met her brother but withheld her identity from him, became his friend, almost robbed him of his mistress (it appears), and then quarrelled and made up with him. She was found attractive by (and seemingly was attracted to) women, but apparently her comrades-in-arms never noticed her condition. She would have been promoted to captain but for her ordering the hanging of a prisoner who had surrendered to her. Over the years she killed several men, one of them her brother, whom she ran through in a nocturnal duel without recognising him. On a number of occasions she cheated certain death by seeking sanctuary in churches. She also narrowly escaped torture and hanging. She spent several periods in jail. Finally, her wayward life had made her so many enemies that even one as formidable as she could not deal with them all, and as they began to close upon her she chose to reveal her secret to a bishop and once more seek sanctuary. So convincing was her disguise that, to overcome his incredulity, she voluntarily submitted to a physical examination by women, as a result of which she was herself proclaimed a woman and a virgin. Her fame quickly spread through the new world and the old. She spent three years in a Peruvian convent awaiting a royal verdict on her status and in 1624 sailed once more to Europe, where she was granted a military pension and papal permission to continue to dress as a man. She returned to the Americas some years later and, at the time of her death, was a prosperous owner of slaves and livestock.¹⁰

¹⁰ Fitzmaurice-Kelly 1908: xxiv

Agustina Antonia's story, apart from donning uniform and going off to war as a man, is not like the pan-European Warrior Maiden tales, which weave stock folk motifs into a pretty story of filial love, suspicion, trial, romance and vindication.¹¹ On the other hand, she has a deal in common with Catalina. To begin with, both women assume the name Antonio for their male persona.¹² Both characters are Gipuzkoan; indeed, Agustina Antonia stresses her origin by expressly referring to her mother as 'probintziana' (literally 'from the province', but in song convention a synonym of 'Gipuzkoan').¹³ At the age of sixteen each decides to put on man's attire and join the army. They appear to have enlisted out of a sense of adventure ('neure txormenian', 'I was a scatterbrain', as Agustina Antonia expresses it), which is not a motive found in other Warrior Maiden ballads. Both achieve rapid promotion to lieutenant. They serve in South America. Unlike the heroines of the pan-European ballads, neither Catalina nor Agustina Antonia are suspected of being women and are not subjected to a gender test until they choose to proclaim their 'real' identity. Both women enter a convent. Viewed in outline, the principal features of Agustina Antonia's life, as the song recounts them, tally with events from the life of Catalina. So many parallel details in the tales of Catalina and Agustina Antonia go beyond coincidence and suggest that the historical personage has to some degree influenced the fictional character.

Yet, for all the likenesses, the contrast is even more forceful. The historical Catalina's deadpan narration (worthy of the ballad manner) actually serves to highlight the flamboyance of her astounding life.¹⁴ Agustina Antonia's more heightened recounting of her story contrasts with its flatness, for, beside Catalina, she has little to tell, or at least she chooses to tell very little. Despite the fleeting references to illness and to four bullet-wounds, we are to take it that she has done nothing out of the ordinary for a soldier; certainly, there seem to have been no duels, no fratricide, no shady liaisons with other women, no derring-do on faraway battlefields, no brawling or card-playing with shifty cronies, no brushes with orthodoxy, no meeting with a father, no *in extremis* confession to a bishop. Or, if there have been astonishing events, we are not to hear of them. She chooses as worthy of appended exclamation her condition as a woman soldier and the fact that she was promoted to sergeant after eleven months' service. And this is all. Whereas Catalina is a *pícaro*, a rogue, held in the grip of her own headstrong and dynamic nature, Agustina Antonia, as far as the song allows us to see her, is calculating, cautious and restrained. In fact, as she herself makes clear, she elects to disclose her secret in her own time because she prefers the safer life of the nun to that of the soldier, but not because she is in any immediate or specific danger. Catalina, who has been a novice in her adolescence, is again obliged to spend two years in a convent once she admits her identity. However, she eventually resumes her life outside and even receives Papal permission to continue to dress as a man.¹⁵ There are differences too in the details. Agustina Antonia has served in but two regiments, one near Algiers; and she has twice been wounded, whereas Catalina's story specifies the havoc she wrought on others without mentioning the cuts she herself may have received. Agustina Antonia openly professes her love for her mother, while Catalina's relationship with her family is dysfunctional and marked by dissimulation.

