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Damen, M.

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Source 8

The *Paso de El Pardo* (*Paso* of El Pardo), 1459

This source consists of a translation of a narrative account of this event.

Author: Diego Enríquez del Castillo

Language: Medieval Castilian

Manuscript source: Madrid, Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, BAENA, C.134, D.5 (fully digitised at <http://pares.mcu.es:80/ParesBusquedas20/catalogo/description/6165857> [accessed 8 June 2024])

Edition used: Aureliano Sánchez Martín, ed., *Crónica de Enrique IV, de Diego Enríquez del Castillo* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid. Secretariado de Publicaciones, 1994), pp. 168–70 (= DEC)

Select bibliography:

Barber, Richard, and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), p. 101

DBE, lemma 'Beltrán de la Cueva'

Nadot, Sébastien, *Le Spectacle des joutes: Sport et courtoisie à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), pp. 61, 154, 246, 301, 337

Pilar Carceller Cerviño, María del, 'Realidad y representación de la nobleza castellana en el siglo XV: el linaje de la Cueva y la casa ducal de Alburquerque' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006), pp. 112–14

Tate, Brian, and Jeremy Lawrance, eds., *Alfonso de Palencia, Gesta Hispaniensia ex annalibus suorum dierum collecta* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1999), pp. 286, 315–16

Torres Fontes, Juan, *Estudio sobre la 'Cronica de Enrique IV' del Dr. Galindez de Carvajal* (Murcia: Seminario de Historia de la Universidad de Murcia, 1946), pp. 208–9

Introduction

This *paso* took place in 1459 near the royal hunting lodge of El Pardo that was situated in the mountainous woodlands north-west of Madrid. The *entrepreneur** of the event was Beltrán de la Cueva, who organised it to mark the occasion when ambassadors of François II, duke of Brittany, came to Castile to visit King Enrique IV; it was the culmination of four days of chivalric events staged in their honour. The political context of the *Paso de El Pardo* can be understood from both an international and a national perspective. On the one hand, François II, who was inaugurated as duke in 1458, may have been seeking to affirm his

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political support for Castile, since, like his predecessors, he was in a constant struggle for autonomy from the king of France. For their part, the Castilian commercial elites in the harbour towns of the Bay of Biscay were very eager to forge an ever stronger relationship with the new duke of Brittany.[1] On the other hand, when considered in the context of the internal dynamics of the Castilian court, the *Paso* can be seen as the moment at which the career of Beltrán de la Cueva, the new favourite of Enrique IV, really took off. This nobleman, from Úbeda in Andalucía, started his career in the king's household in 1456 as guard and page of the lance and was appointed as *mayordomo mayor* (*grand maître d'hôtel*) two years later. The organisation of the *Paso* and the other chivalric events in El Pardo thus attests to his rise at court.[2]

The narrative account of the *Paso de El Pardo* comes from a chronicle written by Diego Enríquez del Castillo (*c.*1431–*c.*1503). This nobleman from Segovia studied theology at the University of Salamanca and became chaplain of Enrique, when he was the crown prince, sometime in the early 1450s. In 1460, shortly after the events described here, Enrique, now king, appointed Enríquez del Castillo as his official chronicler. At the same time, he became one of the king's councillors and served as an intermediary between him and certain rebellious noblemen later in the 1460s.[3] In 1466, the chronicler produced a Spanish translation for the duke of Albuquerque of an Italian version of *De re militari*, a standard military manual originally written by the Roman author Vegetius (late fourth century AD). The fact that it was Beltrán de la Cueva, the *entrepreneur* of this *paso*, who commissioned this translation bespeaks the close connection that there must have been between the chronicler and the organiser of the event. However, the death of Enrique IV in 1474 meant the end of Enríquez del Castillo's career at the Castilian court. It was only in the 1480s that he started to compile his chronicle on the reign of his former patron, with final revisions being done as late as the 1490s. In this work, he painted a favourable portrait of the deceased king.[4] Like the two previous *pasos* that had been hosted in Castile — that is, the *Paso de la Fuerte Ventura* (1428) and the *Paso de Valladolid* (1440) — the *Paso de El Pardo* seems to have been commemorated exclusively in a royal chronicle; the exception to this rule is the later *Paso de Jaén* (1462), which is recorded in a chivalric biography.[5]

What the description of the *Paso de El Pardo* in Enríquez del Castillo's chronicle also has in common with the narrative accounts of these other Castilian *pasos* is that it is very concise, in that not even the names of the *entrepreneur* or his challengers are given. Yet, in spite of this, the main characteristics of a *pas d'armes* are clearly in evidence here: an

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[1] Robert Omnès, 'La Bretagne et les Bretons dans les chroniques de Castille (XIVe–XVIe siècles)', *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 88.4 (1981), 395–417 (pp. 405–6).

