

LA NAVA DE SAN MIGUEL -
A SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF
A SPANISH MOUNTAIN VILLAGE

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WILLIAM KAVANAGH. CAMPION HALL. D.PHIL. TRINITY, 1985.

ABSTRACT

This thesis, based on extensive fieldwork (from 1978 to 1985) at La Nava de San Miguel, a village in the province of Avila in central Spain, attempts to demonstrate six main points:

1. That the continued vitality of the village as a community is based on the economic factors of possession of large summer and autumn pastures near the village, transhumance to winter pastures over the mountains in Extremadura, the cattle market at nearby El Barco de Avila, and virtual self-subsistence, all of which enable the villagers to maintain themselves as cattle raisers; and to the strength of:
a) the village ideal of co-operation embodied in the use of the common known as the 'Sierra de Socios', the transhumant groups and the systems organized by the 'torno'; and b) the village ideal of mutual assistance shown at hay-making, pig-killing, and other aspects of daily life in the village.

2. That all co-operative institutions inside the village are organized by the principle of the 'torno', by which rights and obligations to these co-operative institutions rotate cyclically ('like a wheel which turns endlessly') and the village

itself is conceived of by its inhabitants as essentially having no beginning and no end.

3. That the co-operative institution outside the village (the transhumant group which goes to the winter pastures in Extremadura) is not organized by the 'torno', since the villagers are members of the transhumant groups as individuals, free to change from one group to another, and decisions made by these groups are not controlled by the village as a community.

4. That the villagers conceptually divide the village and the surrounding territory into the 'realm of the men' (apart from the bar, outside the village) and the 'realm of the women' (inside the village).

5. That the people of La Nava conceptualize the world as consisting essentially of two parts: the complementary halves of themselves (their village and their region) and the land across the mountains to the south of them, Extremadura. The villagers radically contrast their village - regarded as cold, dark, and lacking in fertility - with the warmth, sun, and fertility of Extremadura.

6. That unlike affairs in the village organized to ensure continuity and equity by the

principle of the 'torno' and following a movement of rotation, all relations with Extremadura are considered to move up and down in a lineal direction to ensure fertility and life when these are lacking in the village.

The thesis consists of four chapters:

Chapter I looks at the physical situation, climatic conditions, historical background, and other introductory information; Chapter II examines the socio-economic institutions of the village - the 'Sierra de Socios', the systems of 'tornos' for herding the goats, irrigating the fields, etc.; Chapter III deals with the annual cycle of transhumance to and from Extremadura; and Chapter IV examines the 'world-view' of the villagers of La Nava - especially the symbolic aspects of this - and, in particular, the perception they have of their own identity in relation to Extremadura.

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LONG ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on extensive fieldwork (from 1978 to 1985) at La Nava de San Miguel, a village in the province of Avila in central Spain. The village of thirty-seven households (some one hundred and thirty inhabitants) is situated at an altitude of 1200 metres above sea level on the northern side of the Sierra de Gredos, that part of Spain's central range of mountains which acts as the watershed between the basins of the Douro and Tagus rivers and as the barrier between the plateaux of Old and New Castile. The Gredos Mountains offer a strikingly different aspect when seen from either their northern or southern side. While the northern side is made up of softly rounded slopes rising from an average height of one thousand metres above sea level to summits of 2500 metres, the southern side is an enormous cliff-face which drops two thousand metres straight down to the mere 300 metres above sea level of the valley of the Tietar river, a tributary of the Tagus. This tremendous difference in altitude, as well as distinct orientation towards the rays of the sun, means that there are very marked contrasts - climatic, agricultural, and social -

between opposite sides of the sierra.

Located some ninety kilometres from the city of Avila, the provincial capital, the village of La Nava ('nava' meaning 'flat-bottomed valley' in Spanish) is perched on a lateral valley above the main valley floor and is surrounded by vegetable gardens, orchards, and meadows, all well watered by mountain streams which flow down from the remains of the glacial cirques above the village to feed an intricate man-made network of granite-lined water channels. The climate is extreme, with very cold winters and hot summers. Annual rainfall is above 1000 millimetres in the village and above 1500 millimetres on the summits above the village. The latter falls mainly in the form of snow, forming great snowfields which often last into the summer. The granite structure of the mountains means that the soils tend to be acid and poor. This fact, combined with the very steep slopes and a short growing season, has meant that agriculture has traditionally played a secondary role in the economy of the village.

Common ownership of enormous summer pastures, individual ownership of autumn pastures, and annual transhumance to winter pastures across the mountains

in Extremadura permit the villagers to maintain a large herd of cattle, their main source of wealth. The summer pastureland high in the mountains behind the village had been common property since the thirteenth century. However, it was disentailed in the nineteenth century and was bought back from the Spanish State by the villagers of La Nava in 1878 and became known as the 'Sierra de Socios'. Rights to the 'Sierra de Socios' are strictly limited to 'vecinos' (those born in the village or married to someone born in the village) with permanent residence there. The 'Junta de la Sierra', the body which oversees all matters related to the 'Sierra de Socios', is made up of four villagers chosen once every four years at a meeting of all the villagers assembled in 'open council'. The main responsibility of the 'Junta' is to count the cows and goats taken by each household up to the sierra when it opens for the summer grazing at the feast of San Pedro (29 June). Each household is permitted to put a maximum of twenty-five cows onto the sierra.

While all the villagers of La Nava except one sold their sheep in the 1970s when the price of wool declined, they still maintain a large number of goats. In the winter all the goats are herded

together, but in the summer they are divided into two herds: the main herd (some 300 animals) is taken to the 'Sierra de Socios' for the summer season and are known as the 'sierra goats'; a smaller herd (some 60 goats) is kept down in the village and the animals are taken out together to graze each day and brought back to their stables each night. These goats are called the 'coffee goats', since it is the milk of these goats that the villagers have with their morning coffee. The order of turns by which the villagers tend the goats is fixed, and a complete cycle of all those tending the goats (effectively all village households) is known as a 'torno'.

The word 'torno', apart from referring to various machines which turn on their axis, such as a windlass, a lathe, or a potter's wheel, also means a turn round something, a circular movement. While the standard Castilian word for the serial replacement of taking turns ('turno') may refer both to an individual's turn within a series of turns and to the complete series of turns, the word 'torno' as used by the villagers of La Nava refers only to a complete series of turns. The villagers state that the 'torno' is 'una rueda que da vueltas sin fin' ('a wheel that turns endlessly').

There are, at the moment, five co-operative village institutions organized by the principle of the 'torno'. The order of the 'torno' of four of these follows the village street, that of the fifth (the tending of the 'sierra goats') does not follow the street since the various herds which were joined to form the herd of the 'sierra goats' were originally organized as private associations and not all villagers were in them. Of the four village institutions whose 'torno' follows the village street, two always start at the top of the village and work their way down house by house ('always to the right', the villagers say) to the bottom of the village and then jump back up to the top of the street to begin another 'torno'. The turns to go out with the 'coffee goats' and to act as 'regador' (water guard) always begin at the top of the village street. On the other hand, the turns to tend the cattle in the common known as the 'dehesa boyal' in the month of June and the turns to do communal labour (both paid and unpaid) begin one year at the top of the street and the following year the turns will begin at the bottom of the village street. So that within any one year the turns (like those of the 'coffee goats' and the water guards) will always go in a circular fashion; from one year

to the next this order will simply be reversed in the case of the turns for the 'dehesa boyal' and the communal labour.

The village ideal of mutual assistance is demonstrated by the help villagers give each other during the hay-making in July and the pig-killing in December, and in the past by a woman's acting as wet-nurse to a neighbour's baby if the mother did not have enough milk to feed the child, and by the exchange of bread and live yeast when villagers still baked their own bread. Villagers are also very quick to help each other in the event of an emergency, such as when an animal is injured in the sierra.

In the winter, the cattle are taken to Extremadura on the other side of the Gredos Mountains. A number of villagers (the numbers vary, but are usually six to eight) will arrange to take all their cattle together to a rented 'finca' (estate, property) for the winter season. To get to the nearest one takes five days walking with the cattle and some estates are much farther away. The preferred places are between the towns of Malpartida de Plasencia and Navalmoral de la Mata in the province of Caceres. Although formerly the villagers would return in summer with the cattle crossing the high passes over

the mountains, nearly all of them now both go down in February and return in June by the Tornavacas pass, following the 'cordeles' (cattle tracks) which have existed since the thirteenth century. The men will take turns tending the cattle on the rented pastures in Extremadura, though the order of these turns is not referred to as 'torno'. The reasons for this are that, although the order of the turns is fixed, the villagers are members of the transhumant groups as individuals and are free to change from one group to another, and decisions made by these groups are not controlled by the village as a community, either through village officials (the elected heads of the 'Junta' of the 'Sierra de Socios' and the 'Brotherhood of the Water') or by all the villagers united in 'open council'.

The villagers' claim of 'Ahora somos todos iguales' ('Now we are all equal'), while not strictly true in economic terms, is to a great extent true in the sense that there are few outward indications of greater or lesser wealth amongst villagers; the dress, speech, and behaviour of the man who owns fifty cows are identical to that of his neighbour who has only five cows. The villagers are not 'economic maximalists' and consider it 'inelegant'

to try to take advantage of all possible opportunities. They will let their fruit rot on the tress rather than pick it and make jam, since it is thought 'shameful' to do anything which is considered to be not absolutely essential for the economic survival of the household.

La Nava depends for administrative purposes on the next village down the valley, and relations between the two villages are strained. The mayors (always a man from the other village who officially has jurisdiction over both) are considered to be corrupt and out to take advantage of La Nava. The priests are said to be drunkards and women-chasers. In general, the villagers' view of the outside world and of the outsiders who come to the village is one of mistrust. Much of their fear comes from ignorance. The villagers travel little. Many village women have never in their lives been farther than the nearby market town of El Barco de Avila. And, apart from their time doing military service in their youth and their stays with the cattle in Extremadura every winter, the village men travel not much more.

Village space is divided both sexually and spiritually. While the house and the village itself are identified as the realm of the women, the sierra and Extremadura are regarded as the realm of the men.

This is expressed metaphorically by the procession on the feast day of San Miguel (29 September), the patron saint of La Nava. The image of the saint is carried from its place in the chapel to the doorway by four women and is there handed over to four male relatives of these women, who then take the image across the covered porch and through the archway to begin the circle round the chapel. The image may then be carried by any villager from there until the procession returns to within a few yards of the chapel archway, when it is again taken by the four men to the doorway and is handed back to the four women who return the saint to his pedestal. The women - from their world 'inside' - deliver the saint to the men to take to the men's world - which is 'outside'. The men later return the saint from their 'outside' world back to the 'inside' world of the women.

Spiritually, village space is marked by San Miguel and a stone cross at the lower end of the village and San Antonio and a stone cross at the upper end of the village.

The people of La Nava conceptualize the world as consisting essentially of two parts: the complementary halves of themselves (their village

and their region) and the land across the mountains to the south of them, Extremadura. It is significant that the men whose cows are going down to Extremadura in February accompany their animals as far as the border of their region with Extremadura and will go to meet them on the animals' return in June. The villagers radically contrast their village, regarded as cold, dark, and lacking in fertility, with the warmth, sun, and fertility of Extremadura. The most characteristic word the villagers use with regard to Extremadura is 'calor' (heat); but not simply heat as measured in degrees of temperature on a thermometer, rather it is heat in the sense of fertility, of something which produces life. The villagers regard the heat of Extremadura as 'good heat', in contradistinction to the 'bad heat' of a menstruating woman which will spoil cheese-making and cause the meat of the pig-killing to go off. The villagers conceptually oppose the 'heat' of the world of the plains on the other side of the mountains to the 'cold' of their mountain village. They constantly talk about all the things which grow in Extremadura, such as tobacco, grapes, figs, olives, peppers, cherries, asparagus, tomatoes, aubergines, and cork, which they cannot grow in their village.

All that comes from Extremadura is considered to be good and praiseworthy, whether it is clothes or traditional songs. Plasencia, the capital of northern Extremadura, is the preferred place for shopping. Avila, at approximately the same distance from the village as Plasencia but in the opposite direction, is only for affairs related to the central State and to go to hospital. When what is lacking in La Nava must be sought outside, one goes north to Avila for affairs associated with disease, death, pain, and suffering, and one goes south to Extremadura for affairs associated with enjoyment, life, and wealth.

That the villagers attribute ideal properties to Extremadura is a consequence of the necessary complementary character of Extremadura for the life of La Nava. And while within the village affairs are organized by the principle of the 'torno' to ensure continuity and equity and follow a movement of rotation which makes the village effectively without a beginning or an end, all relations with Extremadura are considered to move up and down in a lineal direction - a nuptial movement, the coming together of two complementary halves - to ensure fertility and life when these are lacking in the village.

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PREFACE

It is not my intention to pretend that La Nava de San Miguel is representative of all Castilian mountain villages or even of all villages in the Gredos Mountains. When I decided to do fieldwork in central Spain I was not looking for a 'typical community' - whatever that might be. But I was most certainly looking for some place that was still recognizable as a community. I thought that since the research could only be conducted at the weekends and during two or three months every summer, it might be wise to choose somewhere with not too large a population, so that I would be able to get to know the people and their way of life reasonably quickly. If now I realize the naïveté of that hope for rapid understanding, at least it set me looking for a small village not too far from Madrid, where I was to be based during most of the week. Unfortunately, many villages within an hour or so of Madrid are either inhabited mainly by old people or, in the mountains, are full of pseudo-Swiss chalets owned by outsiders.

For this reason, the first time I saw La Nava de San Miguel (in the summer of 1976) what most struck me about the village was the enormous 'vitality' of the place compared with many other villages similar in size. There were, of course, old people, but there were also many young people and, most significantly, young couples with children. That such a tiny, isolated community, which one would have thought should show the worst effects of the massive abandonment of the land which has been a constant in Spain for the past thirty years or more, should appear to be so full of life seemed to me sufficient reason for investigation. That the villagers had not emigrated to Switzerland, Germany, Madrid, or Barcelona was clear. The question was: Why not?

The simplest answer, I think, is that they are 'rich'. Common ownership of enormous summer pastures and annual transhumance to relatively nearby winter pastures allow them to maintain a large herd of cattle, their main source of wealth. These two factors, combined with near self-subsistence, give them a life which the villagers themselves are aware is not at all bad. Yet economic factors are not everything. The village ideals of co-operation and mutual assistance - embodied in such institutions

as the 'Sierra de Socios', the transhumant groups, and the various activities ordered by the principle of the cyclical 'torno' (which reflects the villagers' conception of their village as essentially having no beginning and no end) - are crucial to the community life of La Nava de San Miguel.

This thesis, while not attempting to be a complete ethnographic study of La Nava, will try to demonstrate the truth of that statement, as well as the contention that an integral part of the villagers' positive valuation of themselves and their life is their relationship with Extremadura, that land just over the mountains to the south of them which is, in so many important ways, the exact opposite of their world and yet, at one and the same time, so very much a part of it. The thesis will try to show that the people of La Nava conceptualize the world as consisting essentially of themselves and Extremadura as complementary halves, and that the very great differences between their village and the other side of the mountains are conceptually integrated by them into a whole.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

In the centre of the Iberian Peninsula there is a series of mountain ranges, running roughly from east to west, which acts as the watershed between the basins of the Duero (Douro) and Tajo (Tagus) rivers. This barrier between the northern 'meseta' (plateau) of Castilla la Vieja (Old Castile) and the southern 'meseta' of Castilla la Nueva (New Castile), known as the 'Cordillera Central' or 'Sistema Central', begins in the east at the meeting-point of the three provinces of Soria, Segovia, and Guadalajara and ends in the west, in Portugal, in the Serra da Estrela.

That part of the 'cordillera' in which the highest peak, Pico Almanzor (2592m), is to be found is known as the Sierra de Gredos. 'Espinazo de Castilla' ('Backbone of Castile'), as Unamuno (1920) called it, the Sierra de Gredos runs for one hundred and fifty kilometres along the southern edge of the province of Avila, at its most easterly limit just touching the province of Madrid and, in the west, extending into the provinces of Salamanca and Caceres. Constituted

basically of granite, the sierra offers a strikingly different aspect when seen from either its northern or its southern side. While the northern side is made up of softly rounded slopes rising from an average height of one thousand metres above sea level to summits of 2500 metres, the southern side is an enormous cliff-face which drops two thousand metres nearly straight down to the mere three hundred metres above sea level of the valley of the Tietar river, a tributary of the Tagus (see Figure 1). This tremendous difference in altitude, as well as distinct orientation towards the rays of the sun, means that there are very marked contrasts - climatic, agricultural, and social - between opposite sides of the sierra.

The high, rough mountain terrain, where winters are long and summers short, of the northern slopes is a very different world from the low, smooth plain, with an early spring and a long growing season, on the southern side of the mountains. The ice and snow which may cover the small, stone houses on the north for weeks on end is rarely seen on the large whitewashed brick houses to the south. The 'minifundio' (small holdings) surrounding the thinly populated, dispersed villages on the northern side of the sierra,

CROSS - SECTION OF THE GREDOS MOUNTAINS

FROM LA UERA (RIO TIETAR) TO THE RIO TORMES

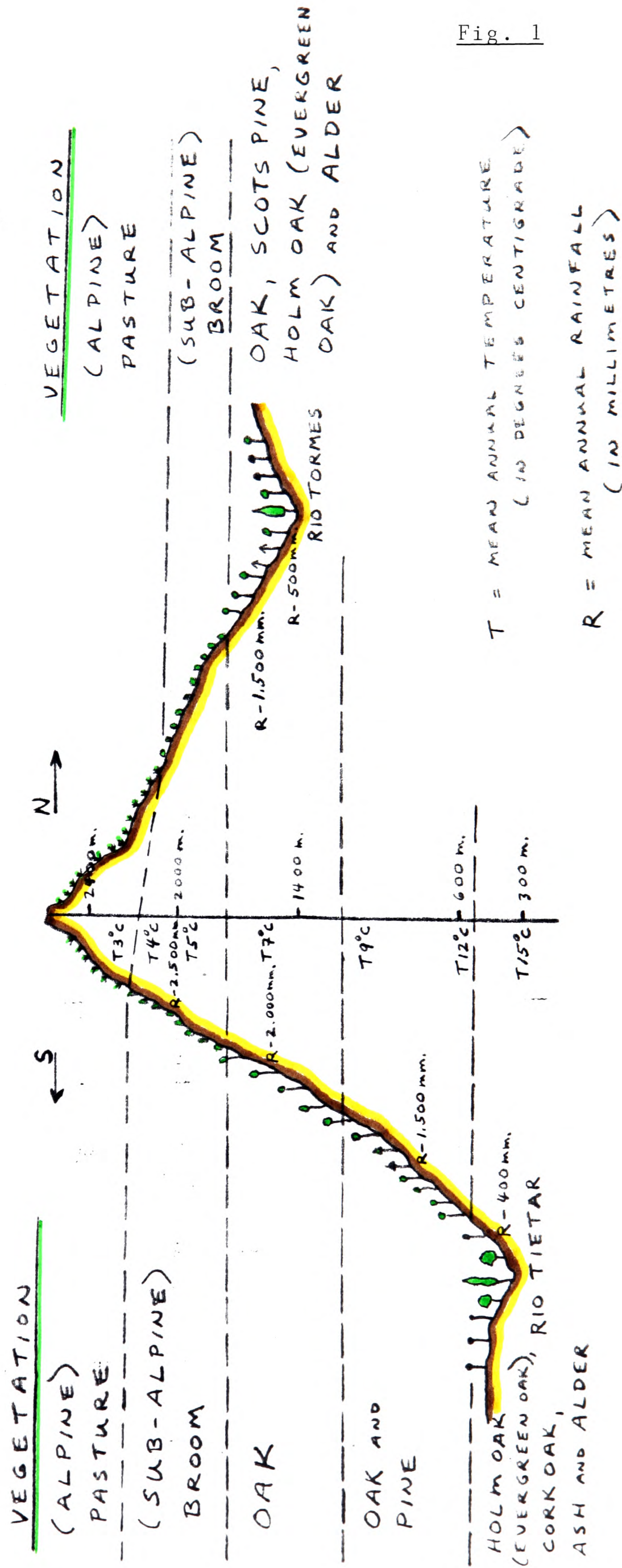


Fig. 1

T = MEAN ANNUAL TEMPERATURE
(IN DEGREES CENTIGRADE)

R = MEAN ANNUAL RAINFALL
(IN MILLIMETRES)

ALTITUDE IN METRES

which are centred on the small market town of El Barco de Avila, is in sharp contrast to the 'latifundio' (large estates) around the populous towns on the southern side, which have the important cathedral city of Plasencia as regional centre. The tobacco, figs, grapes for wine, peppers for paprika, olives for oil, etc. grown in the south and harvested on the estates by paid workers, are completely unknown on the northern side of the mountains, where practically the only things grown and harvested by the individual owner families are beans, potatoes, apples, and wheat.