All in all, I believe that the remoteness of the 'Agustina Antonia' narrative from other examples of the Soldier-Maid allow us to claim endemic status for it. Several of the details suggest the story has been timidly coloured by reference to Catalina de Erauso.

¹¹ There are several Spanish variants published in Lorenzo 1997: 53-59. The French version published by Satrustegi (1972: 73-85) is also satisfyingly melodramatic.

¹² The Urdian versions have her called Antonia Agustina/Antonio Agustín; the Araoz versions reverse the order of the names.

¹³ Villasante (1969, transcribed in Zavala 1998: 529) also notes the emphasis on the heroine's Gipuzkoan identity as a reason for positing the influence of Catalina de Erauso's life on the song.

¹⁴ 'Catalina's story is long on action and travel, on facts, names and enumeration....It is short on observation and self-examination' (Stepto 1996: xxxv).

¹⁵ Fitzmaurice-Kelly, *op. cit.*, xxiii-xxiv

But it would be wise not to overstate the links, for it is an emphatically dull ballad. As we have observed, other versions of the Warrior Maiden ballad have no compunction about weaving a good yarn. Clearly, no ballad-maker could, or would want to, stuff a song with more than a tiny proportion of the exciting events that make up Catalina's life, but, significantly, 'Agustina Antonia' foregoes home advantage, so to speak, and ignores most of the elements which might make the story worth hearing. One is tempted to object that life itself can afford to ignore verisimilitude, but art cannot; yet Agustina Antonia's life is plausible at the expense of being interesting.

Not for nothing, therefore, does J. A. Cid call it 'una pedestre metrificación' of The Warrior Maiden.¹⁶ It is almost as if the ballad-maker were embarrassed by the daredevil adventures offered to him as a template by the real-life Basque Lieutenant Nun and instead opted for a circumspect, low-key story, with very little Mars and no Venus at all, sidestepping the central issue raised by the fact of a woman's cross-dressing: the challenge to the status quo posed by her refusal to accept her stereotyped role. As her autobiography states, Catalina de Erauso remained a virgin, though she was sexually active; we may guess that Agustina Antonia also retained her maidenhead, although nothing is said of the circumstances. Catalina's never having known a man was crucial in protecting her from sanction by church and state once the truth about her condition became known.¹⁷ Agustina Antonia's willing adoption of the veil also seems to bespeak an unimpeachable sexual history.

As sometimes happens in Basque ballads, the song opens with a verse which appears to have nothing to do with the narrative, but which in fact comments obliquely on it:

Gaztiak kantuan ta
zarrak eragusian
ori da pasatzen dena
bardin mundu guzian.

The young a-singing and
The old a-talking;
This is what betides
In equal measure the world over.

The prelude to the story thus emphasises the contrast between this domesticity and Agustina Antonia's strange life. And the contrast between the song of youth and the speech of maturity seems to encapsulate a central theme of the song, the dichotomy between the worldviews of the young and old, between the vigorous young officer of the early verses and the weary nun-to-be of the later.¹⁸

The next two verses zip along in fine style, seeming to presage a rollicking tale: a giddy sixteen-year old maiden joins the army, hoping to become a corporal or sergeant (well, perhaps she is not such a flibbertigibbet after all). But the merry charge of the narrative falters in Verse 4 when within a year she earns her sergeant's stripes, and the impetus falls dead in Verse 5 with her promotion to lieutenant. Her military exploits, as she recounts them, are limited to the attainment of a commission and to serving in two regiments overseas. Not bad for an illiterate woman, she boasts in Verse 7. We concur, but would like to learn how she received the bullet-wounds. However, we are not to know. The remainder of the ballad is devoted to the declaration of her name-change,

¹⁶ 2000: 90

¹⁷ Cf. Mendieta, op. cit., 167. It is also very likely that she escaped from the convent before taking her final vows as a nun.

¹⁸ The most famous example of this type of precluding verse in Basque is found in the classical ballad 'Berterretxen khantoria'. Older ballads in other traditions also often open with a scene-setting verse, but it generally defines the time and occasionally the place. The Basque verses, in contrast, use more indirect associations. Renwick (2001: 60-61) observes that:

The ballad articulates its images in a narrative way: the relationship between images is linear, one-dimensional, sequential and causal. The lyric song, in contrast, articulates images in an expressive way, interrelating them associatively: for instance a burning sun and a pair of sparkling eyes are unified at a higher level of abstraction by some shared quality, such as "intensity". In our shorthand characterizations, we say that a ballad "tells a story" while a lyric "expresses emotion".

the preparation for her new career, the dowry she has amassed, her leave-taking of the world and her heartbroken farewell to her mother.¹⁹ The scatterbrain has become a pious and prudent woman. No effort has been made to dramatise her life; on the contrary, more text is devoted to her decision to join the convent and its implications than anything else. The message of the ballad is renunciation of the world, not a celebration of the active life.

