Caravaca de la Cruz ('Comarcal' capital of northwestern Murcia): a social anthropological study of a Spanish provincial town

A thesis submitted for the degree of D.Phil. in the Faculty of Anthropology and Geography, University of Oxford

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1982

Volume 2 (Photographic appendix continued)



OCCUPATIONS & ACTIVITIES

OCCUPATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The local economy is based on wealth derived from agricultural production. Traditions of cereal, wine and olive growing, while still just discernable habe been replaced by a struggling fruit-growing and conserve industry. For a brief period in Spring and early Summer the bare brown fields of the surrounding *huerta* are filled with the blossoms and then the thick green foliage of the apricot trees. For a fortnight in June the air in Caravaca is choked with the strong smell of ripe apricots.

During the rest of the year the town is a service centre to a widespread agricultural hinterland. There are over a dozen banks, and workshops and garages, clothes shops, toy shops, and furniture warehouses are present in significant numbers. Every Monday a sizeable market caters to the whole municipality, and beyond. Daily the market-place retails imported food, the produce of the *huerta* and of the family food factories.

Light industry, traditionally limited to the production of hemp-soled canvas sandals, retains the skills of old crafts and is now expanding. Already factories producing various styles of slippers, sandals and casual footwear have achieved new success since the decline of the *alpargata* industry. The timber industry has a large local market and will soon be favoured by a planned industrial estate.

As a service centre Caravaca provides entertainments for a whole area. There is an excess of bars, three discoteques, new restaurants, two private sports clubs, a well-supported football team and a large Bingo club. T.V. in every home means that of an evening less people just sit out in the street talking but membership of *tertulias* is still an unbreakable habit. Groups who meet just to talk find themselves participating together in the Fiestas. Preparations take the whole year, involving the raising of money, planning and eating and drinking together.

Religion provides a further focus for bringing colour, tradition, and participation into people's lives. At Easter a week of religious activity becomes important to everyone except those whose work is so vital to them that it virtually excludes them even from recognition as part of the town.

Frontis. The Apricot Harvest is a financially rewarding fortnight of labour-intensive work in June. A whole crop can go from under-to over-ripeness in just a day.

75a. The three-legged ladders used for reaching the tree-tops are traditional technology, and enable eating quality fruit to be hand-picked.

b. Experienced pickers shake the fruit down with careful judgement and the youngsters collect it from the ground for juice-processing.

76a. Apricots are exported from Murcia all over Europe.

b. Some of the ripest fruit is sold in the local market.

77a. Day labourers are still needed in agriculture all year round.

b. A high degree of mechanization in the municipality is leading to higher unemployment.

78a. Traditional methods are indispensable on the tiny plots that inheritance sometimes leaves.

b. Sheep graze the mountainsides and shepherds are in short supply.

79a. The municipal abbatoir is small and in need of modernization. The presence of two private abbatoirs pose problems for the local meat market.

b. The two workers need sparetime jobs to earn a living.

80a. Pig bristles have to be singed and scraped off the carcasses.

b. Lamb and beef is also produced.

81a. Much of the pork is used by family factories producing traditional 'charcuterie' for the local market. Hams are cellar-cured.

b. Sausages are made by hand to a variety of recipes.

82a. The meat is cut.

b. The onions are boiled.

83a. The conditions are taken for granted.

b. All the ingredients are natural.

84a. The products are sold along with fresh meat in the butcher's shops in the marketplace.

b. Every business is a family business and employees are very few.

85a. Families store their own produce in their own cellars.

b. If production is large it is commercially viable.

86a. This *bodega* has the Coca-Cola concession for the town.

b. The family business is traditionally the supplier of wine to the *Cofradía* for the ceremonies of the Fiesta.

87a. Bread made in the villages in the traditional way is also sold in the market in Caravaca.

b. It might also supply several families in a neighbourhood.

88a. This bread can keep for several weeks.

b. Family baking often has to be taken to the oven at the town's bakers.

89a. Other industries follow traditional lines.

b. Shoe factories have developed in place of the *alpargata* artisan work.

90a. A fire is an everyday hazard.

b. There are professional firefighters in the area.

91a. A warehouse containing wooden crates for the fruit processing industry offers little resistance to the flames.

b. Luckily there was no-one inside.

92a. Many of the concrete streets in the old town are at last being re-laid with practical, cobble-stoned sections.

b. Occasionally the school organizes activities which come to the notice of the rest of the community.

93a. Fiesta preparations are a year round activity for everyone. Some need horse-riding lessons for months and save to afford them.

b. The *'Rey Cristiano'* is trailed by his trainer.

94a. Fiesta preparations involve many small-scale celebrations such as the public presentations of the Queens and princesses of the Fiesta groups.

b. The *'Madrina'* of the Pena Rocinante - one of the 'Horses of the Wine' - receives presents and flowers.

95a. Many hours of concentration and hard work are also necessary if Moorish authenticity is desired.

b. The presentation of the 'Sultan' and his 'Favourite' even involves a dramatic representation held in the town cinema.

96a. The churches are the focuses for many other all year round activities and occupations.

b. There is a great deal of work for the priests and the Carmelite friars.

97a. Even Fiesta preparation needs family devotion.

b. All the care and attention is appreciated.