[2] In the 1460s, Enrique gave him the titles of duke of Albuquerque and count of Ledesma. DBE, lemma 'Beltrán de la Cueva'; María del Pilar Carceller Cerviño, 'Realidad y representación de la nobleza castellana en el siglo XV: el linaje de la Cueva y la casa ducal de Alburquerque' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006), pp. 112–14; Jaime de Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla y León en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2000), p. 351.

[3] On the exact nature of this complex conflict, see DBE, lemmata 'Diego Enríquez del Castillo' and 'Enrique IV'.

[4] DEC, pp. 22–31; DBE, lemma 'Diego Enríquez del Castillo'; María del Pilar Carceller Cerviño, 'La imagen nobiliaria en la tratadística caballeresca: Beltrán de la Cueva y Diego Enríquez del Castillo', *En la España medieval*, 24 (2001), 259–83 (pp. 260–8).

[5] See Sources 2, 3 and 10, respectively.

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entrepreneur defends a *paso* (passage) in the form of a gate that is literally situated between two places (El Pardo and Madrid), and invites challengers to compete against him in a dramatised setting, one that also involved Wild Men and was governed by a set of rules of which only a glimpse can be seen. The *Paso* takes place in a purpose-built wooden arena with a tilt* barrier and is witnessed by a high-ranking audience. Yet, it also differs from other Castilian *pasos* — and, indeed, from those *pas d'armes* that were held in other places where this tournament form was very popular, such as Anjou, France and the Burgundian lands — in that it is the only one known to have been commemorated by the founding of a monastery, in this instance by the *entrepreneur*'s own patron. The monastery in question belonged to the Order of St Jerome, an order that enjoyed particular favour from the late medieval kings of Castile, and was located near the site of the actual *paso* in El Pardo; to cement the connection with this event, it was referred to as 'San Jerónimo del Paso': that is, 'St Jerome of the *Paso*'. Whilst Enríquez del Castillo states that the king performed this act of commemoration specifically in honour of his favourite, Beltrán de la Cueva, another royal chronicler, Alfonso de Palencia (1423–92), who was writing in Latin rather than in the vernacular, affirms instead that the foundation was intended, more generally, to 'honour the site in perpetual memory'.[6] Palencia even mentions in this context that the king commanded that the town of Colmenares, which is located 140 km to the west of Madrid in the mountainous area of the Sierra de Gredos and was a fief of the king's former favourite, Álvaro de Luna, should be renamed Mombeltrán.[7] This order was indeed executed, albeit slightly later in September 1461, and the new name of the town has been retained right up to the present day.[8]

Although Enríquez del Castillo's chronicle mentions the founding of the monastery of St Jerome in El Pardo by Enrique IV in 1461, it does not give an exact date for the *Paso* itself. However, María del Pilar Carceller Cerviño has suggested that the *Paso* is most likely to have taken place in 1459, this being the same year that La Cueva was admitted to the knightly Order of Santiago.[9] This date is confirmed by the author of the lemma on La Cueva in the DBE, who even pinpoints it to the summer of that year.

In the translation that follows, page numbers in parentheses have been inserted for ease of reference to Sánchez Martín's edition.

Translation

[In the previous chapter, the chronicler describes how the king moved with his household from Escalona to the royal palace (Real Alcázar) in Madrid. There they passed the time by organising festivities, jousts, cane games and bull runs*.]*

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[6] Brian Tate and Jeremy Lawrance, eds, *Alfonso de Palencia, Gesta Hispaniensia ex annalibus suorum dierum collecta* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1999), p. 286: 'locum illum nobilitandum perpetua memoratione'.

[7] Mombeltrán is a contraction of *mon* (from *monte*, meaning 'mountain') and the first name of the *entrepreneur* Beltrán. Because in Castilian the letter *n* cannot precede the *b*, the *n* is changed into *m*, with Mombeltrán as the result. On Álvaro de Luna, see Essay 1 and Sources 2 and 3.

[8] Tate and Lawrance, *Alfonso*, pp. 286, 315.

[9] Carceller Cerviño, 'Realidad', pp. 13–14. Compare Sébastien Nadot, *Le Spectacle des joutes: Sport et courtoisie à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), pp. 246, 337, who mentions both 1458 and 1460 as dates for this *paso*, but not 1459.