Melody:

If the text is lacklustre, the tune is intriguingly irregular. So many changes in time signature were needed in noting the singing that clearly it was performed in a very free manner. Equally obviously, since it periodically leans towards 9/8 and 4/4, it flirts with regularity without making a commitment. The irregularity also helps in the adjustment of the words to the melody, for the syllabic measure constantly varies.

Like several other tunes in the Basque tradition, this one ignores established rules for melodic composition. For the most part it is clearly minor, though the leading note, when it first appears in the fourth phrase, is interestingly sharpened. The main surprise comes in the penultimate seventh phrase, where the Major third is suddenly introduced, and retained in the last phrase, to give a resounding finale.

Structurally, if we assign a letter to the short musical phrase which corresponds to a hemistich of text, we arrive at the following somewhat unusual expression: A-B-C-D-E₁E₂-F-G. In other words, although some phrases contain echoes of others, there is little exact repetition. A single melodic unit accommodates two of the short verses.

Can a fascinating tune like this save an otherwise dull ballad? It is true that, on the one hand, for most traditional singers a song's essence, what makes it worth singing, resides in *what it says*. Fr Donostia, whose central preoccupation as a folklorist was music rather than literature, yet never lost sight of the importance of text. In a 1951 review he states: 'Una canción popular no es sólo una melodía, es también un texto literario, es una canción que se canta en época determinada...' [A folk-song is not merely a melody, it is also a literary text, a song which is sung at a specific period....'] and three pages further on: '...la melodía, la música de una canción popular no es sino uno de los elementos constitutivos suyos' [...the tune, the music of a folk-song is no more than one of its constituent elements].²⁰ On the other hand, most people would agree that a fine melody can lift dull narration above itself. But how far? Readers may wish to ponder the balanced reflections of Gordon Easton from Aberdeenshire, a contemporary singer of old songs who learns and performs his material in the traditional manner:

A good tune can help a ballad tee, though the story's nae sae good, if ye've a good liltin, a good goin tune, it cairries 't off a wee bit. Bit ye cannae get past the fact that the poetry has to be there tee, [...] an something that's actually happen't or could happen [...] tae mak a satisfyin' ballad.²¹

Finally, we note that Maria Barrena, who gave the ballad to Gandiaga, bewailed the

However, the precluding verses of several Basque ballads seem designed neither as narrative nor as enhancement of emotion, but as oblique reflexions on the significance of the events about to unfold.

¹⁹ For what it is worth, we note that Catalina de Erauso was deposited in a San Sebastian convent at the age of five and thereafter very likely only saw her mother at infrequent intervals. Once, after she had left the convent, during a visit to San Sebastian she happened to see her mother at a mass. Catalina went unrecognised and made no attempt to identify herself. There are no other references to her mother in the Autobiography. See Mendieta, op. cit., 130.

²⁰ 1983: III, 'Reseñas', 92 & 95

²¹ Interview with Thomas A. McKean, published in McKean 1997: 243

loss of her fine singing voice with advancing years, and remarked: 'Neure denporan kantaittia iza bazan, ederki kantauko neban bai! Boza oso lastimosua deuka kantu honek' ['In my young days, whenever there was a singing session, I'd sing it beautifully, I would indeed! This song has a very pitiful air about it'].²² One imagines her description refers to the melody, since the words are not especially harrowing.

Genre:

Although some of the techniques are clearly balladic, the confessional nature of the narration and the absence of dramatic situations or dialogues cause the song to sound more like a chronicle than a ballad. The fact that Gandiaga's other collected text, also from Araotz (see 'Versions' below), offers its six verses in a sequence corresponding to Verses 7, 6, 10, 11, 9 & 13 of ours, without much loss of coherence, underlines the non-dramatic nature of the narration.