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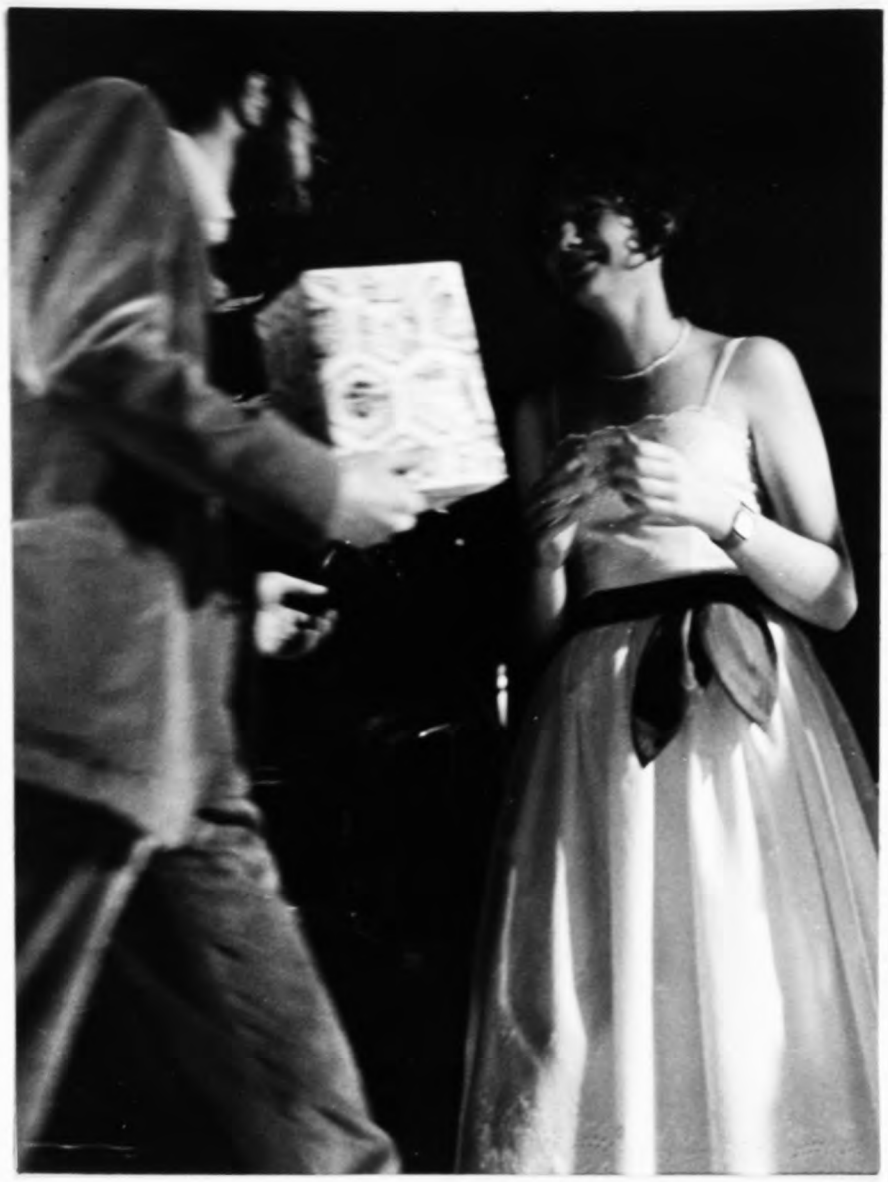

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94b



95a



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96a



96b

Activities:
embroidery

Activities:
embroidery

THE CROSS

THE CROSS

The simple Cross of the Catholic faith and the Cross of Caravaca are equally present in the religious life of the town. They are different forms of the same symbol. The Cross of Caravaca was a double-barred cross said to be made from the 'lignum crucis' on which Christ died and into which his 'sacred' blood soaked. Wood was excavated at Calvary by St. Helena and Crosses were made out of it. It is believed that one of these was transported by two angels from its place around the neck of the King of Jerusalem to the castle at Caravaca in 1231 AD where an imprisoned priest was celebrating Mass before the Moorish ruler --- miraculously causing his conversion to Christianity. This wooden Cross was kept in a jewelled reliquary --- until, in 1936, it was stolen during the prelude to the Civil War. Having been accepted so long by the Church as a genuine relic it was replaced by some other fragments of 'lignum crucis' which are today kept in a copy of the stolen reliquary. The form of this Cross is known throughout Spain, and found throughout the world.

Very many activities in Caravaca are associated with its Cross. The *Cofradia* is responsible for organizing the Fiestas in May, and many other events during the year. The importance of the Cross was newly confirmed by the Pope in 1981 when he granted a Jubilee year of special indulgence to celebrate 750 years since its appearance.

The image of the Cross of Caravaca occurs all over the town: in ceramic tiles at the butcher's; at the heart of a small jewellry industry, and as seven separate images just on the outside of the Sanctuary. There is a reference to the Cross, serving as a constant reminder of all the different meanings of this multivalent symbol, in the names of everything Caravaquenian eg. the Cafeteria Vera Cruz, the Discoteca Vera Cruz, streets named after historical characters involved in the myth, and the Christian names of hundreds of Caravaquenians. The presence of this Cross is both a motivation for and a reflection of Caravaquenian existence.

Frontis. The image of the Cross of Caravaca is found throughout the town. Every home probably contains several examples of it in a variety of forms. The form does not seem to affect its acceptance or meaning in any way.

98a. The use of this symbol can bring anything into a relationship with the Cross.

b. The two angels who are said to have brought the Cross are often considered to be an integral part of the symbol.

99a. The Cross is mass-produced for public consumption.

b. Religion has its place among pot-boilers and plastic plates.

100a. There are so many images of the Cross in people's
b. homes that an historic exhibition of these objects
101a. was assembled for the 750th anniversary.
b.

102a. The Jubilee year attracted thousands of pilgrims to the Sanctuary.

b. A series of lectures about the Cross was given in the Town Hall.

103a. The Jubilee year was opened in the Castle on the 31st January 1981.

b. The preparations were elaborate.

104a. The attendance was massive.

b. There were representatives present of all the Fiesta groups.

105a. The Bishop of Cartagena and Murcia conducted the service.

b. The blessing is given with the Cross.