The road from El Barco de Avila winds its way up the valley, crosses the bridge over the tributary of the Tormes - that same river Tormes which many miles downstream will reflect the towers of Salamanca - and then climbs the mountainside. Suddenly, the road turns sharply to the right and the 'pueblo' (village) of low stone houses with red tile roofs comes into sight some three hundred yards ahead. The village is La Nava de San Miguel.¹

¹Following ethnographic convention, La Nava de San Miguel and the names of the immediately surrounding villages are all pseudonyms. However, the place called La Nava de San Miguel does actually have the word 'nava' as part of its real name. El Barco de Avila, the name of the local market town and regional centre, is not a pseudonym.

The Spanish word 'nava' means 'flat-bottomed valley'. In Spain, there are one hundred and thirty-five towns and villages with 'nava' as part of their name, and more than twenty of these are in the area of the Gredos Mountains. At the point from which, on arriving, the village is first seen is the 'ermita' (chapel) of San Miguel, the patron saint of the village. Villagers say that from his privileged vantage point the saint 'can see and control all that goes on in the village'. Julio Caro Baroja (1974) says that the archangel warrior is very often associated with mountains and high wild places with flowing springs, so that it appears perfectly fitting that the villagers should have St Michael as their patron. And as we shall examine in Chapter IV, it is no accident that the chapel is sited where it is.

Located on the northern side of the sierra, in the 'comarca' (region) of El Barco de Avila and some ninety kilometres from the city of Avila, La Nava de San Miguel is a village, or perhaps more precisely, 'una aldea' (a hamlet), of thirty-seven households (total inhabitants numbered 131 in 1981) sited at an altitude of 1200 metres above sea level and surrounded on three sides by mountains which rise to an average height of over two thousand metres.

Perched on a lateral valley above the main valley floor, the village is surrounded by 'huertas' (vegetable gardens and orchards) and 'praos' (meadows, pastureland), well-watered by the three 'gargantas' (mountain streams) which flow down from the remains of the glacial cirques above the village to feed an intricate man-made network of 'regaderas' (water channels). However, the vision of tall, broad oaks and the lush greenness of the meadows is, to a certain extent, deceptive. For just over the dry-stone walls, on the other side of the meadows, gardens, and orchards regularly watered by the waters of the melting snows, is a harsh landscape of boulders and scrub. The often Swiss-like appearance of the land immediately surrounding the village is due to the efforts of man. The granite-lined irrigation channels - marvels of hydraulic engineering - carrying the life-giving fluid have been built, repaired, and annually cleaned by generations of villagers.

As to the climate, the prevailing winds from the west - with greatest frequency, from the south-west - are generally heavily laden with humidity from storms over the Atlantic. Sweeping across Portugal, these fronts meet few natural obstacles until they reach the tremendous barrier of the Cordillera Central.

According to Gonzalo Barrientos (1978), the simple passing of the sierra causes an average drop in temperature of fourteen degrees centigrade, which is enough to precipitate the greater part of the front's condensed humidity. The normally chilly 'marea' (wind, though the word normally refers to the tide) will then bring 'el hostigo' (lashing wind and rain). For this reason, annual rainfall at La Nava is above one thousand millimetres and on the summits above the village surpasses 1500 millimetres annually. Most of the latter falls in the form of snow, forming great 'neveros' (snowfields) which often last until the month of August, feeding with their melt the irrigation channels and protecting the high alpine pastures from the biting winter winds. During the last 'ice age' (Würm II), the Sierra de Gredos was an area of intense glaciation, and a recent study (Pedraza and Lopez 1980) states that of the over forty glaciers then existing in the Gredos, the longest - some six and a half kilometres from area of accumulation to terminal moraine - was that of the valley now overlooked by the village.

Winters in the village are very cold, with average temperatures below freezing. The first snow will generally fall sometime in October or November -

as the villagers say: 'Por los Santos, la nieve en los altos, y por San Andrés, en los pies' ('By All Saints day ((1 November)), the snow on the heights and by St Andrew's day ((30 November)), the snow at your feet', i.e. in the village) - and the last snow may fall, exceptionally, as late as June. Summers, on the other hand, can be hot; daytime temperatures may reach 30°C or more. However, once the sun sets behind the mountains above the village, the temperature drops dramatically and the breeze off the mountain tops means that the evenings and nights can be very cool indeed. The general dryness of the summer weather is frequently alleviated by the sometimes spectacular thunderstorms. And, because of the altitude, a north wind may suddenly cause the temperature to drop to near freezing - even in the month of July. On the summit of the sierra there may be frost all year round.

While water is not, and rarely ever has been, a problem for the villagers of La Nava (even during years when much of Spain suffered from severe drought), the granite structure of the sierra means that the soils tend to be acid and poor. This fact, combined with the steepness of the slopes (inclinations from 15 to 30 per cent) and a short growing season, has

meant that agriculture has traditionally played a secondary role in the economy of La Nava and all the other villages on the northern side of the Gredos. According to the official statistics of the 1972 Censo Agrario de España (Spanish Agrarian Census), of the over nine thousand hectares of the municipality, only some two hundred hectares are actually farmed. Nearly all the rest is pastureland. So, although the villagers grow potatoes, apples, and the famous 'alubias' or 'judias' (beans) of the 'comarca' of El Barco de Avila, these are all mainly for their own consumption. If someone from outside comes to buy them, the villagers will sell their surplus beans, potatoes, and apples, but will make no effort of their own to market what they produce. Having thousands of hectares of alpine pasture at their disposal, what the villagers of La Nava de San Miguel are really interested in, above all else, is raising cattle.

From the historical and archaeological evidence, it appears that cattle-raising was precisely what the first known inhabitants of this mountain region were doing when the Romans arrived in the second century B.C. Known as the Vettons, they were a Celtic people whose territory extended over what are now the provinces of Avila, Salamanca, and Caceres and into present-day

Portugal. They were well known for their habit of building their 'castros' (fortified towns) on mountain-sides and for their zoomorphic sculptures of bulls and pigs known as 'verracos'. Not far from El Barco is the 'castro' of El Cerro del Berrueco, and just over the mountains from La Nava is the 'castro' of El Raso de Candeleda. As Julio Caro Baroja (1946) points out, the most interesting aspect of the 'castros' is the presence of large enclosures in which the cattle were kept, at the entrances of which were usually placed one or more stone 'verracos'. Caro Baroja goes on to claim that while the land was probably held in common by the Vettons, the cattle were the private property of various families or 'gentilitates'.

Our interest in the Vettons must be limited, however, since there is little more than their having been a cattle-raising people to link them with the present-day inhabitants of these mountains. Yet one Spanish historian (Angel Barrios 1983) goes as far as to claim that the very frequent occurrence of the pre-Roman toponym 'nava' in the valleys of the Alberche and Tormes rivers suggests the continued presence in the, at that time, dense forests of the sierra of small communities of transhumant shepherds able to carry on their marginal existence, not only during

the centuries of Roman and Visigothic domination, but even after the Muslim conquest of the peninsula in the eighth century. The evidence for this is inconclusive. Historians of Spain - Sanchez-Albornoz, Menendez-Pidal, and others - have long argued about whether the frontier territory known as 'Extremadura' (etymology 'Extrema-Duri' - land beyond the Douro) lying between the rivers Douro and Tagus, between the Christian kingdoms of León and Castile and the Muslim kingdom of Toledo, was ever completely depopulated during the Muslim domination of the area in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. What is clear, nevertheless, is that throughout this period there were frequent razzias made by both sides, so it is probable that whatever population there was at that time was not very numerous. In general, the Muslims showed little interest in the inhospitable sierra, apart from their desire to control the mountain passes (Pico and Tornavacas) leading to the Christian kingdoms to the north. Legend has it that the great warrior al-Mansur climbed the peak which now bears his name (Almanzor 2592m) when returning from one of his incursions into Christian territory, though this is unlikely.

The immediate result of the reconquest of

Toledo in 1085 by Alfonso VI of León and Castile was the rapid repopulation of the land north of the city of Avila. The area of the Sierra de Gredos, however, was not so quickly occupied. Not only was the poor mountain terrain much less attractive to settlers than the rich farmland just to the north of the sierra, but when the Muslims recaptured Talavera in 1109 the frontier was simply too close to make the region safe for resettlement. Retaken by the Christians with the fall of Plasencia in 1186, Talavera again returned to Muslim control under the fanatical Almohades in 1195. It was not until the decisive victory of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212, which assured Christian control of the valley of the Guadiana, that the way was finally opened to the repopulation of the area of Gredos.

The historical evidence indicates that, before the end of the thirteenth century, there was a strong development of a pastoral economy on the northern side of Gredos and the establishment of a regular circuit of transhumant shepherding between both sides of the sierra. The incorporation to the kingdoms of Castile and León of the extensive pasturelands of the Guadiana river basin was of crucial importance to the development of the 'Honrado Concejo de la Mesta',

that vast organization of sheep-breeders which every year moved several million sheep from their summer pastures in León, Segovia, Soria, and other places on the northern 'meseta' to winter pastures on the southern plains of Extremadura and Andalucia. From its recognition in 1273 by Alfonso X to its dissolution in 1836, the powerful Mesta controlled thousands of kilometres of 'cañadas reales' (wide cattle tracks). One of the most important was the 'Cañada Leonesa', which after crossing Zamora and Salamanca, was joined at Béjar (30 km to the west of El Barco) by a branch of the 'Cañada Segoviana' which had passed through Avila, Piedrahita, and El Barco, and from there carried on down to Plasencia, Caceres, Merida, and Badajoz in modern Extremadura. A secondary route, known as a 'cordel', went from El Barco past La Nava de San Miguel and climbed up over the sierra to come down on the other side to La Vera de Plasencia. Another 'cordel' went from El Barco via the Aravalle to the Tornavacas pass, then dropped down the valley of the Jerte to Plasencia. It is this latter 'cordel' - and not that going over the sierra - which is the route followed today by the majority of the villagers of La Nava when taking their cattle to and from Extremadura.

The 'comarca' of El Barco de Avila had its origins as a 'Comunidad de Villa y Tierra', an institution fostered by the kings of Castile and León for the repopulation and reorganization of territories recently recovered from the Muslims. The 'Comunidad' consisted of a city or town whose 'Concejo' (Council) had jurisdiction over a large territory, known as an 'alfoz', assigned to it by the king by a charter of privileges or 'fuero'. 'Alfozes' were divided into rural districts known as 'sexmos' or 'quartos' (not always consisting of six or four parts respectively, however) so that the worth, not the size, of each district was equal to that of all the other 'sexmos' or 'quartos' in the same 'alfoz'. Each 'sexmo' or 'quarto' was made up of a number of villages associated for the purpose of a common utilization of the grazing lands of all of them. Each village had its own rural 'Concejo', which was subordinate to the urban 'Concejo' of the 'Villa' (town) in whose 'tierra' (land) or 'alfoz' they were. Rights to the common pasturelands, to participation in the municipal government, and to protection by the local 'fuero' were reserved to 'vecinos'. Not all inhabitants of a city or village were 'vecinos'. The nobility and the clergy were not considered to be such, nor were outsiders who

were living there temporarily. One was a 'vecino' by either having been born there, or by having lived there for a certain length of time - 'lighting a fire', i.e. making a home - with the condition of owning property in the town or village and being admitted as a 'vecino' by the 'Concejo'. La Nava de San Miguel is in the district which was once the 'Quarto de San Bartholomé' in the 'alfoz' of El Barco de Avila. The importance of this will be seen in Chapter II, when we examine the village institution of the 'Sierra de Socios'.

In 1366, Enrique II granted the 'señorio' of Valdecorneja, including the 'alfoz' of El Barco de Avila, to Garci Alvarez de Toledo, whose descendants became, first 'condes' (earls), then 'duques' (dukes) of Alba de Tormes. And although they normally resided at Piedrahita, twenty kilometres to the north-east of El Barco, they would often visit their castle (called Valdecorneja) at El Barco. The change from 'realengo' (royal dominion) to 'señorio' does not seem to have greatly affected the 'Comunidad de Villa y Tierra' of the territory of El Barco. The various taxes and other services which the inhabitants had previously owed to the king, were now owed to the 'senor' (lord). However, since each 'alfoz' - even

within the same 'señorio' - had a different 'fuero' or set of privileges, the lords of Alba had the right to appoint the 'alcalde' (mayor) at Piedrahita, yet had no such right at El Barco, where the mayor was elected by the 'Concejo'.

El Barco de Avila and its region have figured very little in the history of Spain over the past eight hundred years. Ever since it ceased to be the frontier between Christians and Muslims, the region has lived the tranquil life of a backwater, despite the over-enthusiastic claims of one local historian (de la Fuente Arrimadas 1925). No battles were ever fought there or anywhere nearby (though Napoleon's troops are said to have pulled down part of the mediaeval town walls), nor did El Barco ever grow beyond what it is today: a prosperous market town of some 2500 inhabitants, with town walls and castle dating from the twelfth century, and parish church and bridge over the Tormes from the fourteenth. While Brandes (1975) refers to El Barco as 'really no more than a large village with city trappings', he admits that the town is more important than its size would indicate, since, he says, 'it is the lifeline upon which numerous tiny hamlets which cluster around it depend'. Although part of the

bishopric of Avila from the time of the Reconquest to the present day, the town and its region have not always been part of the province of Avila. At the first division of Spain into 'provincias' in 1785, during the reign of Carlos III, El Barco and its territory were assigned to the province of Salamanca. Not until the provincial reorganization of 1833 did the region of El Barco become part of the province of Avila.

The history of La Nava de San Miguel is even more obscure. The story goes, however, that the village almost came to be of national importance in the sixteenth century. De la Fuente Arrimadas (1925) relates that, chosen by the commission of experts appointed by Felipe II as the best site for his new monastery-palace, La Nava missed the chance of immortality when the king - thinking of the time it would take him to travel there and back from his court at Madrid over two hundred kilometres away - decided on the much nearer, though second-best, site of 'El Escorial' (the slag heap).

From the earliest mediaeval references to the village, La Nava has always depended, for administrative purposes, on the next village down the valley, Navaleones, of whose 'municipio' (municipality) it officially forms part as a 'barrio' (quarter, district) or 'anejo'

(annexed dependent). Thus all dealings with the central State must be channelled through the 'ayuntamiento' (town hall) at Navaleones, whose 'secretario' (town clerk) is a civil servant. The 'concejo municipal' (town council) is made up of the 'alcalde' (mayor) and six 'concejales' (town councillors), only one of whom is from La Nava and who is known as the 'alcalde pedáneo' of La Nava, which means that (at least in theory) he has authority only in matters of small importance. In practice, however, he and the rest of the 'vecinos' of La Nava united in 'concejo abierto' (literally, 'open council') decide most things which affect them directly. As one villager put it:

'Lo que importe es que el alcalde de aquí tiene bastón, exactamente igual que el de Navaleones. Del río para acá el amo es el.'

'What matters is that our mayor is invested with authority in the same way as the mayor of Navaleones. On this side of the river, he is the master.'

Moreover, La Nava by no means forms a part of Navaleones in the more important aspects of its economic and social organization, and even less in the subjective appreciation of the villagers. In fact, they feel much closer to the villagers of La Laguna who live in a similar lateral valley off the main valley to the north-west of them.

The parish records of Navaleones/La Nava de San Miguel date, complete and intact, from the middle of the sixteenth century, shortly after the Council of Trent made it obligatory for parishes to keep such records. Christenings are recorded from 1561, burials from 1563, and marriages from 1567. Not long before, in 1534, the Emperor Carlos V ordered a census of tax-paying 'vecinos' and the total given for Navaleones/La Nava de San Miguel was 137. In the 'Relacion de Vecindario' (Population Report) presented in 1587 by all the bishops of Spain to the king, Felipe II, the bishop of Avila reported that La Nava alone had a population of twenty-six 'vecinos'. The 'catastro' (census of property) of the Marques de la Ensenada, dated the second of September, 1752, lists the number of 'vecinos' of La Nava as fourteen. This decline in the number of 'vecinos' between 1587 and 1752 is explained by Barrientos (1978) as having been due to

the severe demographic crisis caused by a series of plagues and economic depression which lasted from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth centuries.

The municipal archives are of much more recent date. An enumeration of 'vecinos' for purposes of collecting the salt tax of 1830 gives the number as twenty-seven. The first official 'Padron' (census of inhabitants) dates from 1875 and lists forty-three 'casas' (households) and 168 inhabitants. Exactly one hundred years later, the 'Padrón' of 1975 gives the number of 'casas' as forty-two and the number of inhabitants as 138. Yet this apparent stability in the number of households and only an 18 per cent drop in population over a hundred years is misleading, since the population of La Nava rose to an average 210-220 inhabitants (peaking at 225 in 1924) with approximately sixty households - nearly twice the present number - from the turn of the century until after the Civil War (1936-39), at which time it began a steady decline to today's level. However, this decline has been no where near as dramatic as it has been at other places. La Nava was hardly affected by the massive emigration of Spanish workers to the north of Europe (France, Germany, and Switzerland)

during the 60s. While Navaleones lost 103 inhabitants during the decade 1961-1970, some 12 per cent of its population, La Nava de San Miguel lost only five inhabitants, 3 per cent of its population. And while the twelve years from 1970 to 1981 saw a somewhat greater loss for La Nava (thirty-one inhabitants), this loss is nearly totally attributable to a lower birthrate - the reasons for this will be examined in Chapter IV - and not to the emigration which has been the curse of many other villages. In the past few years this trend has only continued.