Date:

The song invites speculation about its origin, but refuses to allow unequivocal statement. Given the contradictory evidence, it is well to remember that the original form of ballads, considered as versified narratives sung to music, may significantly predate certain modified versions of them that have come down to us.²³

Satrustegi (1972: 82) adverts to the broadside ballad style of composition and Arejita, Etxebarria & Ibarra include it amongst their 'bertso narratiboak' ['narrative verses'], which suggests they judge it to be no older than the nineteenth century. Kalzakorta does not include it in his compendium *Euskal baladak: Azterketa eta edizio kritikoa* (2015), presumably because he considers it to be a *bertso berri* rather than a classical ballad. Certainly, some stylistic features, like the intercalated exclamations, also suggest the broadside manner. Lakarra, Biguri & Urgell make the point that the story itself is much older than the present verses, but, following Satrustegi, they also remark that the transmission has not been shown to have taken place via written broadsides.²⁴ Indeed, the extant versions, collected from oral tradition, show a degree of textual divergence consonant with true oral transmission. How old this may make them is quite another matter, however.

Villasante points out the agreement between a case-ending in Version D ('Jesusaren esposa'), now fallen out of use, and similar declinations in documents of attested antiquity from the same locality.²⁵

Accepting, as all commentators do, Villasante's suggestion that the mention of the regiment 'Anjel de Ondaseta' is a corrupted version of Arjelen onduan' ('near Algiers': see above), a further conjecture becomes possible. In 1775 Spanish forces unsuccessfully attempted to take Algiers from the Ottomans. If Agustina Antonia's service in Buenos Aires is taken at face value, it cannot have been later than the early nineteenth century. Obviously, the postulation of Agustina Antonia's having seen action in North Africa in 1775 removes her further from Catalina, whose military exploits took place exclusively in the seventeenth-century New World.

Versification:

The 14 verses examined above are composed in a measure that seems to move in and out of different metres. Some verses correspond to the *hiru puntuko lauko artaiña* measure described by Anbroisio Zatarain for traditional verse: 4-line stanzas of 7, 7, 8 and 7 syllables, with rhyme on the 7-syllable lines.²⁶ Other verses seem closer to the *lauko txikia* measure: stanzas with 4 lines of 7, 6, 7 and 6 syllables, in which the second and fourth line rhyme.

Regardless of the yardstick applied, many lines exceed or fail to come up to their allotted number of syllables. An examination of other texts of the ballad seems to suggest that the underlying pattern is *lauko txikia*.

²² Gandiaga 1969, reprinted in Zavala 1998: 532. 'Boza', in her description, literally means 'voice', which I have tentatively translated as 'air', in its widest sense.

²³ Cf. Arejita, Etxebarria & Ibarra 1995: 124.

²⁴ 1983: II, 146

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ 1983: 693

Title:

The title 'Neska soldadua' seems to have found general favour. However, some collectors, compilers and critics have used labels of their own devising: 'Neska soldaduarena' (Gandiaga 1974), 'Monja gerlaria' (Mujika 1984), 'Gerla joandako monja' (Mujika 1985), and 'Agustina Antonia da neure izena...' (Zavala 1998). Titles of convenience for other versions of the ballad can be found below.

Versions:

There are four extant versions, collected in the 1960's by Satrustegi (two in Urdiain, Navarre) and Gandiaga (two in Araotz, Gipuzkoa). Gandiaga's versions have tunes; Satrustegi's do not. There is limited expressional variation in all texts and minor dialectal variation between the Gipuzkoan and Navarran versions. Text B offers, but does not develop, narrative information found in none of the others.

A

'Antonia Agustina da neure izena'

In 1966 Satrustegi collected 'Antonia Agustina da neure izena', three verses of text without music, from 85 year-old Lucas Zufiarre, at Urdiain, Navarre, and published it in his article 'Versión vasca de "La doncella guerrera"' (1967: 323). This version is reprinted in Lakarra, Biguri & Urgell (1983: II, 143-145), Biguri 1991: 555-556 and in Zavala 1998: 527.

The thematic material of these verses, which are somewhat different from those of the Araotz text published in January 1969 (Version C below), corresponds to Verses 8, 6, 11 & 12, respectively, of Version D (the text examined above). The metre is *lauko txikia*.

Satrustegi (1972: 76-77) reprinted this ballad together with its contextual story of the flax test of femininity told to him by Zufiaurre. This story is dealt with in the commentary above.

Satrustegi (p. 78) notes that only one other person in the village, María Goikoetxea, remembered the ballad. She associated it with the Carlist wars and said the girl had failed the flax test.