106a. Every week during the first part of the year, the Cross was taken by the *Cofradía* to visit the faithful in one of the villages of the *comarca* until they had all had the opportunity to gain the Jubilee Indulgence.

b. These visits were awaited anxiously and eagerly.

107a. The Cross arrived by car.

b. The chaplain takes great care of his charge.

108a. The styles of church and community all vary.

b. On every occasion the church was full to overflowing.

109a. Many even had to stand.

b. Often a Carmelite friar accompanied the Chaplain to preach to the people.

110a. Holy communion was also given.
b.

111a. The Cross blessed the community.

b. The whole congregation queued to kiss the Cross.

112a. For many people this is the most important act of all.
b.

113a. Holy Week is another religious occasion involving the whole community.

b. In each church in Caravaca the various *cofradías* dress their floats and care for their images.

114a. Children are involved from an early age.

b. Their masks effect a sinister transformation.

115a. The red-gowned penitents, the *'colora'os'*, balloon-out their costumes with sweets for the children who watch the processions.

b. Some of the processions take place during the day.

116a. Some of them are held at night.

b. The pace of the processions are kept with a drum beat and changes indicated by the buglers.

117a. Rain often causes problems for the organizers.

b. Mary meets her son three times in the Plaza Mayor.

118a. Each of the images is a distinctive representative tableau.

b. They follow a traditional pattern.

119a. On Good Friday the only *cofradía* to process in Caravaca is that of 'the Christ of the Volunteers of the True Cross' in the 'Processions of Silence'.

b. Their standard goes ahead of them.

120a. They wear the Cross of Caravaca on their masks.

b. The *'paso'* like those of some of the other *cofradías* is carried on the shoulders of the members, but this one weighs several hundredweight.

121a. The procession follows a route through the town to
b. the Calle Mayor.

122a. It finally comes to rest,
b. in the Chapel of the Carmelite nuns.

123a. Some still wear the traditional unmasked costume of the head of a *cofradía*.

b. *'Los Azules'* have their bright blue dulled by the rain.



98a



98b



99a



99b



100a



100b



101a



101b



102a



102b



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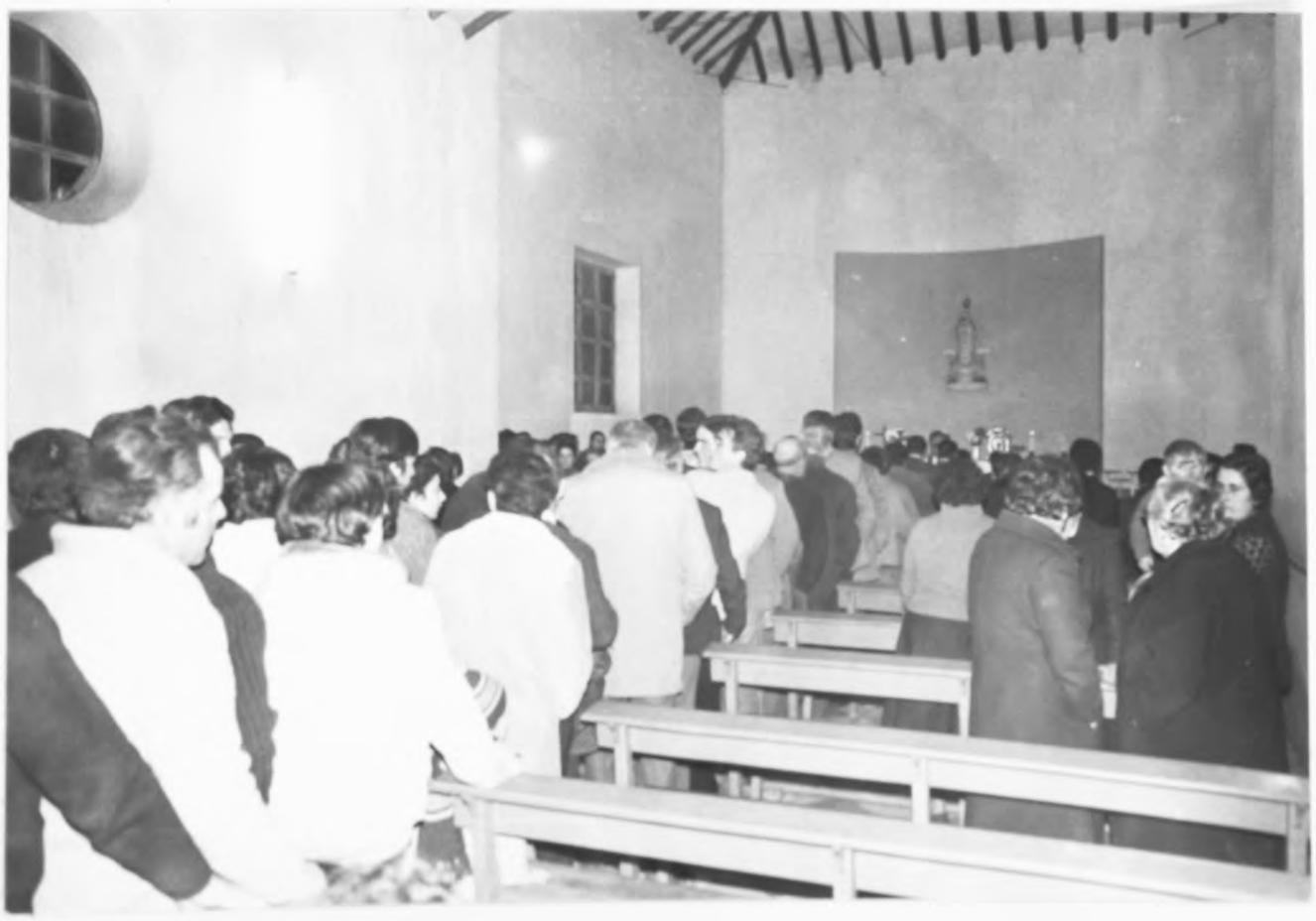