As mentioned above, the village has only half the number of inhabited houses today that it had at the turn of the century. The composition of village households according to the latest municipal census (1981) is given in the table on the following page. Of a total of thirty-seven households, we see that twenty-two conform to the pattern we may call 'simple', i.e. husband, wife, and children. Of the fifteen remaining households, two are older couples whose grown-up children have married and set up independent households; at the moment there are no childless marriages in the village. There are four cases of a young couple living with the wife's parents and no instances of a couple living with the husband's

The Composition of La Nava Households
(according to municipal census of 1981)

<u>House</u>	<u>Genealogical Relationships</u>
1.	H, W, D.
2.	H, W, S.
3.	H, W, S, D, D.
4.	two bachelor brothers.
5.	widow.
6.	WF, H, W, S.
7.	H, W.
8.	spinster.
9.	spinster.
10.	H, W, S, D, S, S.
11.	H, W, S, D.
12.	H, W, D, D.
13.	widower, S.
14.	H, W, D.
15.	H, W, S, D, D, S.
16.	H, W, D, S.
17.	H, W, S, WB.
18.	H, W, D.
19.	H, W, S.
20.	H, W, S, D.
21.	H, W, D, S.
22.	unmarried brother and sister.
23.	H, W, D.
24.	H, W, S, D, HZ.
25.	H, W, S.
26.	H, W, S.
27.	WF, H, W, D, S.
28.	WF, WM, H, W, S, D, S.
29.	H, W, S, S, D, D.
30.	H, W.
31.	H, W, S, S, S.
32.	H, W, D.
33.	WF, WM, H, W, D.
34.	widow and unmarried sister.
35.	H, W, D, D.
36.	H, W, S, S.
37.	H, W, S.

parents, thus indicating a clear tendency towards living with the wife's parents if an independent household is not set up by a newly married couple. In fact, this tendency is even stronger than might appear at first sight, since two of the so-called 'simple' families actually live - that is, take all their meals and sleep every night - at the house of the wife's parents, even though they have their own house elsewhere in the village. And within the past few months, another young couple have married and moved in with the bride's parents. And if there is a positive preference for uxori-local residence, it is not at all surprising that while there are six men born outside the village ('forasteros') who have married into La Nava, there is not one woman from outside who has married a man of La Nava and been brought in to live in the village. Of the remaining households, there is one widower living with his unmarried son and one widow living with her unmarried sister, one unmarried man living with his sister's family and one widow living with her brother's family. Finally, there are two elderly spinsters listed as each living on her own (though one, in fact, lives with a brother), two elderly bachelor brothers living together, and one elderly bachelor forming a household

with his elderly spinster sister.

It is relevant at this point to examine the instance of the elderly spinster living with a married brother and his family - as well as the similar cases of households 17 and 24 - since they throw light on the special interpretation of the laws of inheritance made by the villagers, which is an authentic case of 'derecho consuetudinario' (customary or common law). In Castile, inheritance is usually partible, that is, by equal parts to all children, whether men or women, and this is what is done at La Nava. The sons and daughters will first make a careful inventory of all the property of the parents; everything from houses, fields, and cows down to beds, bedclothes, plates, and glasses. They will then make scrupulously equal 'lotes' (shares) of everything; the number of 'lotes' will be equivalent to the number of heirs. Each 'lote' will be given a number, the numbers will be written on pieces of paper, and all will be put in a hat. Then, eldest first, youngest last, all the heirs will pick one number out of the hat, the number corresponding to the 'lote' each has inherited.

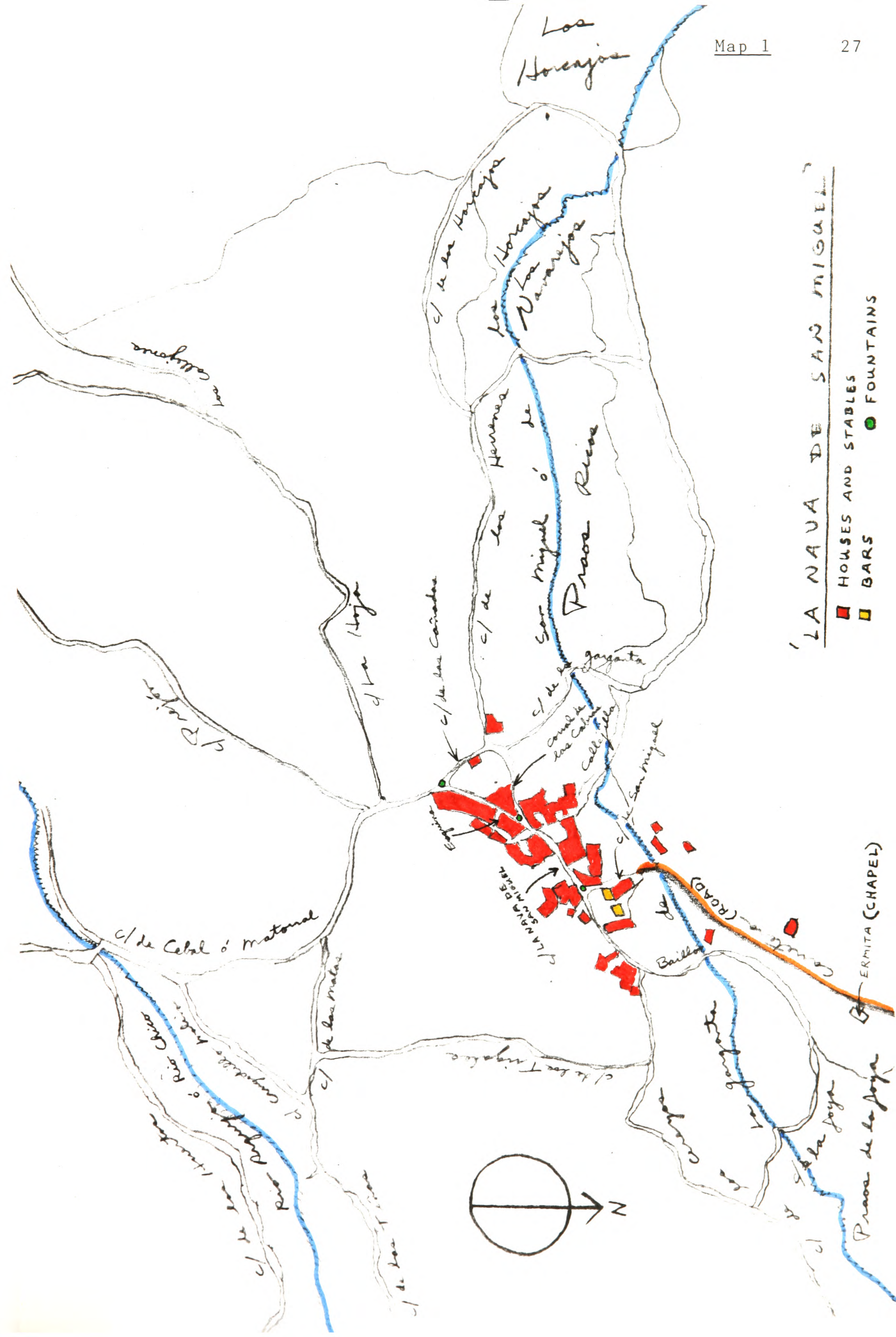
In the case of an unmarried or childless brother or sister, their property, according to normal inheritance law, will be equally divided by all the other brothers

and sisters. However, this is not the case at La Nava, where the brother or sister in whose house the unmarried or childless sibling lives will inherit all the property. This has happened in the cases cited, but not without certain difficulties with the other brothers and sisters who feel that they should have their fair share. In fact, two brothers are now no longer on speaking terms after they nearly came to blows in public one day three years ago. The brothers had agreed some months previously that their elderly, mentally unsound sister should live alternate months with each of them. However, after only a few months their sister refused to continue the arrangement - which gave equal claims to her property to both brothers - and said she wished to live permanently with one sister-in-law (with whom she got on well), rather than with the other sister-in-law (with whom she got on badly). One brother then accused the other of having 'tricked' their sister into this decision for the purpose of inheriting all her property, while the other replied that their sister would not have refused to live any longer with the first brother and his family if she had not been 'mistreated'. In the end, the old woman stayed where she wanted, and the brother with whom she is living

will inherit all her property.

The village of La Nava is basically one long, not very steeply inclined street with a number of very short streets branching off it (see Map 1). Interspersed between the one or two storey houses are the single storey 'casillas' (a combination of stable and hayloft) where the animals are kept. Traditionally, all buildings in the village were made of stone and had tiled roofs. In fact, it is very difficult to tell the difference between a house put up fifty years ago from one built one hundred and fifty years ago. However, in just the past few years, a number of villagers have 'done up' their houses using brick, which is cheaper and easier to work with than stone, and have replaced massive wooden front doors with lighter ones of glass and aluminium; the villagers say that aluminium is 'mas fino' (more elegant) than wood. Another much favoured 'improvement' is to cover the natural stone walls of their houses with a layer of cement, which is then whitewashed to more closely resemble the houses on the other side of the mountains in Extremadura.

Until the year before last (1983), the village had no running water and all water for drinking, cooking, and washing had to be got from one of the three fountains;

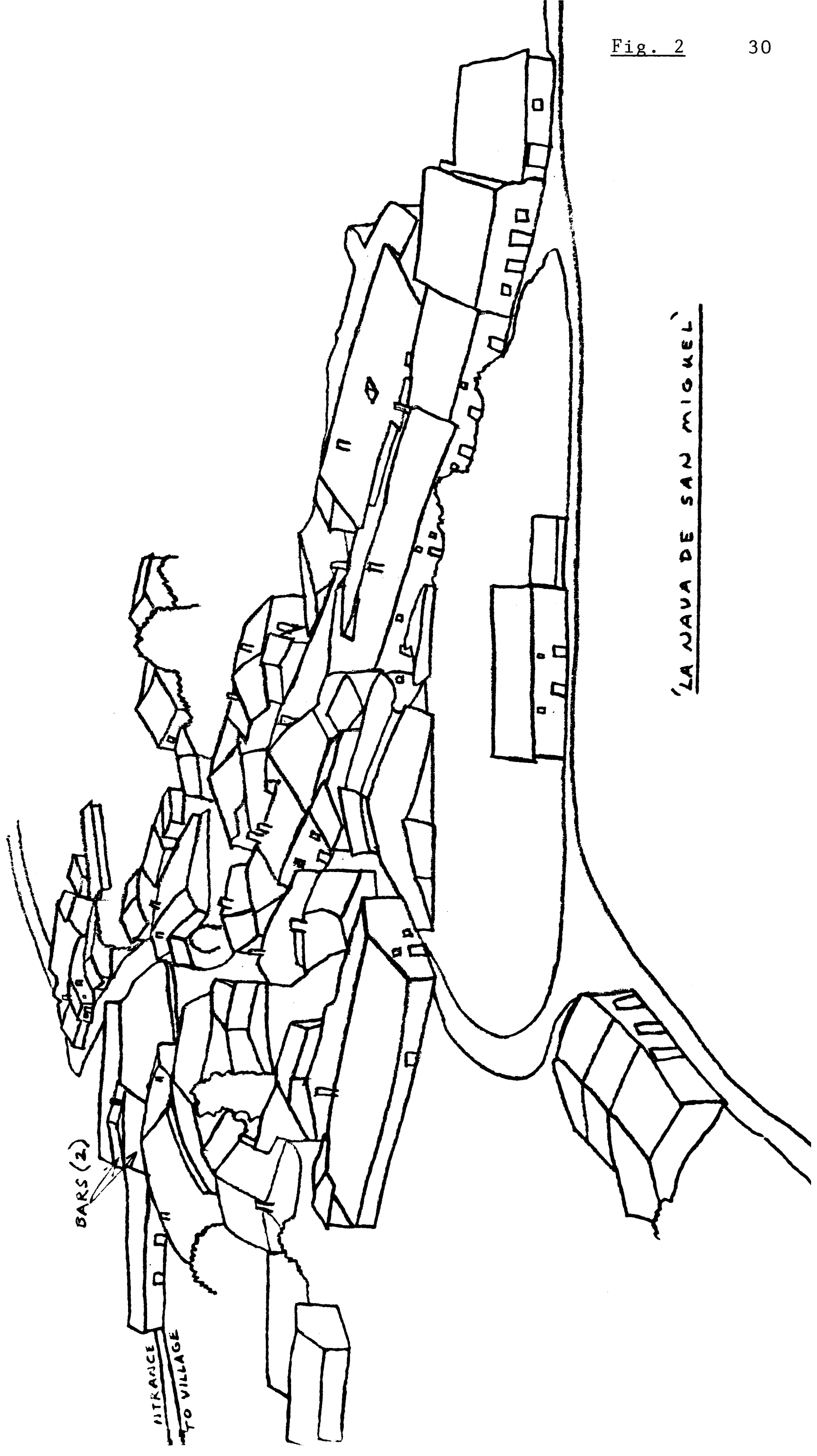


the first at the very top of the village street, the second at a point mid-way down the street, and the third at the bottom of the village (see Map 1). The village has had electric lighting since 1962, but before that the villagers had to make do with 'candiles' (oil lamps) and the light from the kitchen hearth. Yet even now, villagers will have only one bare lightbulb hanging on a wire in each room of the house as maximum lighting. And street-lighting was only put in three years ago (in 1982). Before then, villagers could be seen on moonless nights making their way up and down the street by the light of pocket torches. This year (1985) the villagers have started paving the street with cement, and have decided to dig up the open stone-lined irrigation channel running down the side of the street and replace it with a buried cement pipe.

The system of running water is fed by a natural spring high above the village, from where the water is piped down to a large water deposit at the top of the village. Nothing is added to purify the water (although Ministry of Health regulations require this to be done), since it is perfectly drinkable just as it comes out of the ground. It is forbidden to use this water to irrigate the fields.

At the same time as the water was put in, a series of three large septic tanks was built underground at the bottom of the village to deal with the sewage. Once the sewage system was installed, the mayor decided, for hygienic reasons, that all rubbish such as tins, plastic bottles, etc. was henceforth no longer to be disposed of by simply dropping it into the open irrigation channel running down the village street, but was to be placed in plastic bags and carried to a specially designated site up the hillside between the village and the chapel. However, the villagers openly refused to carry their rubbish up the steep hill to the rubbish tip, saying that the mayor could use the tip if he so desired, but that they themselves had not the slightest intention of doing so. The mayor has now declared that a new rubbish tip is to be built closer to the village. However, until this is done, all the villagers will continue to throw their plastic bags of rubbish into the stream at the entrance to the village.

The size of a village house appears to have little relation to the wealth of the owners, nor do the houses conform to any fixed pattern, since some are of one storey and others of two storeys (see Figure 2).



'LA JAWA DE SAN MIGUEL'

Some houses have the hearth on the ground floor and others have the hearth on the first floor. However, all village houses have a number of elements in common. All houses have an entrance hall (known as 'el patio'), on whose whitewashed walls are usually displayed the highly polished pots and pans (often of copper) called 'la espetera'. There is usually also 'un vasar' (dresser, kitchen sideboard) on which are ranged the plates and glasses. Since running water was put in only two years ago, all houses have the 'palangana' (washbasin on a tripod) in a corner of 'el patio' and, over it, a small mirror hanging from a nail. Though most houses now have a tap about half a metre off the floor over an open drain, only six households have (to date) put in toilet and washbasin and only three have put in either a bath or a shower. Washing is still not a terribly frequent occurrence at La Nava; at the last wedding in the village some few months ago, the mother of the groom was heard loudly proclaiming her indecision as to whether she ought to wash her feet before the ceremony or not. And since no house had ever had a toilet until last year, the fields, or in bad weather the stables, are still considered the appropriate places for one's physiological needs. In fact, a number of the older people openly laugh at the desire

of their sons and daughters for a toilet in the home.

All houses have ceilings of smoke-darkened oak beams and floors of earth or, more frequently now, of tile. The room in which the family will spend the most time - since it is the only part of the house which is kept warm during the long cold winters - is 'la cocina' (the kitchen). 'La lumbre' (the fire) was normally lit every day of the year for both heating and cooking. The hearth is no more than a large flat stone set into the floor with another large upright stone set into the wall behind. The 'leña' (firewood) is supported by 'morillos' (andirons). Above the fire, the 'caldero' (cauldron) is suspended from a huge chain called the 'llar'. The smoke escapes through gaps left between the roof tiles, which also let in the rain. It is significant that the kitchen is always windowless. There are usually two long wooden settles ('escaños') on both sides of the hearth, and suspended from the beams are the curing hams, 'chorizo' sausages, and other products of the pig-killing, against which it is frequent to hit one's head. All houses now have a small butane-gas cooker, which the villagers call 'la cocinilla', for use in the summer, though most cooking is still done over the fire which is lit nearly every day of the year. Adjacent to

the kitchen is usually a small well-ventilated room, called 'el cuarto' or 'la despensa', where the cured meat of the pig-killing is hung.

All houses have 'la sala', which may or may not contain a bed depending on the size of the family, off of which there will be one or more 'alcobas' (bedroom alcoves), each one only just big enough to hold a large bed and separated from the 'sala' by no more than a curtain. Over the head of the bed will be a crucifix. If the family own a wardrobe, it will be in the 'sala', but traditionally - and in most houses still - clothes, embroidered bedclothes, etc., are all stored in 'baules' (trunks) kept in the 'sala'. The white bedclothes, with brightly coloured embroidery and trimmed with elaborate crochet-work, are (along with the carved horn spoons and drinking-cups (('colodras')) made by the men) the highest expression of local craftsmanship; the women and girls will often spend hours every day working on their embroidery while they sit outside their houses and chat with their neighbours.

The 'sala' is usually used only on formal occasions such as weddings, first communions, and the feast of San Miguel. In the centre of the room will be a 'mesa camilla' - a round table designed

to hold the 'brasero' (pan with lighted coals, a brazier) - with half a dozen straight-backed wooden chairs round it. On the walls will be ceramic plates from Talavera, a mirror with photos of children's weddings and of sons doing their military service, plus an assortment of pictures of saints and Blessed Virgins.

Upstairs is 'el sobrao' (the loft), which is where all houses have 'el horno' (the dome-shaped oven of adobe) used for baking the bread and biscuits before the watermills in the valley were closed and the villagers forbidden by the government to grind their own wheat and make their own bread. No one bakes their own bread now; it is brought fresh every day from Navaleones.