1	Antonia Agustina da neure izena, munduben paregabia izandu naizena.	Antonia Agustina Is my name. Surely I am without Compare in the world.
2	Errege serbitu dot zortzi urti ontan, Arjelen onduan ta Buenos Airesetan.	I have served the King These past eight years, Near Algiers and In Buenos Aires.
3	Jauna, barkatu neuri neure pekatua, monja sartzera dijua neure estadua.	Lord, forgive me My sin, My choice now is To become a nun.

B

'Zortzi urte honetan'

Satrustegi also collected a further two-verse version from Juana Mari, sister of Lucas Zufiarre, which he published in his 1972 article 'Romance vasco de "La doncella guerrera"'. It is reprinted in Zavala 1998: 528. One of the verses presents us with the interesting information that the heroine's sexual identity was discovered by another soldier. However, the ramifications of this event are not dealt with in this short version. The metre is *lauko txikia*. The effort at rhyme is poverty itself.

1	Zortzi urte honetan det errege serbitu , neronek nahi nuen eta hantxe dut serbitu.	These eight years I have served the King, It was my desire and That is why I served.
---	---	---

2
 Inuño kapitana
 ez nau ni ezagutu,
 soldau garbatxo batek
 nau ni ezagutu.

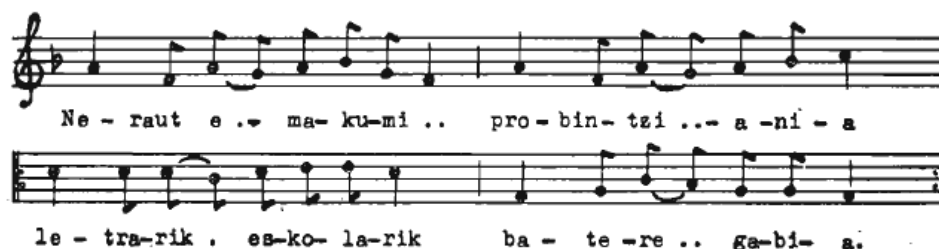
No captain
 Recognised me.
 A haughty [?]²⁷ soldier
 Did recognise me.

C
 'Neskia soldau'

This version was collected by Gandiaga from Leona Ugarte (75) at Araotz and was published in the January issue of *Aranzazu* magazine in 1969, accompanied by comments by Luis Villasante. The singer had learnt the song from her mother. However, her own daughters only first heard it when she sang it to Gandiaga.

Gandiaga reprinted it under the title 'Neskia soldau' in his 1974 article, 'Lau erromantze' in *Euskera* magazine, together with a paraphrase of Villasante's comments from 1969. The text and Gandiaga's 1974 comments can be found at <http://www.gandiaga.com/languztiak.php?id=2804&act=3>, the website devoted to his writings. Text and music, with Luis Villasante's comments from 1969, and Gandiaga's from 1974, are in Zavala 1998: 528-530. Music and text are also reproduced with comments in Satrustegi (1972: 68-69).

There are 6 verses and a tune. The verses, for the most part in regular *lauko txikia* metre, correspond well to Verses 7, 6, 10, 11, 9 & 13 of the Maria Barrena text (Version D, below). The tune is a rhythmically highly irregular unbarred Major, and is unrelated to the single other collected melody (Version D). The instructions in Gandiaga's 1974 article require the last two lines of each verse to be repeated in turn.



- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <p>1
 Neraut emakumia
 probintzania,
 letzarik eskolarik
 batere gabia.</p> | <p>(bis)
 (bis)</p> | <p>I am a woman,
 Of this province [Gipuzkoa],
 Illiterate, unschooled
 In any way.</p> |
| <p>2
 Rejimentu bi izan ditut
 amar urte onetan:
 Anjele Ondasetan
 Buenosairasetan.</p> | | <p>I have been in two regiments
 In these ten years:
 Angel de Ondasetan's
 And the Buenos Aires.</p> |
| <p>3
 Batetikan iru balazo,
 bestetik enfermo,
 Jaunaren abixuak
 Oiek dira klaro.</p> | <p>(bis)
 (bis)</p> | <p>On the one hand, three bullet-wounds,
 On the other, illness,
 Warnings from the Lord
 Is clearly what they are.</p> |
| <p>4
 Moja sartzera noia
 komentu batera,
 Jesusaren esposa
 betiko izatera.</p> | <p>(bis)
 (bis)</p> | <p>I will become a nun,
 In a convent,
 Forever to be
 The bride of Jesus.</p> |
| <p>5
 Oraintxen da denbora
 izena muratzeko
 Agustina Antonia
 naizela esateko.</p> | <p>(bis)
 (bis)</p> | <p>This is the moment
 To change my name,
 To say that I am
 Agustina Antonia.</p> |

²⁷ Cf. Satrustegi, op. cit., 78.

