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EIBAR FOUR BARRELED BREACH LOADING PISTOLS

Sharps system, four barreled pistol, marked: “EUSCALDUNA / 1866 / PLACENCIA” and “CARTRIDGE 297”; 78 mm long barrels, decorated in Eibar Damascene art on a white metal, engraved, frame.

Other pistols of North American origin that attracted the interest of the Basque arms makers included the four barrel, rim fire, Sharps system types; The only things Spanish about the specimen shown above are, the engraving and the inscriptions, as the Guipuzcoan production of this type of pistol are all variants of those designed by C. Sharps, and with the block of four barrels tipping up similar to the Eibar “Lefauchaux” system pistols; They had a manually actuated star extractor, and were made in a variety of calibers.



The Eibar production of these “Sharps” pistols differs from the “Lefauchaux”, the “Remingtons”, the “Colts” and the “CENTRALs”, discussed in the previous Chapter in that, their markings were not limited to the name of this or that “*Montador*” but, some were also marked: “EUSCALDUNA”, the most important arms factory of the Basque arms making country.

I have already made reference to this Factory of “Zuazubizcar, Isla y Cia”, which was established in Placencia shortly before the closure of the Royal Placencia Factory; Between 1861 and 1867, when its technical director was a well known Artillery Officer, Don Bernardo Echaluze, it manufactured Model 1859 rifled muskets for the Army, but, was not given the contract for the transformation of these rifles to the Model 1867

Berdan breech loading system, which was instead given to two factories of inferior quality to that of “Euscalduna”; Those of Ignacio Ibarzabal and the “Orbea Hermanos”.

The lack of interest of “Zuazubizcar, Isla y Cia” in the transformation of the Spanish Army weapons to the Berdan system was due to its having accepted a French contract, through the firm of “Cohen, Lyon et Cie.”, for the manufacture of 30,000 Model 1866 Chassepot rifles; “Euscalduna” also manufactured the fifty “Núñez de Castro system” rifles which were used in the rifle trials where they competed against the Remington rolling block system, which was selected and adopted.

Initially the manufacture of the Remington Model 1871 rifle was foreseen to be jointly executed by the Oviedo Factory and the “Euscalduna” in Placencia, but the onset of the Civil War prevented this; In 1873 the “Euscalduna” factory was occupied and militarized by the Carlist Army and “Zuazubizcar, Isla y Cia” did not recover its property until 1876.

During the war years the Army had acquired a substantial number of North American Remington rifles and had no further need for Euscalduna’s production, a situation that immersed this factory in a period of decline until 1888, when it was acquired by the “Maxim & Nordenfeld” Company which was interested in producing there its patented rapid fire and machine-guns; The factory then changed its name to that of “Compañia de Placencia de las Armas” until the early 20th Century when it was acquired by Vickers.



Four barreled pistols for the 7 mm rim fire cartridge; Left: with 81 mm long barrels, inscribed in silver “Fca VDA DE ARIZMENDI – EN EIBAR” (Domingo Arizmendi’s widow); Right: With 86 mm long barrels, inscribed in silver “Fca DE JOSE MIGUEL MAIZTEGUI – PLACENCIA”



Four barreled pistols for 9 mm caliber rim fire cartridges; Left: 104 mm barrels, inscribed “ZULAICA-EIBAR” (Narciso Zulaica, 1857-1890); Right: 80 mm long barrels, unmarked except for “9 mm”.

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