The diet of the villagers is based on bread, potatoes, and the products of the pig-killing. Meals are either 'frio' (cold), which means bread with cold meats, cheese, etc., or 'de calao', which is a hot meal for which one has to use a fork or spoon. The household cycle of mealtimes is the following: At seven in the morning, the housewife will 'hacer lumbre' (light the fire) and 'desayuno' (breakfast) will consist of coffee with goat's milk. At ten or half-past ten, the villagers have the 'almuerzo' (second breakfast)

of fried eggs and 'torreznos' (rashers) with bread and wine. At one o'clock, they have 'la comida' (lunch) of potatoes with pork, potatoes with eggs, potatoes with cod, or beans with pork. At eight o'clock, 'la cena' (supper) consists of cold meats - 'jamon' (cured ham), 'chorizo' (paprika-flavoured sausage), 'salchichón' (salami-type sausage) and goat's cheese. In the summer, instead of 'la cena' there is 'la merendilla' at seven o'clock, which is very much the same thing unless there are guests invited, those who have helped that day with the haying; in which case, it is more elaborate.

On feast days, the villagers will often eat 'paella' (a dish of rice with chicken), and for 'postre' (sweet course), and whenever anyone visits, they usually have a heavy biscuit made with a lot of lard called a 'perrunilla'. The villagers hardly eat any vegetables at all since, with few exceptions, they do not plant any. And they hardly eat any fruit, although they have great quantities of apples, pears, plums, and cherries rotting on the trees. They say that fruit is not 'real food' and is 'dañina' (harmful). On the feast day of the patron saint, San Miguel, it is traditional to kill a young goat and make a 'guiso' (stew). It is relevant to mention here that given

the sort of diet the villagers have, it is not at all surprising (despite the physical exercise of the outdoor life they lead) that the most common serious diseases from which they suffer are those of the circulatory system. The second most common disease, related both to their diet and to the damp, cold winters the village suffers, is rheumatism.

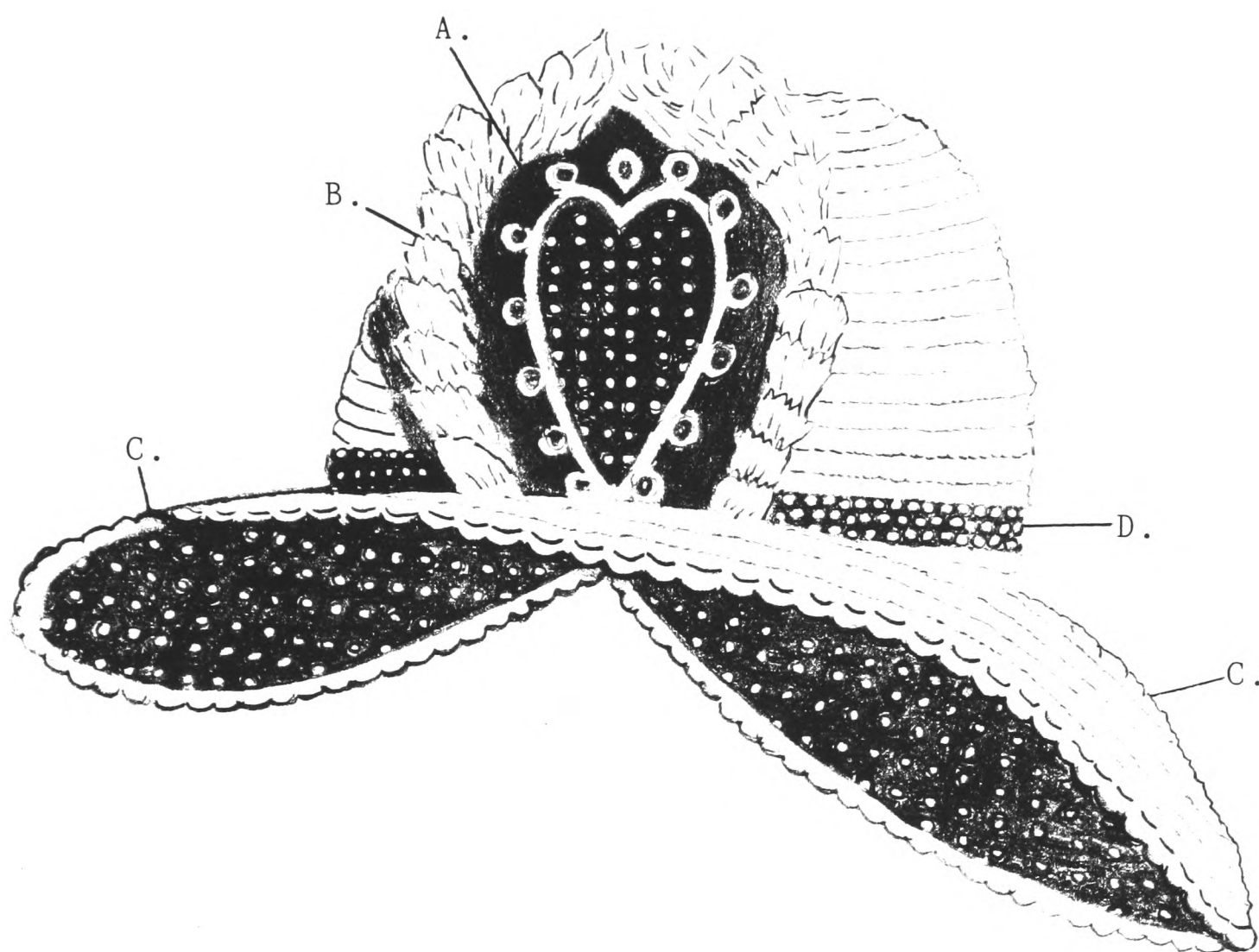
At mealtimes at home, a small table covered with 'huele' (oilcloth) is placed in front of the fire between the two wooden settles. All the family sit round, helping themselves, with either a fork or a spoon in their right hand and a large piece of bread in their left, directly from the 'cazuela' (casserole). All the adults will drink the white wine made on the other side of the mountains in Extremadura. A single glass or mug will be filled from a large 'garrafa' (carafe, decanter) and handed round from person to person. The only really essential implement for eating is 'la navaja', a penknife with a blade some four inches long. All village men carry one of these knives at all times, though I have never seen one used with aggressive intent. One could go so far as to say that a village man without his knife is nearly a contradiction in terms, since, apart from being necessary for cutting the large, round loaf

of 'candeal' bread, the various products of the pig-killing, and the cheeses (the women eat with kitchen knives), a man's knife is used for cutting rope, branches, and the ears and tails of young animals. It is not unusual to see a man calmly eating his lunch with the same penknife that he has just used to cut his personal mark into the ears of a young calf.

At La Nava, dress is a very clear indication of age. Excluding the children, the dress of both men and women can be grouped into three categories. The older women still wear what we could call 'traditional dress' (see Plate 4). This consists of black cloth slippers with rubber soles in the winter and black sandshoes of canvas and rubber in the summer, thick black stockings, a very wide, pleated, black skirt worn on top of one or more of the same depending on the weather, and a flared petticoat with lace at the hem. Over the various and voluminous skirts will be worn a large black apron with large pockets. On top, they wear a black blouse or one or more black knitted woollies. They never wear coats. They wear gold or silver ear-rings, which have usually been bought in Plasencia, and they all wear the traditional hat known as 'la gorra', which is made of rye straw, has a large cloth heart ('corazón) sewn on the front and decorative

ruffs of straw on both sides of the heart known as 'los plumajes' (the feathers) (see Figure 3 and Plates 4 and 11).

The village women themselves say that they do not know what either the heart or the 'feathers' are meant to stand for; but the symbolism seems plain enough when it is learnt that the colour of the heart and band on the hat of an unmarried woman is red, of that of the hat of a married woman is blue, and that on the hat of a widow is black. At the village of Aldea del Rey Niño, just outside the city of Avila, the women wear a very similar hat with a heart on it - red for unmarried girls, blue for married women, and black for widows. The woman who makes the hats there says that the colours stand for the 'estado de animo' (state of mind or spirit) of the women, referring to their sexuality. That this interpretation may very well be the correct one is shown by the fact that at the town of Montehermoso in Caceres, where the women wear a similar hat but with a small round mirror in place of the heart, the mirror is broken when a girl marries, and the broken pieces are removed when the woman becomes a widow. The sexual symbolism of this seems only too obvious.



- A. 'El Corazón'.
- B. 'Los Plumajes'.
- C. 'Las Alas'.
- D. 'El Cinto'.

A widow will always have a black heart and band on her hat, and when a single or married woman is in mourning for the death of a relative, she will sew black cloth over the coloured heart and band on her hat. Once the period of mourning (to be further discussed in Chapter IV) is over, the woman will remove the black cloth covering the coloured cloth on her hat.

While many of the middle-aged women will wear the traditional hat, they will wear a coloured housecoat ('bata'), often with a flowered pattern, rather than the pleated black skirt. The young unmarried women usually wear a coloured blouse with a pullover, trousers, and sandshoes. On Sundays they wear coloured dresses with leather shoes. Only one unmarried girl wears the traditional hat and this appears to be because her aunt makes them and gave her one. The other girls say that they would like to have a traditional hat, but that the two thousand pesetas they cost is too much when an ordinary straw hat can be got for two hundred pesetas.

The old men wear a jacket, a waistcoat, and trousers of black corduroy, and a home-made linen shirt with no collar. They wear a black felt hat with a high crown (see Plates 6 and 7). The dress

of the middle-aged and younger men is very different from that worn by the old men. While the middle-aged men always wear a jacket and either a felt cap with a low crown or a beret, the younger men wear a cloth cap and have recently begun to use overalls when they are working. All men wear boots, and in wet weather or when irrigating they wear 'botas de agua' (Wellingtons). On Sundays and feast days they dress very much the same way, but with shoes which are either black or 'de color', meaning brown. Variations in dress depend on age and not on wealth, so that even on important feast days it is quite impossible to differentiate the wealthier villagers from the others by the quality of their clothes.

The iron bridge across the river below the village was built in 1929. Before that, communications with the outside world were by a dirt track and a primitive wooden bridge to Navaleones and then unpaved road to El Barco (the road from El Barco to Navaleones was only made in 1905) or by a mountain trail which climbed over the sierra behind the village and came down to the Vera de Plasencia in the province of Caceres. It was by this trail that the cattle had always been taken to Extremadura. It was not unusual for the wooden bridge to be washed away in the winter -

villagers say 'Every other winter' - and the father of one present-day villager was frozen to death in a snowstorm while returning from Extremadura across the mountains. Even today, a heavy 'nevada' (snowfall) in winter can leave the village cut off for a week or more.

Starting from the broad valley floor down which the trout-filled river runs and ending at the snow-covered peaks where the 'capra hispanica' (an autochthonous wild mountain goat) is to be found, we can distinguish various bands of territorial division in the landscape. Immediately above the river are the lower 'praos' (meadows), and above the meadows are the 'huertas' (vegetable gardens and orchards) of 'la hoja de abajo' (which, in this context, means the lower fields), which reach to the village. All meadows, vegetable gardens, and orchards are privately owned by individual families. Immediately above the village are 'las eras' (the threshing floors) and 'la hoja de arriba' (the upper fields), above which are the upper meadows. The meadows climb the mountainside on both sides of the two main 'gargantas' (narrow mountain valleys or glens), while around them at the same level is the municipal common known as 'de propios' or 'del concejo'. A large percentage

of the municipal common is taken up by the two pine woods planted some twenty-five years ago. The villagers have a quarter share in the profits made on the sale of the wood that they began to cut last year, as well as each man having the possibility of earning a 'jornal' (daily wage) of 1500ptas. by helping with the work. Above the municipal common, and clearly demarcated from it by boundary stones with the letters 'SS' or an 'S' with a cross either carved or painted on them, is the 'Sierra de Socios', the alpine pastures for the summer grazing. Behind, though not much above, the 'Sierra de Socios' and unseen from the village, is 'la finca del conde' (the earl's estate), which - apart from having the attraction of a 'laguna' (mountain lake) of crystalline beauty - is a paradise for shooting parties in search of the rare (and protected) 'capra hispanica'. While most village men have been to the mountain lake at least once, no woman or girl of the village has ever seen it. The possible reasons for this will be examined in Chapter IV.

The division of space within the village was, until the installation of running water in 1983, strongly marked by the location of the three fountains; one at the very top of the village, the next halfway down the village street, and the last right at the

bottom of the village street. Yet even these three fountains have only been in existence since 1971, and for all the previous centuries of life at La Nava there was only one source of water for all the houses, and that right at the top of the village street. So, with the coming of the three fountains - strongly opposed at the time by those who lived at the top of the village - and even more with the advent of running water, we see that the top of the village has successively been losing importance in relation to the bottom of the village. Before 1971, the two bars that had existed were both near the top of the village. After 1971 a bar was built at the bottom of the village, and coinciding with the arrival of running water at La Nava, a second bar was built at the bottom of the village.

But what has not changed, at least not in the memory of any villager living today, is the number and location of the village 'corrillos'. The word means a small group of people and comes from the word 'corro', which is a ring or a circle. It refers to the group of women whose houses are physically nearest one another and who usually sit together during the day embroidering and chatting. These are the women who, along with the immediate family, will be most

in evidence in the event of illness or death in the family of one of their members. These women refer to the other members of their 'corrillo' as 'vecinas' (neighbours). The names of the eight 'corrillos' at La Nava, beginning from the top of the village and working down, are:

1. El Chorro (The Fountain)
2. Corral del Praillo (The Meadow Pen)
3. La Esquina (The Corner)
4. La Plazuelilla (The Little Square)
5. Corral de las Cabras (The Goat Pen) or
Las Cañas (The Cattle Tracks)
6. Solanillo (The Sunny Side)
7. La Callejilla (The Alley)
8. La Cruz (The Cross)

As was already mentioned, the fields are conceptually divided into those above the village (known as 'la hoja de arriba') and those below the village (known as 'la hoja de abajo'). The importance of this is that, in any one year, all the villagers sow beans and potatoes on the fields above the village and wheat, rye, and barley on the fields below the village. The following year this is reversed, all villagers sow wheat, rye, and barley above and beans and potatoes below, and so on. The reason for doing

this, say the villagers, is that the sheep and goats were, some years ago, allowed to graze freely on the stubble left after the harvest of the wheat, rye, and barley, and if the bean and potato plants were nearby, the animals would eat them as well. Yet while the goats are still grazed on the stubble, there are many fewer of them than before, and there are next to no sheep left in the village, so it would appear that this argument has lost validity. Nor is it a question of irrigation, because although the wheat and rye are not watered, the barley (like the beans and potatoes) needs to be irrigated, and as we shall examine in Chapter II, both the upper and lower fields are included in the irrigation cycle every summer. The villagers say that the different crops are alternated so as not to exhaust the soil, which is true, but the interesting thing is that they all still have such a strong identity of interests so as to all sow beans in the upper fields when wheat has been sown in the lower fields, and vice versa.

The annual agricultural cycle is as follows:
January - Tend the cows. 'Encamar', which means to prepare the 'beds' for the animals with oak leaves.
February - The cows are taken down to Extremadura.
 Clean the meadows of leaves and 'muñigas' (in standard

Spanish, 'boñigas' - cow dung).

March - Prepare the irrigation channels in the meadows.

At the end of the month, begin to plough the combined vegetable gardens/orchards ('huertas').

April - Spread 'el vicio' (manure). Plough the vegetable gardens and leave them for a few days so that the weeds die. Sow the three-month barley. Some years ago, when the villagers kept sheep, they would sow three-month wheat and would leave the sheep out at night to manure the fields. Water the meadows.

May - From the first until the fifteenth, plough for the potatoes and the 'pitos' (beans). From the fifteenth until the end of the month, sow potatoes and beans.

'Escabuchar' or 'escardar', i.e. remove the weeds.

'Curar', which means to spray the plants with insecticide.

June - Hoe and weed. No watering until the end of the month when the barley is watered every eight days.

Cows brought back from Extremadura and taken to the sierra.

July - Cut and gather the hay. Water the vegetable gardens during the day. Water the meadows during the night.

August - Harvest 'el pan' (literally, 'the bread'), the wheat, rye, and barley. Fields left free for the animals to graze on the stubble. 'Trillar' (thresh).

September - Harvest the beans. 'Capillar' (comb) the 'almeales' (haystacks).

October - Lift the potatoes. Pick the apples. Sow the wheat and rye for the following year.

November - Tend the cows.

December - Tend the cows. 'La Matanza' (killing the pig).

As was mentioned above, until very recently there has been only one bar in the village. The single-storey bar served as general store for the women and social centre for the men, as well as home for the owner and his wife and daughter. The owner has been mayor for a number of years. He also runs a taxi service with his private car (the first to be bought by a villager, he got it some ten years ago). The only telephone in the village is at his bar. He has sold his beef cattle and bought milch cows (called 'suizas' by the villagers), since he says that he can no longer go down to Extremadura with the other cows and run the bar at the same time. Three years ago (in 1982) the younger brother of this man built himself a new three-storey house (the first in the village) with a large bar on one floor, right next to the small house cum bar of his elder brother. Although, or more likely, because it is completely

different architecturally from the rest of the village houses, the new bar brought the younger brother a great deal of prestige with his fellow villagers and he was elected mayor in place of his elder brother in the last municipal elections. For the moment, the younger brother still goes down to Extremadura with the cattle in winter for various spells of ten days to a fortnight, while his wife (who happens to be the younger sister of his elder brother's wife) struggles to run what has become the second social centre of the village. The elder brother has just replaced the old black and white television at his bar with a brand-new colour set, in an obvious attempt to keep up with his younger brother, who had installed a colour television which was already attracting all the younger people to the new bar.

It is difficult to overstress the importance of the bar as a focus of social life at La Nava. As we shall examine in Chapter IV, the men of the village never give the impression of being really 'at home' when they are at home. In fact, they are usually far more relaxed when they are at the bar. Yet the bar is a public place, one could go as far as to say that the bar is 'the' public place in the village. For this reason, general conversations in

which all the men present participate, often have more the feeling of a series of monologues, where each man is intent on making a good impression, than on exchanges where each is listening to and learning from the others. A man will frequently be loudly proclaiming the absolute certainty of such-and-such, when he has not the slightest idea of what he is talking about. It seems to be far more desirable to come out with an opinion - any opinion - than to admit that one knows nothing about the matter in question. This behaviour is in sharp contrast to that shown by the same men at home, where they will rarely open their mouths, and where their wife or sister will be the one loudly giving her opinion.

Bar 'etiquette' is very strict, and the men are very careful to avoid the appearance of meanness. A man entering the bar may never buy a drink for someone who is already at the bar, but must himself be invited by someone there before him. Having been invited to one drink, he is then free to order the next round, though if he has joined a group he may have to wait a further round or two of drinks before the others will permit him to pay. Infrequent visitors to the village, if they are family or friends, are never permitted to pay for their drinks. However,

if such a guest has come for an extended stay, he will be permitted to invite others to a drink after the first few days.