6

Ario ama neuria,
 probintziania,
 ongi lastimatzen naiz (bis)
 zu despeditzia. (bis)

Farewell, dear mother,
 From our province, [Gipuzkoa]
 It makes my heart full sore
 To take my leave of you.

D

'Neska soldauarena'

This is the version examined in the commentary above. Gandiaga collected it from Maria Barrena (77), of Araotz, Gipuzkoa, at Albitxuri, Arantzazu, Gipuzkoa, and published it under the title 'Neska soldauarena' in the July issue of *Aranzazu* magazine in 1969. It is reprinted in his article 'Lau erromantze' (*Euskera*, N° 19, 1974: 159-163). The text of the latter, including the words of the song and Gandiaga's comments, are online at <http://www.gandiaga.com/languztiak.php?id=2804&act=3>. 'Neska soldauarena' was reprinted in Satrustegi 1972: 79-81. The text is also in Lakarra, Biguri & Urgell 1983: II, 143-145; and in Arejita, Etxebarria & Ibarra 1995: 124-125 (Spanish translation, 174). Melody and text, with Gandiaga's comments and a Spanish translation, are reprinted in Zavala 1998: 530-533. The text is also available on the Euskomedia website: <http://www.euskomedia.org/cancionero/4203>.

E

Tune

The 1994 recording of 'Agustina Antonia' by the group Hiru Truku, titled 'Neska soldadua', sets the text to an attractive metrically regular tune in Major 4/4 whose melodic contours declare it to be clearly related to the very free tune collected by Gandiaga at Araotz (Version C). The liner notes source Gandiaga as collector and Araotz, 1967, as the location and date. Perhaps this variant is the group's development of the aforementioned free melody of Version C.



Affinities to Other Traditions:

Warrior maidens are common enough in folk narrative to warrant a separate entry (Motif K1837.6) in the Aarne-Thompson index. As we have already discussed, most ballads dealing with the theme treat of stock narratives, which appear to differentiate them from the 'Agustina Antonia' family of songs. There is another Basque version of the Warrior Maiden, however, whose somewhat unclear narrative seems to depend on stock pan-European motifs: see 'Affinities Within the Basque Tradition' below. For easy comparison, I append some references to Warrior Maiden ballads from other European cultures:

Portuguese:

Almeida-Garret 1863: III, 71-82, text of 'Donzella que vai á guerra'
 Braga 1869: 215-219, text of 'Doncella guerreira', from the Azores, with commentary
 Azevedo 1880: 159-172, texts of three versions collected in Madeira

Spanish:

Cossío y Mazas 1933-1934: II, LXV, N° 273, pp. 17-18, 'La doncella guerrera'
 Menéndez y Pelayo 1944: 242-244, 'Don Martinos', an Asturian text of the ballad; commentary
 Cid 1974: 486, 'La doncella guerrera'
 Reta 1980: 72, a single verse and tune of 'La doncella guerrera', collected in Eslava, Navarre
 Cruz-Saenz 1995: 202-207 & 230, 15 texts and one melody of 'La doncella guerrera'
 Lorenzo 1997: 39-59, a study and anthology of the Spanish variants of the Warrior Maiden
 Haya 2000: 97-101, five texts of the 'Doncella guerrera' from the area of Santoña, Santander; despite their geographical proximity to the province of Biscay, these variants of the tale have only the cross-dressing motif in common with 'Agustina Antonia'.
 Valenciano, 2006: 112-122, contains an entertaining analysis of the dress motif in a Leonese version of 'La doncella guerrera'
 Asensio 2008: 232-262, 45 texts of 'La doncella guerrera'; the accompanying CD contains a recording of the singing of one of the versions

Goldberg 2000: 56, offers several more references to collected versions of 'La doncella guerrera'. See also the 'Index of Folklore Motifs in the Romancero' on the *Pan-Hispanic Ballad Project* website, Motif T462.1 http://depts.washington.edu/hisprom/optional/motif_ballad.php#S (accessed 21.02.2018).