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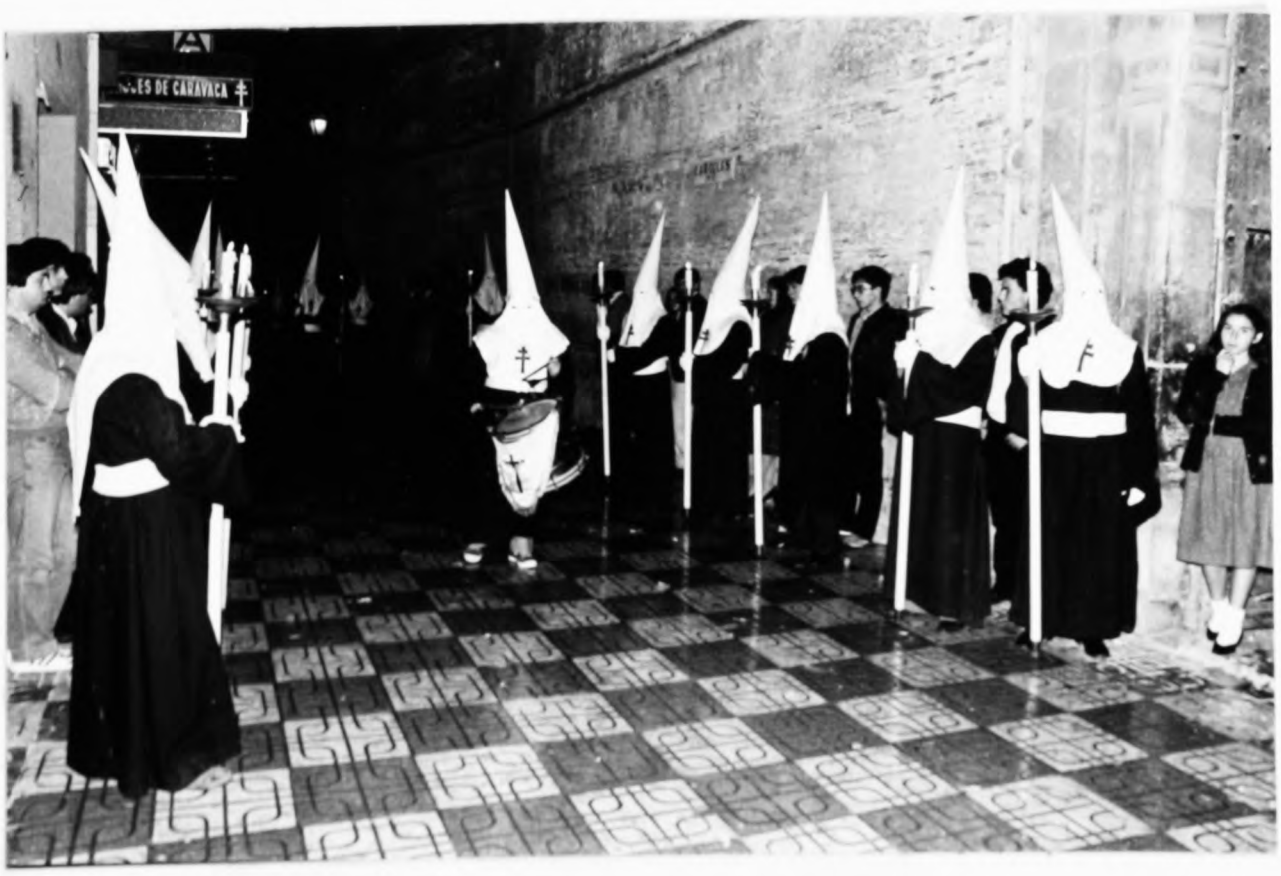

121b



122a



122b

The Cross
Holy week costume

The Cross
Holy week costume


FIESTA

FIESTA

This section is not devoted exclusively to illustrating the patronal fiestas held in May every year, but to the phenomenon of 'Fiesta' as part of a way of life. Various fiestas are held throughout the year on the occasions of several saint's days and traditional festivals. The fiesta is made up of extreme sensations --- of feelings, which transcend everyday experience. It contains sustained exhilaration, only known in Britain perhaps for the split seconds of individual emotional catharsis. The essence of fiesta is participation. The fiesta is a public not a private affair.

Mention has already been made of the fiesta as a political arena with the opportunities for participation in the hierarchy of organization or the drama of the celebrations, but the fiesta also provides many opportunities for extraordinary social contact: between different generations, classes, occupations, and between the sexes. In the past the Church often opposed the 'licentious' behaviour of the fiesta interludes. Today they are periods of heightened tension in human relationships, partners change and marriages are questioned. The fiesta is not completely religious nor completely secular. It imposes its own values and restructures time. No work is done and people stay awake when they would otherwise be asleep. Food and drink is consumed in excess.

The fiesta is marked off from 'normal' time by its noise and colour. The noises are loud and startling: brass bands playing favourite selections of marches and eastern sounding tunes, fireworks cracking apart above the town, and bells clanging across the rooftops. The colours are bright and gaudy, shimmering gold and silver satins and silks, deep-coloured costly velvets, and decorations which complete the spectrum. The fiesta manipulates aspects of every symbol system.

More than in anything else the patronal fiestas differ in scale from others held during the year. Every part of the town is touched by the celebrations although only special spaces have their character temporarily changed by the activities. The town's population swells to 50,000. Around £½m. are spent on producing just this one week of total social transformation.

Frontis. Fireworks, on the night of the 3rd of May, the Day of the Invention of the Cross form a centrepiece of the Fiestas.
The Fiesta Year runs from June to May.