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(168) **Chapter 24: How the duke of Brittany sent an ambassador to the king,[10] concerning certain alliances and pacts made with him, and how the king ordered grand festivities to be organised for him**

When the king was thus accompanied by the grandees[11] and other nobles from his kingdom, who honoured his court by turning out in great numbers, the duke of Brittany[12] sent an embassy[13] led by the foremost knight of his household, asking the king for a pact and an alliance. The king was very pleased about this and received him in fine style. While he was making a decision regarding the ambassador's request, the king commanded that a lavish festivity be organised in order to demonstrate his power and his high estate. He wanted this event to take place at his hunting lodge called El Pardo, which is a very delightful and suitable place, because of both the wooded mountains in the immediate surroundings and the multitude of animals[14] in the area, and is located two leagues[15] away from Madrid. The festivity was very elaborately organised, featuring both sumptuous decorations and large cabinets displaying silver objects weighing more than 20,000 gilded marks.[16] Here the king demonstrated the extent of his nobility and royal magnificence. When he saw two squires in livery, who were affecting an official air, going over furtively to the cabinets to steal some silver objects, he pretended not to see them and allowed them to keep their stolen goods and take them away. When the household officers[17] discovered that some silverware was missing and notified the king, he replied: 'The thieves were persons who needed that silverware, so they took it out of necessity. It is better that they

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[10] Enrique IV of Castile (1425–74), son of Juan II and María of Aragon, king of Castile (1454–74), was married first to Blanca II of Navarre (1424–64), but they divorced in 1453 on the grounds that the marriage had not been 'consummated'; in 1455, he married his cousin Joana of Portugal (1439–75). DBE, lemma 'Enrique IV'.

[11] The *grandes* formed the top layer of the nobility in Castile, which consisted of some sixty entitled nobles, half of whom were counts and the rest dukes, marquesses and viscounts. María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, 'Los grandes nobles', *Medievalismo: boletín de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales*, 13 (2004), 127–42.

[12] François II (1435–88), son of Richard, count of Étampes, and Marguerite of Orléans (daughter of Louis I), was married to Marguerite of Brittany and became duke in 1458.

[13] The author of the lemma 'Beltrán de la Cueva' in the DBE gives their surnames as Bois, Onisilre and Godelin. The chronicler Alfonso de Palencia suggests that the visit of Jean V, count of Armagnac, in 1462 was the reason behind the organisation of the *paso*, but this does not tally with the suggested chronology here. Tate and Lawrance, *Alfonso*, p. 316. On this occasion in 1462, a joust was indeed organised, with the king paying for the services of the King of Arms and five minstrels belonging to the duke of Sidonia. Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, '1462: Un año en la vida de Enrique IV, rey de Castilla', *En la España medieval*, 14 (1991), 237–74 (p. 258).

[14] Bulls were bred in the grounds of the royal residence whereas wild boars populated the woods. Ladero Quesada, '1462', p. 254.

[15] A *legua castellana* (Castilian league) is normally 4190 metres. The royal residence of El Pardo was situated some 15 km to the north-west of the Real Alcázar (Royal Palace) of Madrid, but did have extensive grounds.

[16] The silver mark in late medieval Castile consisted of eight ounces, weighing approximately 230 grams.

[17] The term used is *reposteros*, household officers with the special task of guarding and monitoring the personal goods of the monarch kept in the cabinets, especially the cutlery and silverware. Salazar y Acha, *La casa del rey*, pp. 237–40.

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appropriated my possessions rather than those of any other. I forgive them so there is no need for you to try to find them.'

(169) The festivities lasted for four days. On the first day, a joust was organised with twenty knights, each team consisting of ten men, all of them expensively dressed and equipped. The prizes were a piece of brocade and two pieces of crimson velvet for those who performed the best. On the second day, there was a bull run and after that there was a cane game in which a hundred knights participated in two teams of fifty [men], consisting of the foremost nobles and the sons of grandees of the household, all richly attired and their horses decked out in gilded trappers*. On the third day, there was an impressive hunt both on horseback and on foot, where they killed many wild and dangerous animals. For these festivities, the king gave out many gifts of money, brocade, silk, cloth and luxurious linings of marten, ermine, sable and grey squirrel, not only to the queen,[18] her ladies and the principals of her household, but also to her employees, servants and other noble knights in her entourage.