Not long ago (some twenty years, say the villagers) a young man who had not yet done his military service would not smoke in front of his father, though he could go to the bar with his friends and drink. And it has been less than ten years since the young unmarried women have been going to the bar on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and only in the past few years when they have dared to smoke. Married women neither go to the bar nor do they smoke.

Villagers use the words 'tio' and 'tia' (literally, uncle and aunt) as a prefix to the Christian names of married people, very much as they would use 'don' and 'doña' to refer to the doctor, the schoolteacher, the veterinary, or the town clerk; anyone 'de carrera' (a professional). Thus don Carlos is the schoolteacher and tio José is a villager and tia Maria is his wife. It is interesting to note, though, that elderly bachelors and spinsters are not referred to as 'tio' or 'tia', but solely by their Christian names or 'motes' (nicknames). Villagers explain that one uses the form of 'tio' or 'tia' to someone one would naturally address with the respectful

form of 'you' (Usted). Sons and daughters, often themselves married and with grown-up children, will still use the formal 'Usted', rather than the informal 'tu', when speaking to their parents. In fact, I once heard a young unmarried woman address another woman only some four or five years older with the formal 'Usted' since the latter was married and her mother's sister. However, this may soon be changing for the younger generation. This year (1985) a village man of fifty was complaining to me that his adolescent sons had just begun to use the 'tu' form to him and he was not at all happy about the novelty.

Amongst themselves, villagers will sometimes refer to other villagers by their nicknames. Some (few) nicknames are publicly acknowledged by their owners and may be used in their presence, while others would not even be used if a close relative of the named person were present. The villager called 'tio Pajaro' (bird) does not seem to mind his 'mote' (he once showed me a receipt on which his nickname figured as surname), while one strongly suspects that the villager known as 'tio Mentiras' (lies) would mind being so addressed in public.

The use of nicknames at La Nava is not, however, as frequent as it is reported to be at other places

(Kenny 1969, Pitt-Rivers 1971, and Brandes 1975a and b). The reasons given by Freeman (1970) for the absence of nicknames in the Sorian village of Valdemora - 'that the town was too small to produce the duplication of Christian names that would make nicknames useful . . . but also because it is in the very nature of such appellations publicly to set individuals and families off from their fellows, while it is in the very nature of the común's public face to stress its members' common bonds' - could be applied with equal validity to La Nava. In fact, the most common use of the nickname is where the same Christian name is carried by more than one 'vecino'; the existence of four men with the name 'Julián' means that each man is normally referred to by a nickname.

Villagers will generally - after a few moment's thought - be able to remember the surnames of their fellow villagers, but do not use them when talking about one another. As is usual in Spain, every person has two surnames: the first surname of his father and the first surname of his mother; the surname from the father comes immediately after the Christian name (or names), the surname from the mother coming after that. The two surnames are only used on official documents such as the identity card, tax forms, etc.,

and the town clerk is the only one who has a complete list of these.

The high level of endogamy at La Nava is shown by the fact that, of the thirty-seven households listed in the 1981 municipal census, only one household does not have (as either the first or the second surname of husband or wife) the name 'Cabezas', 'Martin', or 'Gonzalez'. In fact, while the surname 'Chaparro' appears nine times, 'Gonzalez' thirteen times, and that of 'Martin' twenty-four times, the surname 'Cabezas' (literally, 'heads') appears no fewer than fifty times, making it the most common surname at La Nava. It is interesting, in this context, to point out that in the 1752 'catastro' of the Marques de la Ensenada there is not one 'vecino' with the surname of 'Cabezas', while there are four 'Gonzalez', three 'Chaparro', and one 'Martin'. Yet less than eighty years later in the list of 'vecinos' drawn up for purposes of the salt tax in 1830, there are nine household heads with the surname 'Cabezas'. It would appear reasonably clear (but can only be confirmed by further work on the parish records) that a man, or more likely a number of brothers, with that surname first settled at La Nava sometime between the 'catastro' of 1752 and the salt tax of 1830.

Apart from the two brothers who run the two bars cum shops and use their cars as taxis, there are no specialists at La Nava. While at Navaleones there is a blacksmith, a carpenter, a butcher, a baker, a postman, and a hairdresser, no such figures exist at La Nava. When the women in their forties want their hair done before the fiesta or other special occasion, the hairdresser from Navaleones comes to the village and cuts their hair extremely short. The younger women prefer to go to a hairdresser at El Barco, and the old women grow their hair long and keep it tied up in a bun at the back of their head. The men cut each other's hair, and there are four or five of them who are known to be particularly good at it. These 'barbers' do not charge for their services, but will usually be invited to a drink afterwards.

There are three young men who drive every weekday to El Barco to work as bricklayers, and are usually available at the weekends to do odd building jobs in the village. They can be regarded as part-time farmers and cattle-raisers, since they will often take time off (they refer to it as 'permiso', which means permission or leave) when they have to collect the hay in July, the grain in August, kill the pig in December, etc., and will spend their evenings and

free time taking care of the animals. Each has either his father or father-in-law to take care of things when he is working as a bricklayer and to go to Extremadura with the cattle for him in the winter.

Of the outside professionals who come to the village, the most important is the doctor, who usually comes from El Barco on Tuesday and Friday mornings. He holds his surgery in the kitchen of the old bar. The villagers do not pay to see him, nor if they have to call him urgently at some other time, since this is part of 'Seguridad Social' (Spanish National Health). However, each household pays the doctor the 'igualala' (agreed fee) of one hundred pesetas a month, which was the system by which the doctors were paid before the existence of the 'Seguridad Social'. The 'practicante', a medical assistant qualified to give injections, etc., lives at Navaleones and his services are included in the 'Seguridad Social'. Medicines, also included in the 'Seguridad Social', are got at one of the three chemists at El Barco. The two men who run their cars as taxis will normally fetch such medicines when they go to El Barco, but will charge for this service if they have to go especially for them. The veterinary, who lives at El Barco, was previously paid by the same 'igualala' as the doctor,

but decided that he was not earning enough and for the past year has been charging in relation to the number of animals each villager owns.

To enjoy the benefits (health insurance and old-age pension) of the 'Seguridad Social', all village men pay a fixed rate (5500ptas./month in 1985) under the 'Régimen Especial Agrario', which is that section of the Spanish National Health dealing with farmers. Wives and children are included with husband or father. The unmarried men pay the same rate as the married men, while the unmarried women get private health insurance.

To acquire the 'Documento Nacional de Identidad', the identity card which every Spaniard over the age of sixteen is obliged to carry with him at all times, is a simple matter at La Nava. Every five years (the period for which the card is valid) the authorities come to the village to renew everyone's identity card. A few days before they are due to arrive, a photographer from El Barco will come to the village and all the adult villagers will stand, one by one, up against the whitewashed wall of the old bar to have their photograph taken.

To pay their taxes, the villagers of La Nava are required to go to nearby Navaleones on certain

days in the year when the tax-collectors are there. If they do not go then, they are obliged to go to the tax offices at Piedrahita.

Fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as wine, are brought to the village by lorry every Thursday and Friday. The butcher from Navaleones also comes with meat, but this is somewhat clandestine, as he is only licensed by the health regulations to sell meat from his shop and not from his van. The village is also frequently visited by a variety of lorries and vans which bring clothes, shoes and boots, bedclothes, crockery, kitchen products, etc. The arrival of one of these 'ventas ambulantes' (travelling stalls) - the villagers refer to them as 'las tiendas' (the shops) - is announced by the pop music and announcements blaring from their loudspeakers. All such sellers always set up their folding tables at the bottom of the village street.

CHAPTER II

VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS

What is probably the most important single event in the entire history of La Nava de San Miguel was the signing, on 27 February 1878, by all the 'vecinos' who were the household head (thirty-nine men and five widows), of the document by which the villagers bought back from the Spanish State the sierra above the village which had been their common property from the time of the Reconquest. The reason why it was necessary for them to do this is the following.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, successive Spanish governments had sought a way to remove what they regarded as the main impediment to the formation of a modern state. This was the considerable amount of land in the hands of the nobility, the Church, and the municipalities, which was not only exempt from taxation but was also completely outside the market economy in 'manos muertas' (mortmain). Various wars, not only with France, England, and Portugal, but also later with

the Carlists (defenders of the ancien régime strongly supported by the Church and headed by the Infante don Carlos) placed the Exchequer under great strain. The necessity of covering the public debt, dealing a blow to the enemies of liberal ideology, and placating the land-hunger of the rising bourgeoisie, all combined to produce a series of 'leyes de desamortizacion' (disentailment laws) enacted throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

Disentailment was carried out in two main phases, each period known by the name of the minister of 'Hacienda' (Exchequer) associated with it. During the years 1834-43, the disentailment of Mendizábel was principally concerned with ecclesiastical property and the dissolution of the religious orders and left untouched the property of the municipalities. However, the law of 1 May 1855 drawn up by Madoz specifically disentailed municipal properties, both 'bienes de propios' (which were owned by the municipalities as institutions) and 'bienes comunales' (which belonged to the community of 'vecinos' of each municipality). The 'bienes de propios' were normally let out to either villagers or outsiders, and the income so derived was used to defray the costs of the municipal corporation. The 'bienes comunales',

on the other hand, were open to all 'vecinos' and provided the free pastureland, firewood, etc. very necessary to the economies of most villages. Precisely for this reason, the law of 1855 gave town councils the possibility of asking for exemption from sale of their 'bienes comunales', if they could show that the common land had been open and free of charge to all villagers during the twenty years preceding the promulgation of the law. Yet, in practice, most villages did not request such exemptions and the greater part of the commons of Spain were expropriated and auctioned off as if they belonged to the municipalities as 'bienes de propios'. Joaquin Costa (1898) was to refer to this as 'the insane war of the nation against its municipalities'.

The auctioning of the sierra of La Nava took place in the city of Avila on 13 July 1869. The sierra was bought by one Francisco Garcia of Avila for the sum of 2504 'escudos' (for two lots), to be paid in ten equal instalments, the first a fortnight after the sale and the rest at annual intervals, so that the entire sum had been paid to the State after nine years. The amount cannot be considered high, since the sierra, according to the 1878 document,

'está constituida por grandes montañas de rocas y terreno inaccesible siendo una pequeña parte aprobechable para los pastos y estos de escasa produccion'.

'consists of great mountains of rock and inaccessible terrain, only a small part of which is useful as pastureland and that of limited value'.

What also seems to have influenced the low price was the fact that the urban bourgeoisie was much less interested in acquiring such lands (of small value as a profitable investment) just when more appetizing investments were beginning to appear elsewhere. For this reason, many villages in the northern half of Spain, including La Nava, were able to retain their communal pasturelands by buying them back from the State. Francisco Garcia was merely the intermediary who was able to get rid of his seriously devalued and otherwise unsaleable government bonds by using them to buy the sierra, in exchange for which the villagers of La Nava paid him in hard cash.

By the document of 1878 the sierra was resold,

officially at the auction price, by the Avila intermediary to a 'vecino' of La Nava, José Cabezas Casado, who in the same document ceded ownership of the sierra 'in favour of all the "socios" (partners), maintaining for himself a part equal to those of all the other "socios" and co-owners of said land'.

The importance of the document of 1878 for the village is twofold. Firstly, the sierra above the village passed from being part of the common property of the 'Quarto de San Bartholomé' of the 'Comunidad de Villa y Tierra' of El Barco de Avila to become the private property, known as the 'Sierra de Socios', of all the 'vecinos' of La Nava de San Miguel (see Map 2). And secondly, the regulations concerning the sierra agreed to in the 1878 document are precisely the rules still observed by the villagers today.

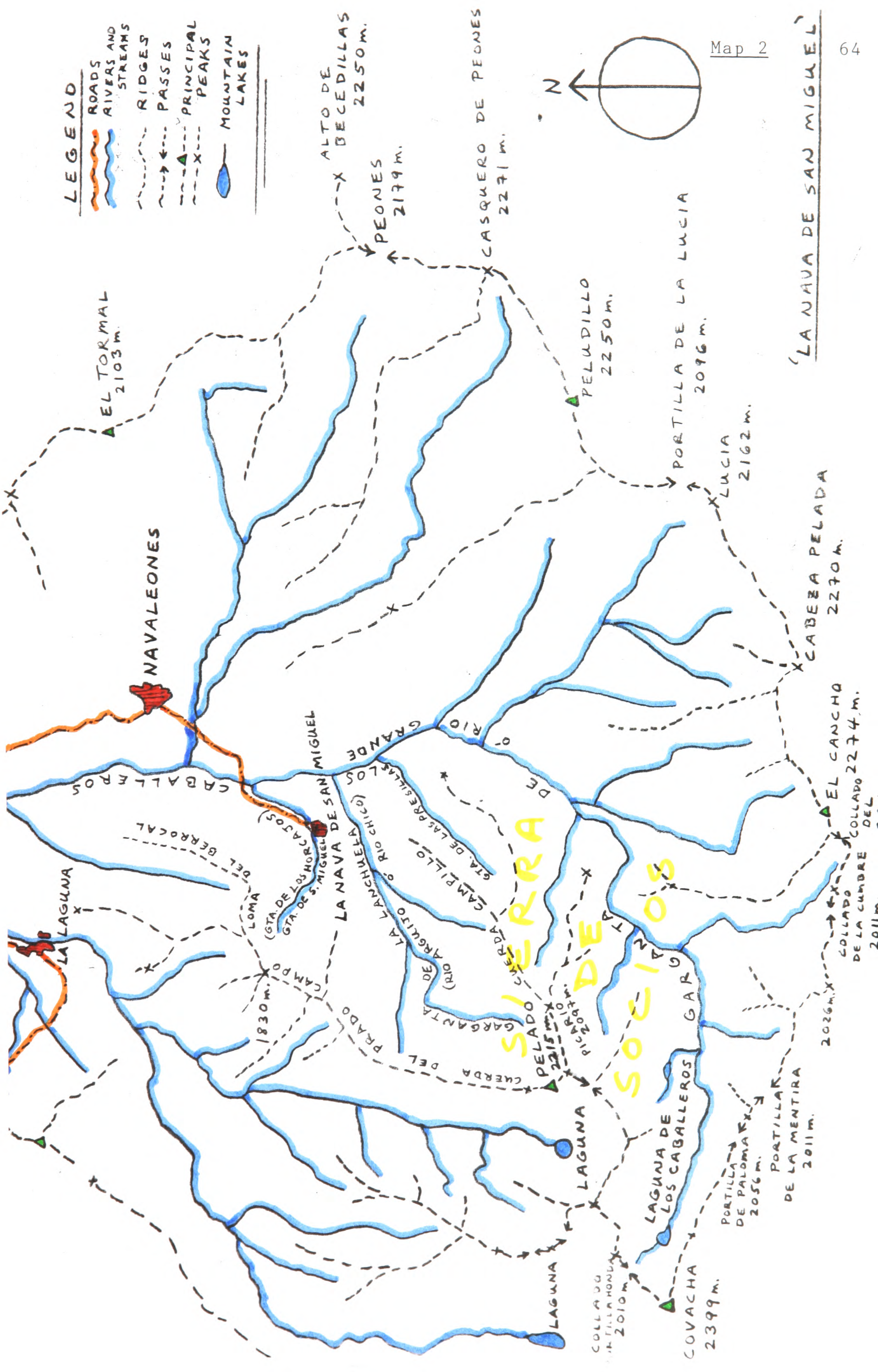
It was established, among other things, that: the limit on the number of animals each member may introduce into the sierra is fixed at 350 sheep, 90 goats, and 25 cows; if a member does not pay the quota on his animals asked for by the administrative body of the sierra, his animals will not be admitted to the sierra; if any animal trespasses on the sierra when it is closed, the owner will be fined; no animal owned by a person not a member may be admitted to

LEGEND

- ROADS
- RIVERS AND STREAMS
- RIDGES
- PASSES
- PRINCIPAL PEAKS
- MOUNTAIN LAKES

Map 2

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'LA NAVA DE SAN MIGUEL'

the sierra; rights to the common pass to children and 'legitimate descendants'; all expenses of the sierra will be charged to each member on a 'pro rata' basis; and if a member is not happy with the conditions, he will be expelled from the society.

Most importantly, rights to the 'Sierra de Socios' are strictly limited to 'vecinos' - those born in the village ('hijos del pueblo') or married to someone born in the village - with permanent residence there. If a 'vecino' leaves the village, he loses his rights to the sierra, but can regain them by taking up permanent residence again. If a man from outside marries a girl of the village and he comes to live there, he will 'comprar' (buy) rights to the sierra by paying a certain (quite small) sum of money to the governing body of the common, known as the 'Junta de la Sierra'. However, in no sense can rights to the sierra ever really be 'sold', since villagers do not personally own 'shares' in the sierra which they could sell to anyone else. The number of 'partes' (parts, shares) in the sierra is not fixed, but depends on the number of 'cabezas de familia' (heads of household) at any given moment. There is no such thing as having a half-share or the like, since all sons and daughters will inherit full rights

to the sierra and are able to transmit the right to their husbands or wives, if they are outsiders. And just as obviously no villager can have more than one 'parte' in the sierra, since it is not a question of transferable 'shares' but of 'rights to the usage' of the common. Women are never elected to the 'Junta de la Sierra' and, as we shall examine in detail later, do not (normally) participate in tending the goats in the sierra or the cows in Extremadura, yet they are considered to have exactly the same rights to the sierra as a man. In theory, a villager only inherits his 'parte' in the sierra upon the death or retirement of his father, or, if married and with a still active father, upon the death or retirement of his wife's father. Otherwise, villagers say that 'no tienes parte en la sierra' ('one has no part in the sierra'). In practice, however, this does not prevent such villagers from having their cattle in the sierra in the same way as all the other 'vecinos', though they can not be members of the 'Junta de la Sierra'.

The 'Junta de la Sierra', the body which oversees all matters related to the 'Sierra de Socios', is made up of four 'vecinos' chosen once every four years at a meeting of all the 'vecinos' assembled in 'concejo abierto' (open council). Each out-going

member of the Junta will propose a 'vecino' to succeed him, though anyone in the assembly may propose someone else. There is no formal vote; consensus is reached by discussion. The four men agreed upon must then draw lots to see in which order each will take his turn as 'Presidente de la Sierra' for a year's time. The 'presidente' keeps the accounts and has custody of 'la caja' - the box containing the documents of the sierra. Meetings of the Junta are always held at the house of the current 'presidente'. Although most decisions of the Junta are reached collectively by the four, if the question is a particularly important one - as, for example, the decision to let out the shooting-rights to the sierra - the matter is decided by a majority vote of the 'open council'.

The principal responsibility of the Junta is, on the two days before the feast of San Pedro (29 June), to count the number of cows and goats that each villager wishes to take up to the sierra for the summer pasturing. The cows are counted without much fuss on the afternoon of the 27th, although in some years the Junta does not even bother to visit the meadows to see the animals because they have the list of cattle made by the veterinary which, unlike a similar list made by the town hall for tax purposes, faithfully reflects reality.