124a. The *Fiesta del Carmen* on June 18th involves a *becerrada* held in the *Patio de los Frailes*.

b. A calf gives young men and boys a chance to practice the art of bullfighting and to test their mettle.

125a. In a male-dominated culture the liberated woman tries to take her place among the young *'aficionados'*.

b. Not everybody takes the bull by the horns.

126a. At Epiphany the Town Hall organizes the Christmas Fiesta.

b. 'The Three Kings arrive from the East' bearing gifts for the children.

127a.

b.

128a. The Kings address the public in the Plaza Mayor.

b. The participants enter into the spirit of the occasion.

129a. In February *'Carnaval'* has been revived after a period of prohibition during the dictatorship.

b. This 'old-fashioned family' won second prize in a *Carnaval* competition at one of the discoteques.

130a.

b.

131a.

b.

132a. The approach of the Fiestas is heralded in April by the arrival of the *'tio de la pita'* leading a troupe of children like the Pied Piper.

b. With him come the *Gigantes* and *Cabezudos*.

133a. The Fiesta posters appear in April, and they always contain images of the essential elements of The Fiestas.

b. The 'Dance of the Neckerchief' preludes the opening and is the first release of true Fiesta fervour.

134a. On Day 1 the beautiful and costly blankets for the
b. next day's *Caballos del Vino* competition are given a public preview.

135a. In the Plaza del Hoyo the horses are also shown off.

b.

136a. 'The Pure Blood' is waiting for you.

b. On the morning of Day 2 each *barrio* is prepared for their part in the Fiesta.

137a. The ritual of dressing the horse for competition begins by attaching the *'bolas decola'* and the *'culera'*.

b. Then the *'crilera'* is attached.

138a. *'Arturo'* has been dressing horses for more than thirty years.

b. The atmosphere is tense in this dimly lit garage.

139a. Outside the sun has slowly come up, and inside the blanket has been put on the horse.

b. The finishing touches are very important.

140a. The horse is shown off in its *barrio* before all the groups assemble in the Plaza Nueva.

b. The blanket is said to look very different on the horse.

141a. The *'Pura Sangre'* has its own distinctive style.

b. 'Moors' and 'Christians' mingle with the *Caballos del Vino* in the early morning light.

142a. All the 47 horses are shown off in a chaotic parade through the town.

b.

143a. Children have found their own way of taking part.

b. People present a comic image of their country origins.

144a. Everyone has taken to the streets.

b.

145a. 'Miss Spain' accepted an invitation to parade as *'Maja'* ('beauty') of the Halcones Negros.

b. *Cohetes* ('exploding sky-rockets') are an essential part of the atmosphere and nowadays they are carefully controlled.

146a. The banners of Yusuf Ibn Abderraman Al-Firi have been painted on 'authentic' hides.

b. The Almohades flag is waved enthusiastically.

147a. Behind the standard bearer dance this *cabila* of fighting Moors.

b. In this group men and women participate on an equal basis.

148a. There are hundreds dancing to Moorish tunes.

b. They are followed by their 'Sultan' and 'Favourite' on horseback - dressed in the richest costumes of all.

149a. The destination of this first parade is the *Templete*.

b. Here tens of thousands of people await the *Misa de la Aparición*.

150a. An open-air Mass is celebrated.

b. A Cross is lowered to the altar on wires to simulate the original miracle.

151a. The parade makes its way back through the town to the castle.

b. Each of the 'princesses' and 'beauties' ride horses through the crowds.

152a. On the hill up to the castle the race of the *Caballos del Vino* takes place.

b. The four *caballeros* must not let go. Occasionally there are injuries.

153a. In the courtyard the crowd awaits the results of the judging for the most beautiful blanket and the prize awarded to the winner of the race.

b. In 1981 the horse of the Pena Mairena was judged to be the most beautiful.

154a. On the evening of Day 3 another procession approaches the *Templete*.

b. The Christian groups parade to different tunes.

155a. The children take the whole performance in their stride.

b.

156a. Swords raised, the Christian groups enter a simulated battle after the *Parlamento* between their 'rulers'.

b. At the peak of the hill the Cross guarded by the *Arma'os* with flowers in their helmets, waits to descend for the ceremony which will bless the water flowing through the town.

157a. One of the joint leaders of the Almoravides - owner of a small shoe factory - waits for the big parade to begin.

b. The Almoravides show off their standard.

158a. In the Gran Via the spectators wait to take their seats.

b. The Christians have taken Moorish prisoners.

159a. The parade lasts four hours.

b. Some Moors fire deafening *arcabucos*.

160a. The Halcones Negros have changed their costumes and Miss Spain waves to the crowd again.

b. Even the smallest participant of all does not appear overawed.

161a. The Moorish Sultan shows off his riding skill.

b. His companion is resplendent in glittering green and gold.

162a. This Moorish atmosphere, typical of the *'refugios'* for dancing and drinking till dawn, was created out of the concrete basement of a modern block of flats.

b. When the fireworks fill the sky at the end of Day 3, the Fiestas still have two days to go.