Galician/Spanish:

Forneiro 2000: 116-118, a textual version in Spanish with some Galician lexis

Catalan

Milà y Fontanals 1882: N° 245, text of 'La niña guerrera'

Aguiló 1893: 205-214, text of 'Donzella qui vá a la guerra'

Francoophone:

Puymaigre 1865: 76-84, 'La brave Claudine' and 'La fille soldat', textual variants from Rémilly and Lorraine, with commentary

Bujeaud 1866: II, 200, 'La fille soldat'

Quépat 1878: 17-18, text of 'La jeune fille soldat'

Smith 1880: 5-11, 'Chansons populaires. Femmes soldats', texts and commentary

Carnoy 1883: 348-351, 'La fille qui tue son galant', text of a Warrior Maiden variant

Fleury 1883: 278-279, text of 'La fille militaire'

Beauquier 1887: 345, 'La fille déguisée en dragon', from Lorraine

Tiersot 1891: 709-710, 'La fille déguisée en dragon', tune and text, from Brittany

Closson 1915: N° 150, 'La fille que se fait passer pour un garçon'

Rossat 1917: I, 140-144, 'La fille soldat qui tue son amant', 6 texts and melodies collected in Switzerland

Davenson 1946 : 345-348, 'La fille soldat', text and two melodies, from Savoy

Satrustegi 1972: 83-84, 'La femme soldat', text and melody collected in the Bearn

Piedmontese:

Ferraro 1870: 54-56, text of 'La ragazza guerriera', from Monferrat

Ferraro 1888: 41-42, text of 'La ragazza soldato', from Monferrat

Nigra 1888: 286-295, 'La guerriera', variants of the ballad from Piedmont, with commentary

Venetian:

Wolf & Widter 1864: 57-59, text of 'La figlia coraggiosa'

Bernoni 1872: XI, N° 5, text of a variant of 'La guerriera'

Romagnan:

Pergoli 1894: 31-32, text of a variant of 'La guerriera'

Italian (The Marches):

Gianandrea 1875: 14-15, a fragmentary variant of 'La ragazza guerriera'

Tuscan:

Giannini 1902: 396-398, text of 'La guerriera'

Anglophone:

Henry 1990: 326-335, a fair selection of ballads from the Ulster tradition involving intrepid cross-dressing maids

Dugau 1996: *passim*, analysis of The Female Warrior in Anglophone song

Hungarian:

Leader 1967: 344-345, text of the Moldavian ballad 'The Soldier-Girl'

Finally, we may mention that Graves (1986: 88-92) analyses the relationship between Piedmontese and Castilian texts of the soldier-maid ballad.

Affinities Within the Basque Tradition:

There may be another Basque ballad of the Warrior Maiden, although the opaque storyline makes it impossible to be quite sure of the gender of the protagonist. What cannot be doubted, however, is that it employs, at least in part, stock narrative devices of the pan-European tradition. It was collected by Gandiaga from Timotea Guridi of Araotz, Gipuzkoa, who completed it with the aid of another lady, María Josefa Zumalde, also of Araotz. 'Soldadu sartu nintzan' was published by Villasante in 1968 in the July issue of the monthly *Aranzazu* and reprinted in Zavala (1998:534-535), and also on the website devoted to Gandiaga's works (<http://www.gandiaga.com/languztiak.php?id=2804&act=3>, accessed 21.02.2018), and again in Kalzakorta (2015: 1136-1137). Villasante's remarks on the song are included in all these publications. A recording was released by the group Hiru Truku on their CD *Hiru Truku II* (1997, Nuevos Medios NM 15 709 CD).

'Soldadu sartu nintzan' has a turbid narrative in its present form, at least for modern listeners who are deprived of contextual information about the events. For example, how do the first four verses connect to the last four? There is clearly a love-story at the heart of the song, but we cannot resolve it into focus. Kalzakorta unequivocally labels the song 'Neska soldadua balada' ['The Ballad of the Soldier-Maid'] and on balance one feels that, given the hints in Verses 3 and 4, a girl in uniform is hidden somewhere just out of view. But the female identity is not stated.²⁸ Notwithstanding this, for our purposes here it is sufficient to

²⁸ No comments are made on this issue by Gandiaga, Villasante or Zavala.