Villagers say that even the list of the veterinary is not really necessary, because 'everyone knows what everyone else has'. Early the following morning the cows are taken separately by their owners up to the sierra.

The counting of the goats, on the other hand, is an extremely colourful affair held sometime after eleven o'clock on the morning of 28 June. All the villagers turn out to watch as the four members of the Junta count the goats, decorated with flowers for the occasion, of each family in turn. The four men stand in a line at the top of the village and the over three hundred goats are driven past them. Since the men position themselves less than two metres from the house wall, the goats are forced to pass them singly. This, added to the fact that each man carries a thin stick with which he taps each animal as it passes him, gives the whole operation an appearance similar to that of running the gauntlet, though the animals are not harmed in the slightest. While the goats of each family are counted in turn, the villagers are very quick to point out that the object of the exercise is to count the total number of goats in the sierra herd and not to check whether each household has correctly declared the number of goats they own.

Immediately after the counting of the goats in the main herd at the top end of the village, a much smaller herd, some sixty goats, is counted in an identical manner by the Junta at the bottom end of the village. The importance of this will be examined below.

Sometime in January the Junta collects the quota due from each villager for the number of animals he has introduced into the sierra on the eve of San Pedro. It makes no difference if a man has later removed one or more animals from the sierra, either because the animal was ill or he wished to sell it at the cattle market at El Barco, he is still obliged to pay for the number of animals he first took up. The villagers say: 'El que pisa, paga' ('Every animal which steps onto the sierra, pays'). However, they also say 'Mamando, no paga', which means that the calves are not counted, only the adult head of cattle. This year (1985) the sierra rate for a cow was 250ptas. Since a goat is always rated by the villagers at one-tenth that of a cow, the sierra rate for a goat was thus 25ptas. Unlike the calves, the kids are counted and charged at the adult rate. Villagers say that the fact that the kids are counted and the calves not has its origin from the time when 'the rich ones'

had cows and the poorer villagers only had goats. The money collected by the Junta is used to pay the 'contribución' (taxes) on the sierra paid to the State and for the normal running expenses of the Junta: for 'jornales' (daily wages) for the cleaning of the irrigation channels in the sierra; for the 'guarda' of the sierra; and for the wine consumed at the meetings of the Junta.

The post of sierra guard is filled annually by a curious system referred to by the villagers as a 'subasta' (auction). What happens is that all the village men crowd into the house of the 'presidente' of the sierra, who starts off the bidding at 25000ptas. The men will then shout out their bids, each one a thousand, five hundred, or only a hundred pesetas lower than the previous bid, until the job goes to the man who has offered to accept the least money for it. That villagers are less willing to take such jobs as time goes by (although the current rate of inflation in Spain, officially some 8 per cent, is also a contributory factor) is clear from the fact that the 1983 annual salary for the sierra guard was 17000ptas., that of 1984 was 19500ptas., and the annual salary agreed to this year (1985) was 23500ptas. In fact, the man who had been acting as 'guarda' for

the past few years said this year that he was not interested in the post as it was no longer 'profitable', and the job went to two very young men, one of whom has just returned from doing his military service and the other who has yet to do his. The responsibility of the sierra guard is to ensure that no one trespasses with his animals on the sierra in the spring and early summer, when the grass is growing, before the official opening of the sierra at the feast of San Pedro.

The limit on the number of cows permitted in the sierra, identical to the number stipulated in the contract of 1878, is twenty-five per 'vecino', in the village sense of 'vecino' as meaning 'cabeza de familia' (household head). In theory, if a villager wished to keep more cows than that up in the sierra, he would have to pay an extra fee on the additional cows as well as obtaining the permission of the Junta. However, what in fact happens is that any extra cows will be 'put in the name of' a relative and no extra fee will be paid. What the villagers mean by this is not that a man would actually claim he had many fewer cows than he in fact had - this would be absurd in so small a community where everyone knows exactly what everyone else has - but that any extra cows are considered, in some sense, 'as if' they were the cows of others.

For example, there is one villager who has fifty cows. This is obviously twice the number permitted in the sierra. However, this man keeps all his cows in the sierra every summer and pays for them at the ordinary rate. It happens that he has two brothers; one has 12 cows and the other 16. Adding together the herds of the three brothers gives 78. Now, since each brother is permitted to keep 25 cows in the sierra, the three brothers together may keep 75 cows. Since this is basically the number of cows they have, adding their herds together, no one in the village openly complains about the extra cows. However, a number of villagers told me that this was not fair and that the man with the extra cows should be made to pay more, so it is very likely that one of the main reasons why there is no public protest is that no one in the village cares to become an enemy of the man with the extra cows. Another version has it that the cows have been 'put in the name of' the father-in-law of the man with the extra cows.

The total number of cattle owned by the people of La Nava varies slightly from year to year, but is approximately 350 adult cows and about a dozen bulls. The cows are all of an autochthonous breed known as 'raza Avileña', which is bred only for meat and not

for milk and is particularly well adapted to the extreme conditions of the mountains and to the long journeys involved in the annual cycle of transhumance. The bulls kept are of two breeds: about half are 'raza Avileña', to maintain the purity of the breed; and the other half are 'Charoleses' (from Charolais), to produce calves which fatten quickly. All the calves, male and female, produced from Avileña-Charolés crossings are always sold, as are most pure-bred Avileña calves. A particularly good pure-bred male calf may be kept as a 'semental' (stud), while one or more pure-bred female calves may be raised for breeding, depending upon the size of the herd, the market price of calves, and the financial situation of their owner. The cows will normally produce a calf a year. A cow which has not had a calf for two years will be sold.

While the Avileña bulls may either be taken to the sierra in the summer or be kept down in the village, the Charolés bulls are never taken to the sierra, since, apart from their being much less hardy than the Avileña bulls, their owners will usually exchange the 'services' of their stud for help with the hay-making in July from any fellow villager without a bull. For each animal impregnated, the owner of the cow must spend either one day cutting

grass with a scythe or two days gathering hay for the owner of the bull. A cash payment is never made, since it is considered important to try to give such transactions the appearance of freely given mutual assistance. One villager, commenting on a fellow villager's helping him cut the grass, adamantly affirmed: 'Money has never passed between us. We are friends.' Villagers seem to go out of their way to 'demonetize' these institutionalized forms of reciprocity by even inviting the man who has 'paid' for services in this way to dinner (called by them 'merendilla') that evening along with any other men, relatives or friends, who have helped them with the hay-making.

The cattle will remain up in the sierra for about three months from the feast of San Pedro, depending on the weather and the state of the grass. During that time the cows and their calves are left on their own, apart from the occasional visit of their owners to ensure, for example, that a cow has not broken a leg fighting with another cow. If such a thing were to happen, the first villager to notice would immediately report the matter to the owner of the cow. The village men would accompany him up to the sierra to inspect the injured animal. Often,

there would be little remedy other than to kill and butcher the animal there, most likely by quartering it, and carry the meat down to the village on donkey- or horse-back to sell cheaply to fellow villagers, since, as villagers say, it would be extremely difficult to get a full-grown cow which had been crippled down from the sierra. The village ideal of mutual assistance (seen in many aspects of daily life) comes to the fore in such times of crisis. A good example of this which I witnessed was when a villager's horse was reported to have fallen in the sierra. All the village men dropped whatever they had been doing and made the long climb, over an hour, up to the place where the already dead horse lay. All that could be done was to bury the animal, but it was an enormous show of village solidarity for the man who had just lost his best horse. While the villagers say that no one forces or compels them to help in such cases, since they are not 'bajo un amo' (under a boss), they are, in fact, quite conscious of the social importance of such events and go as far as to say that, apart from the certainty that one will someday be able to 'recuperar' the help given, such occasions are a perfect opportunity for them to 'romper las rencillas' (literally, 'to break up the grudges'). What they are saying is that after

they have all participated together in helping a neighbour, the tensions and ill-will normal to the life of any small community will be reduced and 'las aguas vuelvan a su cauce' ('the floodwaters return to the riverbed'), which means that something which has got (even slightly) out of joint returns to its proper position.

If the autumn weather is fine, the cows will normally stay in the sierra until San Miguel (29 September). However, if the villagers think that the cows are not eating enough or if the snow comes earlier than the proverb says - 'By All Saints day, the snow on the heights and by St Andrew's day, the snow at your feet' - the cows will be brought down to the meadows near the village. Sometimes the cattle will even come down on their own if the weather suddenly turns cold. One man told me he had been woken up one cold autumn night by the sound of cowbells, and recognizing them to be of his own animals, had rushed out to find the cows starting off down to Extremadura on their own.

The cattle will then spend about four or five months in the village; the variation from one year to the next depending on the weather and on the quantity of hay in the barns and in the 'almeales' (conical haystacks, standard Castilian refers to them as 'almiares')

in the meadows. If the weather is not too cold, the cattle are left out overnight in the fields, but are stabled in the village upon the arrival of snow, referred to by the villagers as 'las moscas blancas' (the white flies). Then usually sometime at the end of February or the beginning of March the cattle are taken to Extremadura, where they will remain for the following four months until the next fiesta of San Pedro. The transhumance to Extremadura and the stay there will be examined in detail in Chapter III.

While the cows up in the sierra may be left on their own for weeks at a time, goats and sheep must be constantly watched whenever they are taken out of the stables. Villagers claim that sheep are much more difficult to control than goats (at the slightest chance they will jump into the vegetable gardens and start eating the bean and potato plants) and are much fussier than the goats about what they will eat. While goats are perfectly happy to eat practically anything growing (heather, broom, thistle, etc.), sheep will eat only grass and tender plants. Villagers state that goats are much hardier animals than sheep and that in the winter when the grass is covered with snow or ice, the goats (like the cows) will scratch beneath to find the grass, while the

villagers had been forced to clear the snow from the meadows before the sheep would graze on them.

While during the summer and autumn all the village sheep would be grouped in the sierra into three large herds (known as 'pastorias'), each herd minded in turns by the men who had their sheep in that herd, in the winter and spring the wife or daughter of each member of the 'pastorias' (the Spanish word includes the owners of the sheep and not just the animals) had been obliged to take their own sheep out to graze all day, every day, in fair weather or foul. At nine in the morning women and girls would take the sheep up to small meadows above the village, where sometimes two or three women would be able to chat together while the sheep grazed, but often the woman or girl would be alone with her embroidery. The sheep would remain there until about two o'clock when they would come down to the meadows and fields to feed on the stubble after the crop had been harvested. Finally, at six in the evening in winter they would be brought back to the stables for the night. In the spring, however, the sheep would not be put in the stables, but would spend the entire night inside a movable fence called 'la red' (standard Castilian 'el redil') on the field ('huerta') of a member of

the 'pastoria'. The order of this system of manuring the fields naturally was in accordance with the order in which the men took turns tending the sheep of each herd.

All the difficulties involved in breeding sheep are given to explain why since 1978 only one villager keeps sheep (a small herd of some 40 animals), while as recently as 1971 the villagers still had 500 sheep. 'Ahora somos todos señoritos', they say, meaning that like rich and idle gentlemen, they cannot be bothered to work hard any more. This is clearly not the whole answer since they just as quickly say that 'el ganado menudo deja mas', that is to say that the sheep and goats are more profitable than the cows. What seems to have happened is that the villagers were perfectly willing to put up with the obvious inconveniences of keeping sheep for as long as doing so remained really profitable. However, the merino sheep bred by the villagers gives very little milk and is valued principally for its fine wool, so that when the price of wool declined in the late 60s and early 70s, this was no longer the case. And once a number of men had sold their sheep, this meant that the remaining members of the 'pastorias' would have had to take more frequent turns as shepherds in the sierra; a fact which only

encouraged more of them to get rid of their sheep.

It is in these circumstances that we can understand a village abandoning its centuries-old tradition of sheep-raising in the short space of seven years.

When most villagers still had sheep they would always take all the sheep up to the sierra every summer at the feast of San Pedro (though the one man who still keeps sheep now joins his small flock with another in the sierra of La Laguna for the summer). In fact, the names by which the three herds were known ('El Horco', 'La Berciosa', and 'La Majá') referred to the three parts of the sierra to which the sheep were taken and where they would spend the night in the 'majá' (sheepfold, in standard Castilian 'majada'). While the sheep and the shepherd at 'El Horco' would spend the entire summer on the same pastures, the two flocks of sheep and the two shepherds at 'La Berciosa' and 'La Majá' would spend two days at one place and then alternate, so that the sheep and their shepherd would spend the summer first two days on the pastures of 'La Berciosa' and then two days on the pastures of 'La Majá', then back to 'La Berciosa' for another two days, and so on. Villagers say that by this system (known as 'contra careo', where 'cereo' means pasture) the shepherds of the two nearby 'pastorias' could not accuse each other of having the

better grazing-lands. The sheep (like the goats) were always charged at one-tenth the rate for a cow (or a horse or a donkey) by the 'Junta de la Sierra'. The sheep were normally taken across the mountains for the winter; the system of transhumance to Extremadura will be examined in Chapter III.

One important effect of the selling-off of the village sheep was that many villagers were able to buy more cows or simply did not need to sell their calves for a year or two after selling their sheep. This has caused a certain general levelling of economic standing amongst villagers. In 1958, five villagers owned half the total number of cattle in the village, and many villagers had only one or two cows and some even had none at all. Today, while it is true that one man (a son of one of the previous five) has fifty head of cattle, most villagers have between seven and twenty head of cattle. The fact that older villagers now receive old-age pensions which they do not spend but give to their sons and daughters has only helped this tendency to invest in cattle.

The manner of herding the goats depends on the time of year. In the summer and autumn the goats are divided into two herds, while in the winter and spring all are grazed together in one herd. As was

described above, at the opening of the 'Sierra de Socios' on the day before the feast of San Pedro the main herd of village goats (some 300 animals) are counted at the top end of the village and are then taken up to the sierra for the summer grazing. However, the smaller herd of some 60 goats (that which is counted at the bottom end of the village) does not go up to the sierra, since each household normally keeps one or two goats in the village during the summer in order to continue having a regular supply of milk. In fact, these goats are referred to by the villagers as 'las cabras del café' (the coffee goats) or 'cafeteras', since it is goat's milk that the villagers have with their morning coffee and not cow's milk, which is reserved for the calves. Some villagers call these goats 'chocolateras', which may either reflect their personal preference of breakfast drink or be a reference to the fact that chocolate, formerly considered a luxury, is still taken by all the guests on the morning of a wedding and by the unmarried boys and girls at dawn after the fiesta of the patron saint, San Miguel.

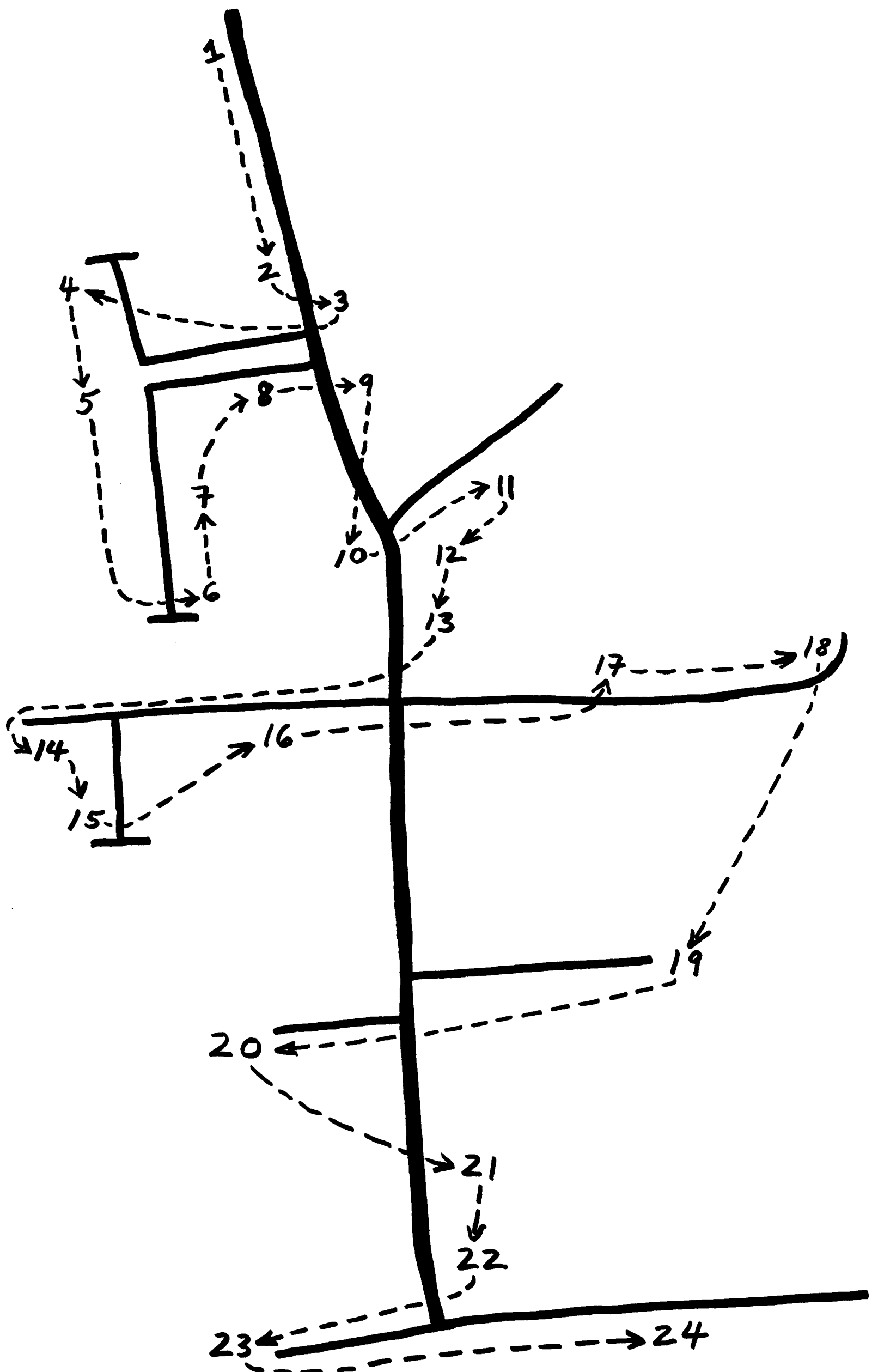
These 'coffee goats' are taken out to graze every morning and are brought back to be milked by their owners every evening and then shut up in the stables for the night. The 'coffee goats' are not

taken up as far as the sierra, but rather to the lower-down slopes near the village. When people kept sheep, every family would take the 'coffee goats' along with the sheep, but by 1976 (when most villagers had already sold all their sheep) the villagers decided that it was a tremendous waste of time for each family to spend hours every day tending only one or two goats, so they agreed to introduce the present system by which every household owning goats must take its turn (represented by father, son, or brother) as goatherd to all the 'coffee goats' of the village. Significantly, what are often considered to be ideals of 'traditional' rural society - co-operation and mutual assistance - are, in this case, the basis of a 'modern' adaptation. What seems clear is that such a reaction on the part of the villagers of La Nava to the changed circumstances follows quite naturally from the fact that those ideals are so deeply embedded in their community life.