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124b



125a



125b



126a



126b



127a



127b



128a

colour
King with tape recorder
the participants



129a



129b



130a



130b



131a



131b



giants
colour





133a

dance of handkerchief colour

colour
blankets
1

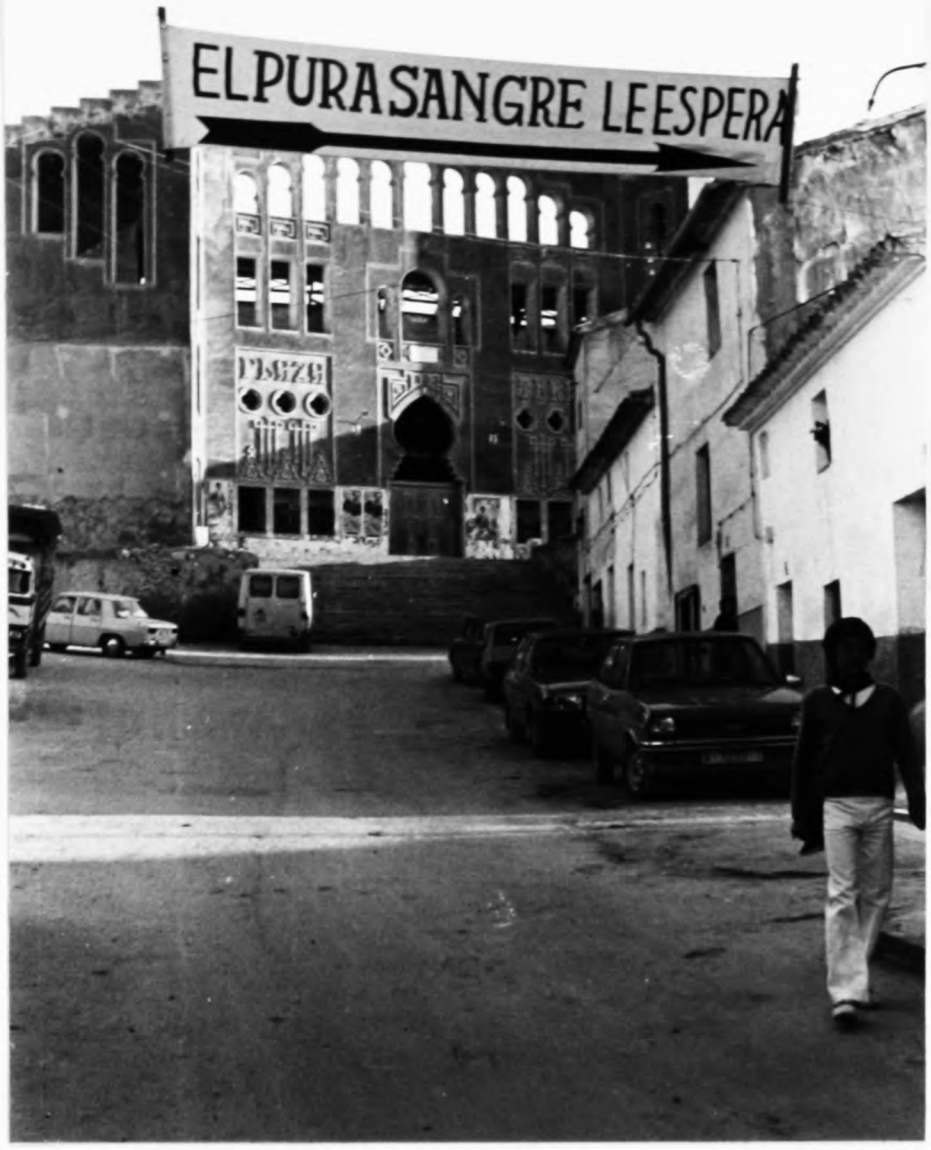
colour
blanket
2



135a



135b



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144a



144b



145a



145b



146a



146b



147a



147b



148a



148b



149a



150a



150b



151a



151b

Colour
Waiting crowd

Colour
Winner + horse
Maroon



154a



154b



155a



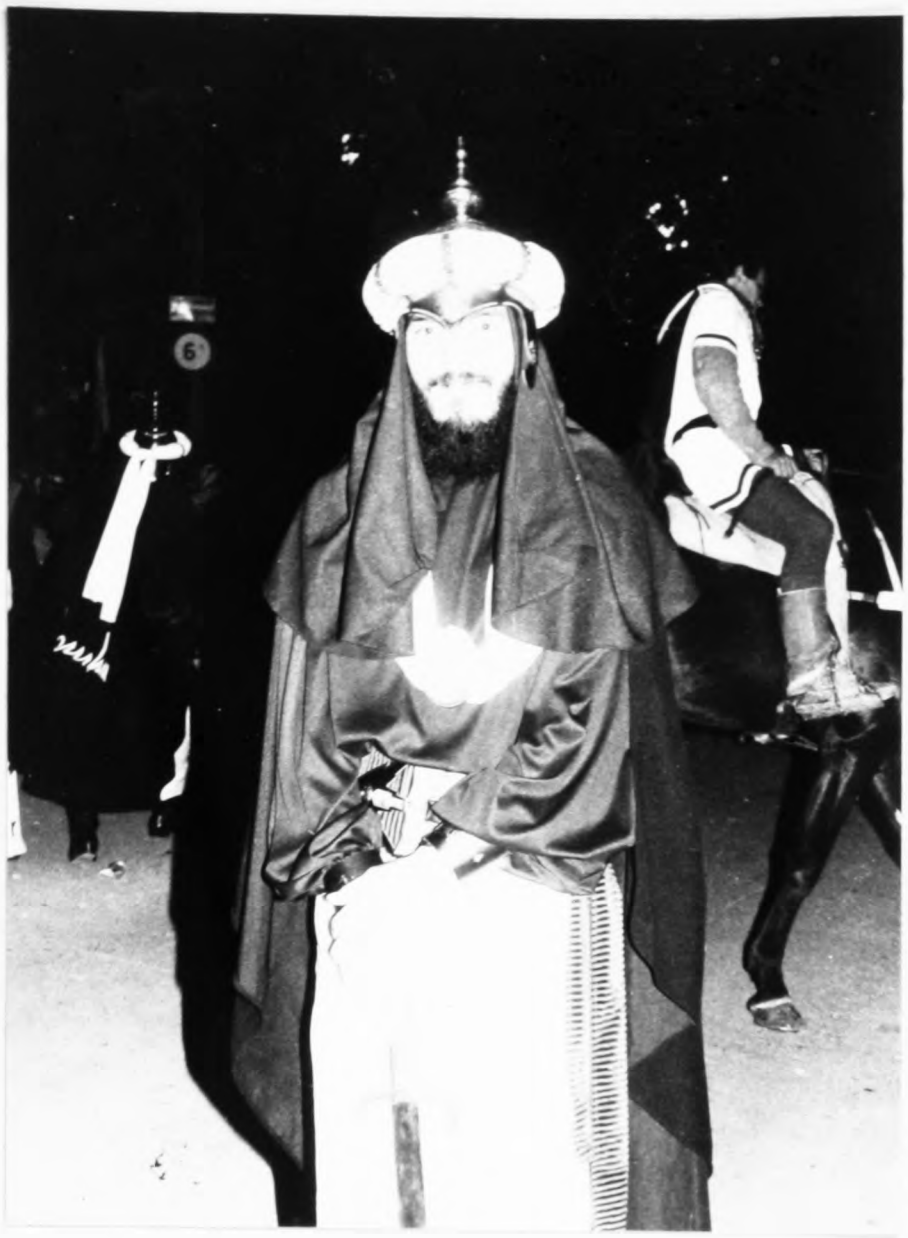
155b



156a



156b



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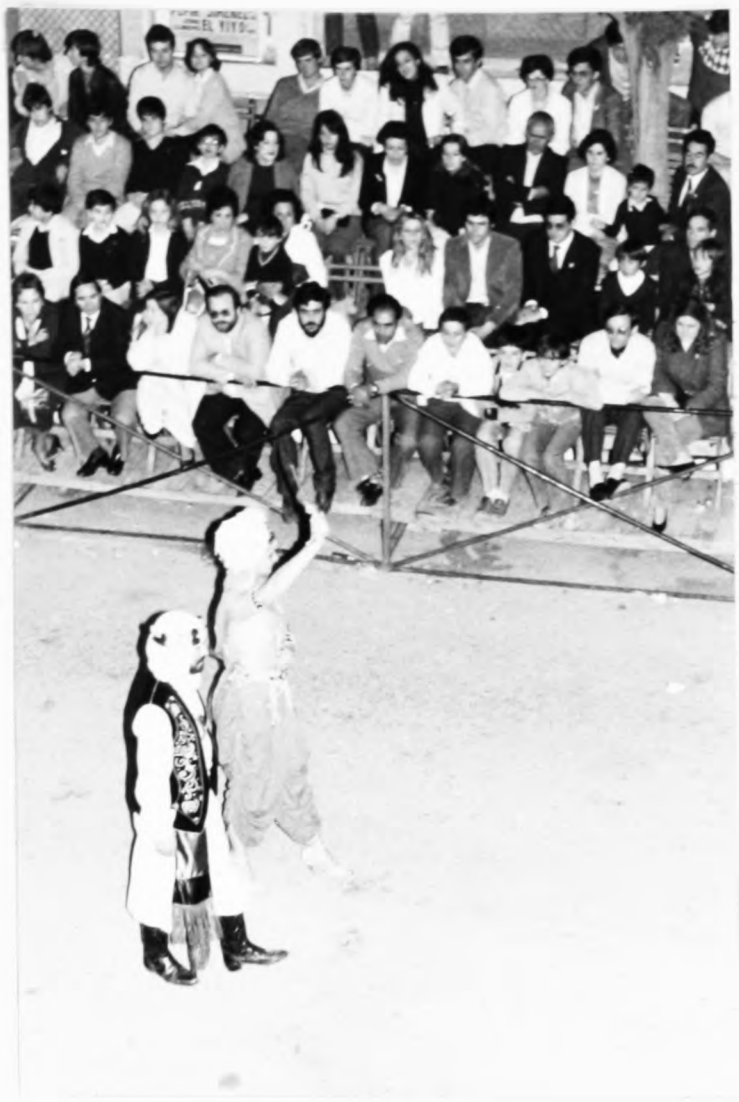

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162b


MUERTE

MUERTE

> In every country death has finality. It arrives and the blinds are drawn. Not in Spain. In Spain they are lifted. Many Spaniards live between walls until the day they die, when they are taken out to the sun (Frederico Garcia Lorca, translated in Lorca, 1967 p.133).

Countries and religions vary considerably in their attitudes to death. In Spain people live with constant acknowledgement of its presence. Bullfights show death given, avoided, refused and accepted several times in one afternoon. They can be seen regularly on television and no important fiesta can be complete without one. Caravaca's bullring is a prominent reminder of the society's reflection upon death --- like the Churches it is an important feature of the townscape, but the cemetry, the world of the dead, is placed outside the town.

In Caravaca the municipal abbatoir is within hearing of a large housing estate. The sounds of death are familiar: children cling to the railings, fascinated and horrified. In the countryside the *matanza* ('the animal slaughter') takes place every year for the survival of most households. This *comarca* is in a region in which hunting is of special importance, dead animals are found stuffed, as trophies, in most country dwellings, and in the town caged birds and animals are kept in large numbers --- their deaths subject to human control.

As Hemmingway explained:

> [Spaniards] know death is the unescapable reality, the one thing any man may be sure of; the only security;....They think a great deal about death and when they have a religion they have one which believes that life is much shorter than death (Ernest Hemmingway, Death in the Afternoon, 1932 p.234).

Every week in Caravaca there is at least one funeral. Deaths are announced on the doors of the bars, in the papers and on handbills. Funerals are public affairs, respects are paid, condolences are written, the coffin is accompanied, black is worn in mourning, and the dead are remembered at Mass, through prayers and the vigil of the candle's flame.

Frontis. In the cemetry, bodies are buried in niches or tombs and these houses of the dead are visited by whole families every All Saint's Day, to eat and sleep and celebrate. This other world is lived in once a year, every year.