point out the great differences between this ballad and 'Agustina Antonia'. The latter is a model of intelligibility, to the point of aridity. It is sober and straightforward in its telling, with no great events apart from the singularity of a woman masquerading as a man in the army. There is no femininity test.²⁹ Every detail of the story is plausible; the girl's motive for enlisting, in order to become a corporal or sergeant, is modestly self-interested and achievable. Little in the way of balladic technique is apparent in the telling. 'Soldadu sartu nintzan', on the other hand, is extravagant and implausible, in the manner that folk-tales are: the central character joins the army to serve the king³⁰, a fairy-tale king who sits weeping on his throne for lack of soldiers. A love story is obviously central to the song, but its terms are unconstruable. If indeed the hero-heroine is a cross-dressing woman, we may be sure that this is no more than one of the elements of the plot. The story as we have it seems to indicate a fairy-tale happy ending in marriage. In short, though both ballads were collected at around the same time in the same village, Araotz, they do not belong to the same genre.

'Soldadu sartu nintzan'



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1
Soldadu sartu nintzan
zortzi bat urteko,
Errege serbidu-ta,
txikitin parian paiña,
ai, libre izateko. | I listed for a soldier
To serve for eight years,
To serve my king and,
<i>Txikitin parian paiña,</i>
To be free, oh. |
| 2
Erregek ez dau biar
gizon ezkondurik
baizikan mutil libre
txikitin parian paiña
ai, libre libretxorik. | The king he has no need
Of wedded men,
But only of the free lads,
<i>Txikitin parian paiña,</i>
The very very free lads, oh. |
| 3
Mutillak biar eta
mutillik egon ez,
Errege sillan dago
txikitin parian paiña,
jarrita negarrez. | He needs lads and
Lads there are none,
The kings sits on his throne,
<i>Txikitin parian paiña,</i>
He sits there a-weeping. |
| 4
Neskak ba-daude baiña
ez dute balio.
Erregeri begitik
txikitin parian paiña
ai, negarra dario. | Lasses there are, but
They are no use to him,
From the king's eyes,
<i>Txikitin parian paiña,</i>
The tears fall down, oh. |
| 5
Bergaran nindoiela
Brigariarekin
enamoratu nintzan
txikitin parian paiña
ai, damatxo batekin. | When I was in Bergara
All with my brigade,
I fell in love,
<i>Txikitin parian paiña,</i>
With a little lady, oh. |

²⁹ Cf. the commentary above, where I argue that the flax test in the contextual information given by Lucas Zufiaurre (Version A) was not likely to have been part of the original ballad.

³⁰ Going to serve the king is a motif this ballad shares with many Hispanic 'Doncella guerrera' variants.

6
 "Etxe zuriko dama
 ikusten badezu
 gorantziak eiola,
 txikitin parian paiña
 ai, esango diozu.

"If you should see the lady
 From the white house,
 Give to her a greeting,
Txikitin parian paiña,
 From me, oh.

7
 Nor eroi eman dizun
 galdetzen badizu
 Felis de Aranburu
 txikitin parian paiña
 ai, esango diozu."

If anyone should ask you
 On whose behalf you speak,
 Tell them it was me,
Txikitin parian paiña,
 Felis de Aranburu, oh."

8
 Felis de Aranburu
 ain gizon trebia,
 Bergaran billatu dau
 txikitin parian paiña
 ai, beretzat andria.

Felis de Aranburu,
 A gentleman of note,
 In Bergara he has found,
Txikitin parian paiña,
 A lady-wife for him, oh.

Secondary Literature :

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 Lakarra, Biguri & Urgell 1983: II, 145-147
 Mujika 1984: 69-70
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 Arejita, Etxebarria & Ibarra 1995: 124
 Zavala 1998 : 527-532
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Commercial Recordings:

Hiru Truku. 1994. 'Neska soldadua', on *Hiru Truku* (Nuevos Medios, CD); online at *Spotify*
 Singer: Ruper Ordorika
 The 14-verse text collected by Gandiaga (Version D, that examined above); for comments on the tune, see above
Izarrak. 2008. 'Neska soldadua', on *Biziari so* (Agotila, CD)
 Singers : group
 An *a capella* four-part harmony rendition of the text, set to Hiru Truku's melody
Alboka. 2017. 'Agustina Antonia', on *Lurra, ur, haize* (Aztarna, CD)
 Singer: Xabi San Sebastian
 Tune and text of Version D, as examined in detail above; each half of the tune is repeated, to allow a single round of the melody to accommodate four of the short verses

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