The order by which the men take turns in tending the 'coffee goats' follows the location of the houses on the village street. As was mentioned in Chapter I, La Nava is essentially one long street with a small number of side streets. The turns will begin at the top of the street (which is the same as saying at the top of the village) and work their way down to the

bottom of the street (which is the bottom of the village). When the turns have worked their way to the bottom end of the village they will jump back to their starting point to begin another descent of the village street. The order of the turns is fixed and, according to the villagers, goes 'siempre a la derecha' ('always to the right'). What they mean by this may be seen in Figure 4, where the house at the very top of the village street (the house with which the turns to take out the 'coffee goats' ((nearly)) always start) appears as number 1.

What is particularly interesting is that the villagers refer to a complete series of turns - starting from one end of the street and reaching the other end - not by the standard Castilian word for the serial replacement of taking turns, 'turno', but by the quite distinct word 'torno'. 'Torno', apart from referring to various machines which turn on their axis (windlass, lathe, potter's wheel, etc.), means a turn round something, a circular movement. While the word 'turno', as with English 'turn', may refer both to an individual's turn within a series of turns and to the complete series of turns, the word 'torno' as used by the villagers of La Nava refers only to a complete series of turns. They say that 'un torno es cuando da la vuelta a todos' ('It is a "torno" when



it has gone round everyone', the 'everyone' being understood as all who are included in that cycle). Villagers are aware of the word 'turno' as referring to an individual's turn in a series of turns, but do not use it. Rather than saying that 'today is so-and-so's "turno" to tend the goats', they will say 'Hoy le tocan las cabras a X'. And to say 'We do not have a turn this turn round', they will say 'No nos toca guardar en este torno'. What is most significant is that the villagers state that the 'torno' is 'una rueda que da vueltas sin fin', 'a wheel that turns endlessly'. And they describe the movement of the turns jumping from one end of the street to the opposite end after the completion of each 'torno' as 'vuelve la rueda', 'the wheel turns or returns'. So what might appear to be simply movement straight up and down is conceived by them as being circular.

What is understood as movement 'to the right' and what as movement 'to the left' appears to be in direct relation with the age of the person questioned. For all villagers over the age of forty, movement 'a la derecha' (to the right) is understood as movement which, taking Ego to be in the centre, goes in a counter-clockwise direction; while for those younger

than forty, movement 'a la derecha' is defined by some as going counter-clockwise and by others as moving in a clockwise direction. The confusion and doubt expressed by the younger villagers when asked whether a particular movement is 'to the right' or 'to the left' is in complete contrast to the confidence and certainty of the replies of the older villagers when asked the same thing. It would appear that the village convention of movement 'to the right' as movement going in a counter-clockwise direction is in direct conflict with the convention of the wider society outside the village which deems that movement 'to the right' is movement going in a clockwise direction. For this reason the more educated younger members of the community find themselves in difficulty when questioned closely on the point. The direction of the procession which circles the chapel carrying the image of San Miguel on the saint's feast day - always going counter-clockwise - is variously described by the young people of the village as going 'to the right' or 'to the left', but always by their parents as going 'to the right'.

The older people give as examples of movement 'to the right' that of the reaper's arms as he cuts the grain with his scythe and that of the shearer's

hand as he clips the wool from the sheep; both of which (for a right-handed person) are movements going in a counter-clockwise direction. What the older people do, when they wish to demonstrate movement 'to the right', is to rapidly move their right arm in a sweeping gesture across their chest until their hand (the right one) nearly touches their left arm. And to show that something goes 'to the left', they will make the same sweeping movement with their left arm in the opposite direction. If they move their body at all, they will turn slightly - we would say 'to their left' - when they indicate movement 'to the right', and will turn - we would say 'to their right' - when they demonstrate movement 'to the left'. It is necessary to emphasize that movement in either direction is not conceived of (at least by the older villagers of La Nava) as going in a straight line, but rather as always going in an arc or a curve.

The villagers of La Nava are firmly convinced that the right and left sides of the body (which, by the way, are the same as our definitions of the right and left sides of the body) are controlled by the corresponding side of the brain. Or more precisely, by the right 'brain' and the left 'brain', since they state that (talking of both men and animals) 'tenemos dos sesos'

('we have two brains'), and that the right 'brain' controls the right half of the body and the left 'brain' controls the left half of the body. Villagers are unsure of how much, if any, interconnection exists between the two 'brains', but are very quick to demonstrate the validity of their anatomical model by reference to the 'modorra'.

The 'modorra' (some villagers say 'modorro') is the name given to a number of diseases of the brain and spinal cord, known in English as 'the staggers' or 'the blind staggers', which affect cattle, horses, and sheep. The villagers explain that the animal begins to turn round in circles and run against walls. The villagers say that they have no idea what causes the disease, but claim that they can tell which 'brain' of the animal is affected by observing in which direction it turns; if the animal turns 'to the right' (i.e. counter-clockwise), it is the right 'brain' which is diseased, and if the animal turns 'to the left' (i.e. clockwise), it is the left 'brain' which is affected. The villagers say that they know this because when they cut open the skull of the dead animal the 'brain' which is diseased is 'full of water'.

The villagers say that there is a very simple way of ensuring that the lambs do not get the 'modorra',

and that is by cutting off their tails before they are a year old. However, this must only be done, say the villagers, on 'Jueves Santo' (Maundy Thursday), and only with a knife which is not too sharp but has been previously used to cut bread, meat, or other food. The villagers say that they do not know why the knife must not be too sharp, but state that the operation must be done on Maundy Thursday because that is one of the most 'sacred' days of the year. It is relevant here to point out that the male lambs are castrated when they are two or three months old, but with no importance being given to the day when this is done nor to the sharpness of the knife used in the operation.

Villagers say that 'la mano derecha es la mas importante' ('the right hand is the most important') and 'manda la mano derecha' ('the right hand leads'). To demonstrate this to the ethnographer, one man held up his left hand, saying: 'Con esta, no soy' ('With this one, I am not able'); he then held up his right hand and said: 'Pero con esta, todo lo que sea' ('But with this one, anything'). Villagers refer to a left-handed person as 'zurzo' (standard Spanish is 'zurdo') or, more frequently, as 'gacho'. The use of the word 'gacho' is very interesting, since in standard Spanish it does not mean 'left-handed' but 'bent down' or

'turned downwards'; 'un cuerno gacho' is 'a down-curved horn' and 'una vaca gacha' is 'a cow with down-curved horns'. The idea expressed by the use of 'gacho' to refer to 'left-handed' appears to be that, like a cow with down-curved horns, a left-handed person is malformed and thus unable to defend himself properly. One couple told me that they had tied their young daughter's left hand behind her back in order to force her to use her right hand, until told not to do this by the schoolteacher. The parents said that they had acted in this way because it was 'muy malo y muy feo' ('very bad and very ugly') for their daughter to use her left hand to eat and to write.

It is relevant here to note that when the village men smoke they always hold the cigarette in their left hand, while the young women (the older women do not smoke) hold the cigarette in their right hand. When the villagers were asked what they would think of a man who smoked holding the cigarette in his right hand, they replied that the man would probably be 'un marica' (a homosexual). Village men could give no reason for holding their cigarette in their left hand, though when pressed by the ethnographer one or two did suggest that it might be to leave the right hand, the important hand, free to work or drink with.

What the villagers mean when they say that the order of the turns of the 'coffee goats' goes 'siempre a la derecha' (always to the right) when going down the street is explained by them by referring to the two cases where the order of the turns loops into side streets and where the man at the bottom of the side street has his turn before neighbours whose houses are closer to the high street (see houses 6 and 14 in Figure 4).

The fact that, not only the 'torno' for tending the 'coffee goats', but also the 'torno' for acting as 'regador' (water guard) always starts at the top of the village and works down the street might make it appear that the villagers conceive of their village always from the vantage point of the top of the street. Yet the villagers do not put it in these terms, and they point out that since the 'torno' of the 'trabajos vecinales' (communal work), as well as the 'torno' for tending the 'yunta' (team for ploughing) in the common known as the 'dehesa boyal' (all these systems organized by the 'torno' will be examined below) start at the top of the street one year and at the bottom of the street the following year, the village really has no beginning nor end. However, the fact that of the five existing co-operative village institutions organized by

'tornos', two always travel down the street, whereas two alternate between going up and going down the street (the fifth system of 'tornos', that of the 'sierra goats', has no relation whatever to the location of people's houses on the street), does imply a certain predominance of the top of the village.

The villagers say that the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats' should always be 'completed' at the end of each season, that is, always finish at the bottom of the street. At the end of the summer grazing season, which may vary from year to year depending on the weather but is usually sometime round the first of November ('Todos los Santos'), the 'sierra goats' descend and the two herds are reunited for the winter. The reuniting of the two herds will be advanced or delayed by a few days so that the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats' may be completed. And in the case of the 'sierra goats' being forced down from the sierra by the advent of bad weather some days before the completion of the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats', the remaining men of that 'torno' will complete the 'torno' by going out the necessary days along with the goatherd of the main herd. The villagers say that they do this so as to begin the 'torno' each season with household number 1 at the

top of the street. When asked what they would do if the 'sierra goats' were forced down by bad weather when the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats' was beginning, or midway down the street, rather than finishing, the villagers reply that they would simply take up the following year with the next man in line after the one who had last taken out the goats the previous year.

If a family keep two 'coffee goats', they will 'guardar las cabras' (watch over the goats) one day in every 'torno', and if they have only one goat in the 'coffee' herd, they will 'guardar' one day in every other 'torno'. The villagers refer to this as having either 'un dia' (a day) or 'medio-dia' (a half-day), respectively. In the exceptional case of a family needing the milk of three or even four goats every day (if they have many children), they would be permitted to have this number of goats in the 'coffee' herd and would have to tend the entire herd 'a day and a half' for three goats and 'two days' for four goats; 'a day and a half' meaning they must take the goats for two consecutive days in one 'torno' and for one day in the following 'torno', while 'two days' means precisely that, that they must go with the goats for two days in every 'torno'.

If, for some serious reason such as illness, a man is unable to go out with the goats when it is his turn to do so, the next man along the line will take them without the first man needing to make up the lost day, since, as the villagers say, everyone is bound to be ill at some point, so that my helping you now means that you will help me when I need it sometime in the future. However, if a villager simply wishes to change his day for his own convenience, he may do so by asking a neighbour to take his day in exchange for taking that of the other. On the other hand, if the weather is particularly bad one day, the villager whose turn it is might decide not to take the goats out at all that day and then take them out the following day. This would also happen if the day were a special feast day, such as Easter or San Miguel. On such occasions, each villager will bring branches of willow to the stable for his goats to eat.

The system of 'tornos' for tending the 'sierra goats' is quite different from that of the 'coffee goats'. Until very recently, there were two herds of goats in the sierra every summer, one known as 'la cabrada grande' (the large herd) or simply 'la cabrada', the other known as 'la cabrada pequeña' (the small herd) or 'la cabradilla', which means

the same. In 1977 these two herds were joined to form what villagers call the 'cabrada de la sierra' or 'cabrada principal'. However, the 'tornos' of both old herds were not altered in the slightest. What happened was that the villagers decided to begin with the 'torno' of the 'cabrada grande' and then follow with the 'torno' of the 'cabrada pequeña'. The 'torno' of the present-day main herd has no relation whatever to the spatial orientation of the houses in the village, since both old herds were originally organized as private associations and not all villagers were in them. When there are various children in the same family, they take their place in the 'torno' 'por orden de forma de familia', say the villagers, meaning eldest child first, then the second, and so on until the youngest child, except for the child who has remained with the parents, who always takes his turn before the others.

At the beginning of each new year one of the villagers owning goats will take his turn as 'encargado de las cabras'. He is in charge of supervising the goat systems in much the same way as the 'presidente de la sierra' oversees all matters related to the 'Sierra de Socios'. His main responsibility is to carry blocks of salt up to the upper pastures for

the animals to lick throughout the summer. The rotation of this position goes strictly according to the order of the 'sierra goats'.

A villager with five goats in the sierra in the summer is said to have 'a half-day', if he has ten goats, 'a day', with fifteen goats, 'a day and a half', and 'two days' if a man has twenty goats in the sierra. There is a certain flexibility to these figures, since those villagers with 'a half-day' are permitted to have one extra goat, those with 'a day' are permitted to have two extra goats (i.e. up to twelve goats), 'a day and a half', three extra goats, and 'two days', four extra goats, on condition that they pay for any extra animals along with the rest at the current sierra rate (one-tenth that of a cow) to the 'Junta de la Sierra' and that they pay a special fee (something like 50 pesetas per animal) to the 'encargado de las cabras' to pay for the salt he puts up in the sierra. Each villager is also permitted to have up to two billy-goats in the sierra without paying for them. Although the maximum limit on the number of goats any one household may have in the sierra, according to the document of 1878, is ninety, no one now has more than twenty goats.

As with the 'coffee goats', a man with 'a half-day'

will tend the goats once in every other 'torno', a villager with 'a day' will go with the goats one day in every 'torno', one with 'a day and a half' will go for two days in one 'torno' and one day in the following 'torno', and the man with 'two days' will tend the goats for two days in every 'torno'. The duration of the entire cycle (the 'torno') may vary from year to year, since the number of villagers having goats may change, as may the number of goats each man has, though villagers say that with 'a day' one has to be goatherd every twenty-five days or so, and with 'a half-day', once approximately every fifty days. One man who keeps but two goats in the sierra herd is obliged to go with the goats on only four days of the year - on the twentieth of the months of February, May, August, and November. He told me that some years ago he had merely paid a bit extra to the 'encargado de las cabras' rather than being required to take the goats at all, but that now the 200ptas. or so that he was formerly asked to pay no longer compensates for the day's wage (calculated by the villagers to be 1200ptas. in 1985) considered lost when a man spends a day with the goats.

In the sierra the goats are milked twice by the man whose turn it is to tend them, first in the

evening and then again on the following morning, and all the milk from both these milkings belongs to him. He will begin the day of his turn by climbing to the upper pastures at dawn and watching the neighbour who had spent the previous night with the herd while he milks the goats. He will then spend the day in the sierra watching over the goats. He will carry his 'morral', a leather bag with a long strap, in which he (or his wife) will have packed food sufficient for lunch and dinner, usually various cooked meats (mainly pork), cured ham, goat's cheese, a loaf of bread, and a full 'bota' (leather wine bottle). He will probably also carry, apart from some sort of stick or staff (though not a shepherd's crook), his 'colodra', an ornately carved horn used for drinking from the mountain streams and for preparing 'leche migá', which is a 'soup' consisting of goat's milk, bits of bread, and sugar. The horn is put into a cold stream to cool, and the 'soup' is had as dessert. Another version of 'leche migá' (literally, 'milk with crumbs') is goat's milk with bread, garlic, and bits of cured ham, and is had as a first course. And since the goats usually graze near the high snow-fields, the goatherd has the opportunity of making 'ice-cream'. This he does by making a cavity in the

snow, pouring in some goat's milk which he stirs quickly with a stick, and adding sugar.

In the evening the goatherd will bring the goats back to the stone 'corral' (pen) where they spend the night. Before milking the goats, he will first put the kids in a separate pen, with branches of heather placed on top of the wall so that they will not jump out. The kids are kept away from their mothers so that they do not drink their milk. Someone in the family (wife, son, or daughter) will come up from the village with the donkey and the tin milk containers, and when the goats have been milked will take the milk back down to the village, where the women of the household will make the cheeses. The lids of the milk containers are never put on, as this would cause the milk to go off. Instead, the mouths of the containers are stuffed with ferns so that the milk will not spill on its journey down the mountain.

The villager who has been goatherd that day will then spend the night in the stone 'choza' (hut) a few yards from the pen. The following morning at dawn he will milk the goats a second time, someone from his family will come up again with the donkey, and then they will descend together to the village with the milk with which the women will make a second

batch of cheeses. The total number of cheeses varies greatly; from the maximum of twenty-odd, when the goats first go to the sierra early in July, gradually dropping down to the five or six cheeses made in September. According to the villagers, however, this disparity in quantity is amply compensated for by the superior quality of the cheeses made later in the season. Villagers prefer to eat goat's cheese fresh, unless there has recently been a case of Malta fever in the region, in which case they will sell all the milk to the dairy-waggon which goes daily from village to village collecting milk. They will sometimes put the week-old cheeses in olive oil, where they are left for six months or more. This has the double effect of eliminating all danger of disease and of preventing the cheeses from drying out too much, though villagers claim that the process makes the cheese 'too strong' for their liking.

Apart from their value as milk-producers, the goats are also kept for the income they provide from the sale of the kids. The villagers do not take the kids to market to sell them, but wait for outsiders (often butchers from El Barco) to visit the village looking for them. A goat about to give birth is always kept down in the village, since a kid born

in the sierra is sure to be lost and eaten by foxes. Of far greater danger to adult goats (as well as to sheep and cattle), however, are the vipers and poisonous mushrooms abundant in the sierra. Every year a number of animals are lost through contact with either one or the other.

In winter and spring, from All Saints to San Pedro, all the village goats (over 350) are herded together every morning and taken up the slopes nearest the village and in the evening brought back down again. They make quite a sight all coming down the mountainside together. The order of the 'torno' is that of the 'sierra goats'. However, unlike the norm in the sierra, the goatherd does not have a right to the milk.

Despite the fact that a number of anthropologists who have worked in southern Europe - Campbell (1964), Pitt-Rivers (1971 and 1977), Blok (1981), Herzfeld (1984), and others - have found a certain amount of symbolism associated with sheep and goats, the villagers of La Nava show little evidence of this and when questioned straight out they deny having any ideas at all about sheep or goats apart from the fact that sheep are more of a bother to keep than goats. However, when pressed on the point by the ethnographer, one villager finally

admitted that perhaps sheep are better than goats because a sheep, 'like Christ', does not protest when it is killed, while a goat makes a lot of noise.

It is interesting, in this context, to look at the only occasion during the year when women and girls are permitted to accompany the goats. It will be remembered that we discussed how the women and girls were the ones who would tend the sheep on the mountainside near the village, when the villagers still kept sheep, while it is the men and the boys who go with the goats (both the 'sierra' herd and the 'coffee' herd). When in the months of May and June of every year the upper pastures of the 'Sierra de Socios' are closed to all animals so that the grass will grow for the summer grazing, it is essential that the goats are carefully controlled and prevented from entering the sierra pastures marked off with boundary stones. For this, one goatherd is not enough, so that the man whose turn it is to tend the goats on any day from the first of May until the day before San Pedro (29 June) will need to take either his son (as 'zagal', young shepherd or goatherd), his wife, or his daughter (as 'zagala') as an assistant. The lack of someone to serve as an assistant on these occasions is given by the villagers as one of the

principal reasons why a household would not keep goats.