On the fourth day, it so happened that the king had at that time, as his *mayordomo*[19] a person from an ancient and excellent noble family from Úbeda who was so close to him that none of the king's past favourites enjoyed as much favour as he alone did, according to the will of the king, and not without reason: he certainly had so much virtue that he deserved all of the prosperity and good luck that came to him. He was an exemplary servant, being without malice towards the king, magnificent in his estates, courtly and gracious towards all: he was generous to those who asked for this help. He spent lavishly, knew how to make merry and bestowed great honour on the good; he was also a fine rider of the jennet*, a great hunter, an extravagant consumer of fashion, and an honourable and generous person. Since he already had the respect of a great lord,[20] and because he derived great pleasure from [doing so], he agreed to organise a *paso* in the middle of the road near the town[21] [in order] to celebrate the return to Madrid of the king, the queen, the ambassador and other lords. This was to be done in the following manner. There was a tilt barrier surrounded by lists made of wood with gates through which those who came from El Pardo had to enter: the gates were guarded by some Wild Men who only let knights and noblemen accompanied by noble ladies pass on the condition that they would promise to run six courses with the defender; if they did not want to joust, they had to leave their right gauntlet.[22] Next to the barrier, a

[18] Joana of Portugal (1439–75), daughter of Duarte I, king of Portugal and Leonor of Aragon, married Enrique IV in 1455 and gave birth in 1462 to a daughter called Juana. Some years later, various rebellious nobles accused Juana of being illegitimate, on the grounds that the king himself was impotent, and claimed that her real father was Beltrán de la Cueva, the organiser of the *paso*. DBE, lemmata 'Juana de Portugal' and 'Juana de Castilla'.

[19] In an older edition of this chronicle, it is made explicit that this refers to 'un caballero que se llamaba Beltran de la Cueva' (a knight called Beltrán de la Cueva). Josef Miguel de Flores, ed., *Crónica del rey don Enrique el Quarto de este nombre, por su capellán y cronista Diego Enriquez del Castillo* (Madrid: D. Antonio de Sancha, 1787), p. 40.

[20] At this point, he was not yet numbered among the grandees, as he received the corresponding titles of count and duke later on in his career.

[21] The author of the lemma 'Beltrán de la Cueva' in the DBE identifies this place as Puerta de Hierro, on the bank of the river Manzanares, which was the entrance to the royal estate of El Pardo.

[22] Compare this stipulation with the fifteenth article of the chapters of arms of the *Paso Honroso* (1434),

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well-crafted wooden arch[23] was constructed to which many golden letters were attached. After having finished his courses, he who broke three lances could go over to the arch and pick the first letter of his lady's name. There were also three tall stands: one where the king, the queen, her ladies and the ambassador could eat and spectate; another one for the grandees; and the third one for the judges of the joust.[24] All were given a very sumptuous dinner where everything was served in great abundance and was very well organised and arranged. The festivity lasted from morning until night, when the king and the queen (170) retired to their palaces.[25] Because this *paso* was an exceptional event, the king wanted to honour his *mayordomo* and support his undertaking, and so he ordered that a monastery of the Order of St Jerome be founded, this monastery now being referred to as San Jerónimo del Paso.[26]

When the event came to an end and the ambassador, who had been treated with so much honour, completed his mission, the king showered him with great gifts of horses, mules, silver, money and pieces of brocade and silk. With this he took his leave, being very contented and full of praise for the magnificence of the king's estate.

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which stated that any knight or gentleman who came by the passage could not leave without depositing either one of his arms or his right spur. PH, p. 403.

[23] This is the second Castilian *paso* to feature an arch as part of its dramatised setting, since one was also present at the *Paso de la Fuerte Ventura*, where it is dubbed the 'Arch of the Daunting Adventure': see Source 2, p. 60.

[24] Nadot, *Le Spectacle*, p. 246, incorrectly states that a special wooden tower was constructed as a décor for this *paso*: although there was a tower in El Pardo, it was built in 1458 and intended for hunting. Ladero Quesada, '1462', pp. 252–4.

[25] The king and queen therefore seem to have had a palace each at their disposal.

[26] The monastery was constructed on the bank of the Manzanares river near El Pardo in front of the hermitage of St Anthony. The editors of the Latin chronicle of Alfonso de Palencia, which mentions the 'monasterium … appelatio Transitus', translate the name of the convent as 'Santa María del Paso', by which name it was also known. Tate and Lawrance, *Alfonso*, p. 286. By contrast, Enríquez del Castillo remarks that it 'is *now* being referred to as San Jerónimo del Paso': that is, at the time of writing the chronicle in the 1480s. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, because of its humid and unsanitary riverside setting, the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, decided to move the monastery to El Prado in Madrid, which was nearer to their own royal residence, where it was renamed San Jerónimo el Real. *Ibid.*, p. 316.

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