163a. Candles are lit to the Virgin Mary and to *El Señor* and
b. contact with the 'others' is maintained.

164a. People have gathered to pay their respects and against the wall the bereaved family receive the *'Pesame'*.

b. The family and male adults accompany the coffin through the town.

165a. The cemetry is always sited outside the town like a village in miniature.

b. The gates are open to frequent visitors.

166a. Many people afford family tombs.

b. The Caravaca cemetry is new and few of the usual shade giving trees have grown yet.

167a. Bodies are buried above ground.
b.

168a.
b.

169a. Also outside the town unwanted animals are disposed
b. of in a 'culturally controlled', if 'inhumane', fashion.

170a. Cultural control of death is at the heart of Spain's most prominent national ritual occasion: the Bullfight.

b. Behind the scenes in the patio the *cuadrillas* form.

171a. The *picadero* is heavily armoured.

b. The *matador* comes into the arena.

172a. The *peones* face the bull first.

b. The aim is to discover the bull's natural faults and tendancies.

173a. The *matador* in his 'suit of lights' weighs up his chances.

b. The *picador* tests the animal's strength and valour.

174a. The bull is usually pic'd two or three times.

b. Then the *banderillas* are placed to correct any 'defects'.

175a. The *torero* demonstrates the beauty of his art with the cape.

b. A stylish pass wins applause and today, earns his money.

176a. This is 'the moment of truth'.

b. *'EL Yiyo'* demonstrates how a bull <u>should not</u> be killed.

177a. Six bulls meet their death in one afternoon.

b. Pepin Jimenez acknowledges the crowd's applause, and thanks God for his survival.



163a



163b



164a



164b



165a



165b



166a



166b



167a



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168a



168b



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170a

Colour
Toiles



171b



172a



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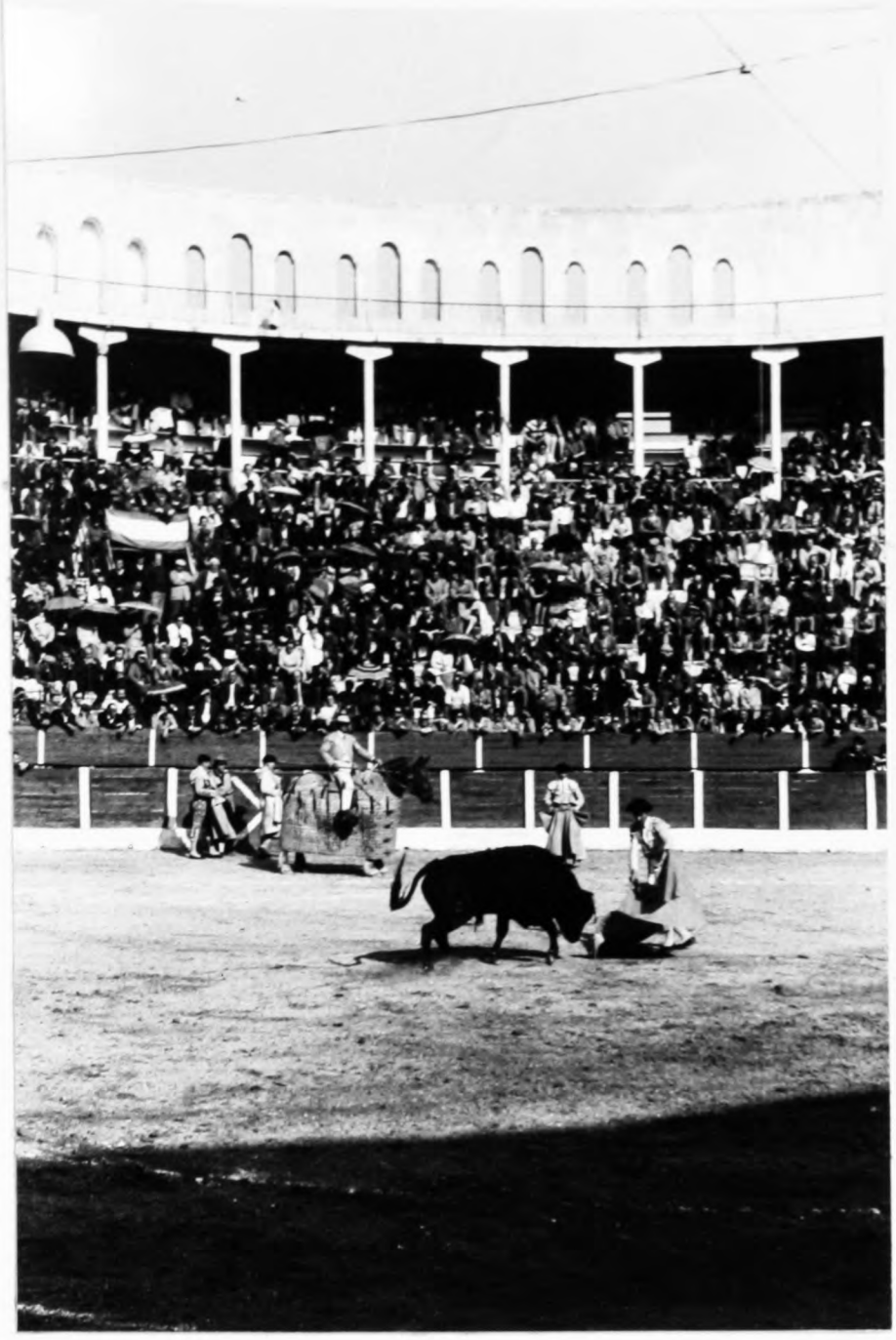

174a

Colour

Banderilleros.



175a



175b



176a



176b



177a



177b