It is important to stress that the woman or girl who goes to tend the goats will only go as assistant to a man, and should the man be ill or otherwise unable to take the goats, the turn will pass to the next man. So, unlike the Greek shepherds studied by Campbell (1964) who conceptually oppose men and sheep to women and goats, the villagers of La Nava seem to be making the opposite association of men and goats and women and sheep. However, men were never forbidden to go with the sheep. In fact, they would spend every summer with them up in the sierra. What I suspect to be more important in this case is an identification of the respective territorial realms of men and women; where the sierra (and Extremadura) are conceived of as being the world of the men and the village (and area nearby) as the world of the women. This idea will be examined in Chapters III and IV.

The combined vegetable gardens and orchards, on which the villagers of La Nava now grow beans, potatoes, maize, wheat, rye, barley, and pumpkins below and apples, pears, plums, cherries, walnuts, and chestnuts on the trees above, are known as 'las huertas'. The irrigation of the 'huertas' (which are all 'regadío', irrigable land) normally begins sometime early in July, but may be

a bit earlier or later depending on the state of the weather, and ends, again depending on the weather, sometime round the middle of September. The 'huertas' are irrigated approximately once every eight to ten days. The eight-day interval between waterings at the beginning of July, when there is still a great deal of melt-water flowing off the snowfields in the sierra, lengthens to ten days in September when the snowfields have almost all disappeared and the flow of water is diminished. As was mentioned in Chapter I, it is prohibited to use tap water to irrigate the fields or the vegetable gardens/orchards.

The irrigation of the 'huertas' is supervised every day by two 'regadores' (literally, 'one who irrigates'); villagers also refer to them as 'aguadores' ('water men', in standard Spanish the word means 'water seller') or 'veedores' (overseers). At dawn both men climb to the top of the highest meadows above the village, closing off the irrigation channels leading into each meadow and directing all the water into three main channels, known as 'regaderas' (standard Castilian 'regadera' normally means a sprinkler or watering-can, while 'reguera' is the usual word for an irrigation channel). One man will climb first to the top of the meadows to the right (as seen from the

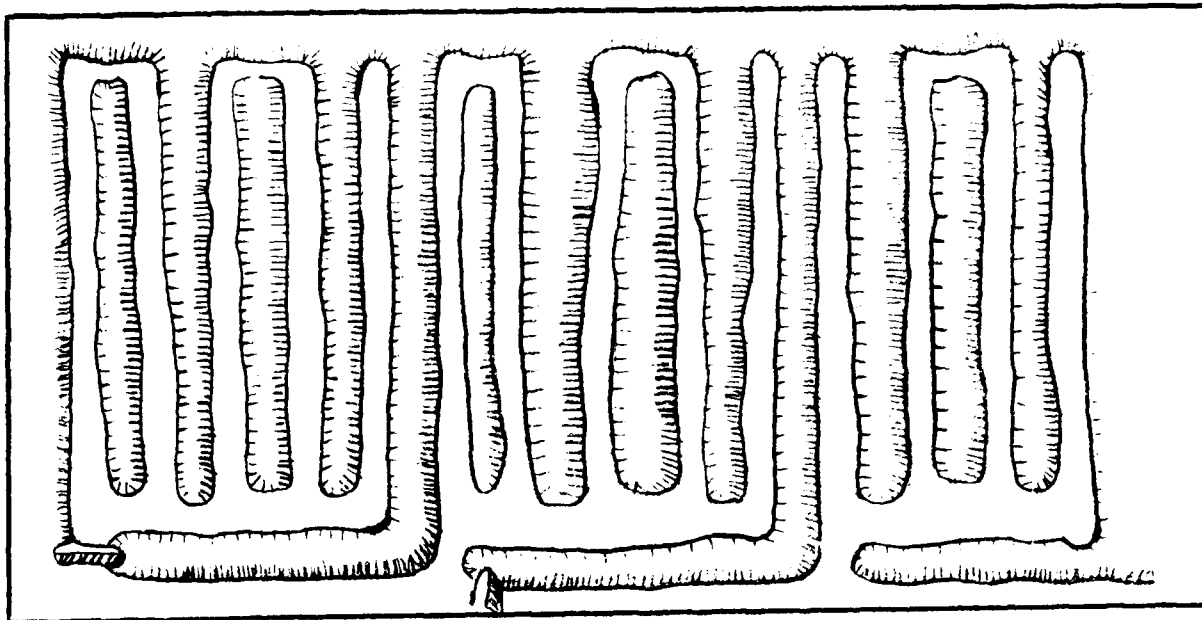
village), come back down to the village, and then climb to the top of the meadows to the left (as seen from below), while the second man will climb to the top of the irrigation channel in the centre. Round about seven o'clock the irrigating will begin, supervised by the 'regador' who climbed to the right and then to the left (as seen from the village below). Villagers state that the reason for this is that the right and left channels are somewhat shorter than the centre one and the water guard who went up the middle channel will usually take longer to return to the village than the other man. However, villagers say that there is no 'rule' about this and that the water guards will decide between themselves which of them is to take the morning turn.

Those villagers whose fields are to be watered that day will be notified the previous evening by one of the two water guards, and villagers whose fields are the highest upstream will already be in their 'huertas' when the water channelled down by the water guards arrives. As the morning wears on, it is the job of the guard to ask the person watering if he or she is nearly finished (there is no time limit, each one is free to water until the 'huerta' is considered to have received enough) so that the next one downstream may

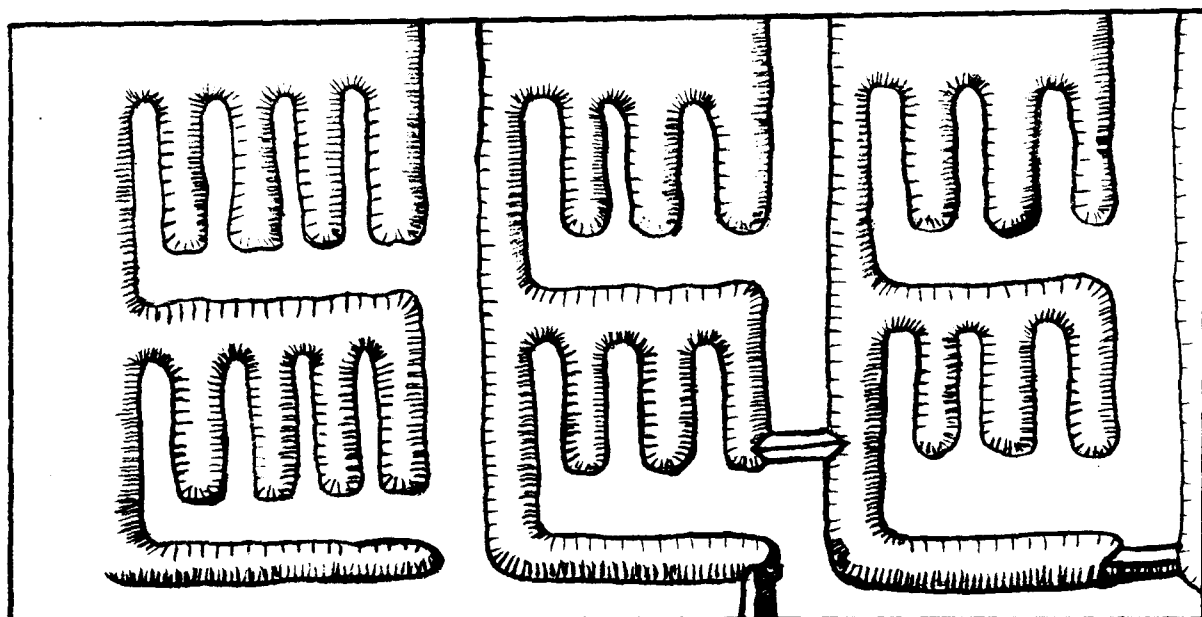
be notified that his or her turn is about to begin.

The villagers use three methods of preparing the fields for irrigation: 'por surcos', 'por tornas', and 'por eras' or 'por cabeceras' (see Figure 5). 'Por surcos' means 'by furrows', and the soil is tilled using a plough drawn by the 'yunta' (a pair of yoked cows) or a horse or a donkey. 'Por eras' or 'por cabeceras' is said to be done 'a mano' (by hand), which means that after the 'era' or field has been ploughed, the villager will use his 'azada' (multi-purpose short-handled hoe) to form the 'cabeceras' or ridges of earth which will be opened and closed with the 'azada' as watering proceeds. Although the preparation of the land 'por eras' takes longer than that 'por surcos', it has the advantage that the closing off of the 'cabeceras' as watering proceeds is simultaneously preparing the 'huerta' for the following irrigation, which will proceed in the opposite direction. Thus, watering of a field prepared 'por eras' will go from right to left one time and from left to right the following occasion.

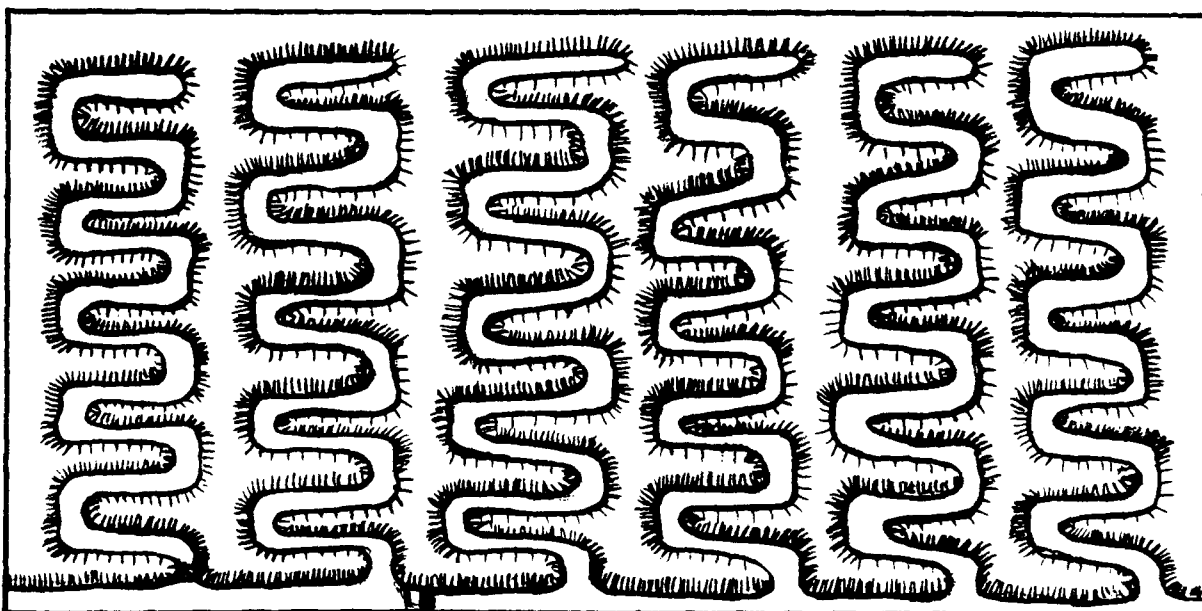
At two o'clock the morning water guard will be replaced by the other 'regador', who will oversee the irrigation 'hasta se quita la raya del sol', until the last rays of the sun have disappeared from the



A. 'Por surcos'.



B. 'Por tornas'.

C. 'Por eras' or
'Por cabeceras'.

mountain peaks on the other side of the valley. From which moment the water is said to be 'libre' (free) for the meadows until the following morning. Since the orientation of the valley is approximately north-south, the shadow of evening wells up from the valley floor and engulfs La Nava (on the western side of the valley) some good time before the mountains on the other side of the valley are covered by the rising tide of evening.

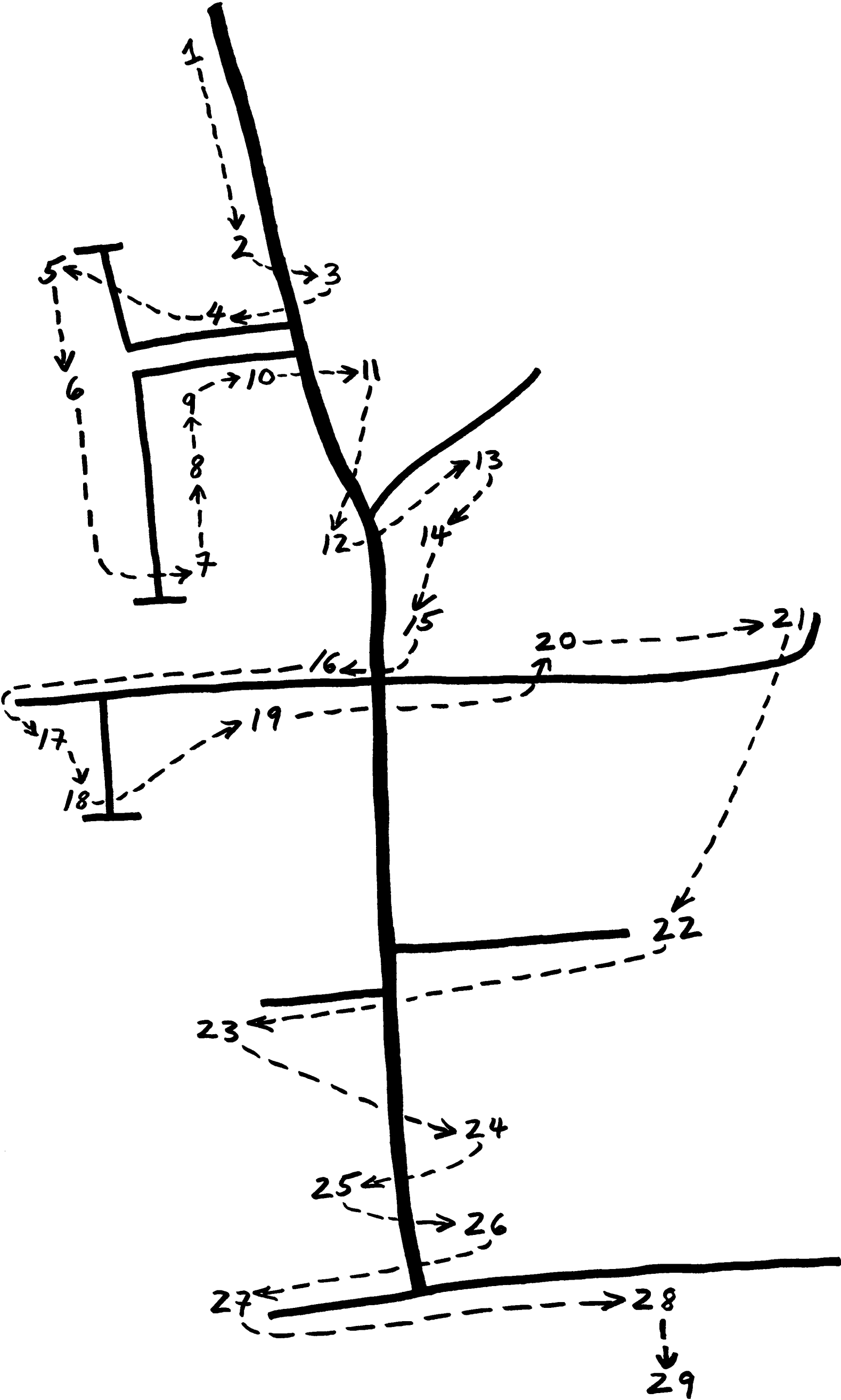
The eight- to ten-day cycle of irrigation always begins with the highest 'huertas' and, day by day, works its way down to the lowest, from where it jumps up to the top to begin the cycle all over again. And since the three irrigation channels come together when they reach the village (the right channel joins the centre one (('la principal')) at the top of the village, while the left channel joins the centre one a bit farther down) and all the water for irrigating flows down the village street in an open stone-lined channel, it is perfectly correct to say, as the villagers do, that the order of irrigating 'baja por la calle' ('goes down the street').

The order in which villagers take turns to serve as water guard also 'goes down the street'. Taking up from where it left off the previous year,

the 'torno' begins with the next downhill man and continues down the street 'always to the right'. When the turns reach the bottom of the street, they then jump back up to the top of the village to begin another descent; 'the wheel turns', as the villagers say. The order is, apart from the addition of five villagers who do not keep goats but irrigate 'huertas', that of the 'coffee goats', as may be seen in Figure 6.

When asked why the 'torno' of the water guards always goes downhill, the villagers reply that since water always flows downhill, the 'torno' 'of the water' should do likewise. When asked whether the 'torno' of the water guards (or of the 'coffee goats') would ever go uphill rather than downhill (i.e. backwards), the villagers say that this would not happen. When pressed on this point by a stubborn ethnographer, they say that they might one day decide to do such a thing, 'porque somos los amos' ('because we are the masters'), and therefore quite free to decide such things for themselves, 'pero no se hace asi' ('but it is not done like that').

Unlike the turns for the goatherd of the 'coffee goats', the turns for the water guards go by pairs and, during any one season, the same two men will always



act as water guards on 'the same day, alternating the morning and afternoon between them from one 'torno' to the next. These pairs may or may not stay the same from one year to the next, since if villagers die, retire, marry, or move house within the village, the order of the turns will be affected, even though the direction (downhill and 'to the right') never alters. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the villagers are very much interested in maintaining stable pairs of water guards during any one season, since if the number of villagers obliged to serve in such capacity is not an even one (as is the case in Figure 6), the last man on the list (i.e. the one at the bottom of the street) will have to serve as water guard on his own for a full day once every other 'torno'. This man is said to have 'a day', while all the other water guards have 'a half-day'.

This would seem to give us a ^c clue as to why a villager who takes the 'coffee goats' out for one full day is said to have 'a half-day', while another who takes the goats for two days in the same period of time as the first man is said to have 'a day'. Rather than saying that a man is obliged to tend the goats every other 'torno', the villagers say that he has 'a half-day', since a man who must go with

the goats every 'torno' is said to have 'a day'. Since we know that the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats' was started up only as recently as 1977, it does not seem far-fetched to suppose that the villagers have simply applied to a newly created institution an ordering principle which they had already been using in another context. Yet the 'calque', as we might say, is not perfect. For the man who is said to have 'a day' as water guard does exactly the same amount of work, over a period of two 'tornos', as the rest who are said to have 'a half-day', while the villager who has 'a day' with the 'coffee goats' does twice the work, over a period of two 'tornos', as a fellow villager with 'a half-day'. He also has double the number of goats in the 'coffee herd'. So, while the 'torno' itself is a cycle always moving in the same direction, not all who are goatherds, water guards, etc. participate in every 'torno', and the villagers will use the expression 'a half-day' to mean two things which to us might appear to be very different, but which to them are identical: the 'half-day' of working either a morning or an afternoon, and the 'half-day' of working one time round and not the following.

The water guards are considered to earn a

'jornal' (daily wage) of 600ptas. (in 1985), so that every time a villager acts as water guard for a morning or an afternoon he is said to earn a 'medio-jornal' of 300ptas. Since the 'torno' of the water guards is rarely completed at the end of the summer (when the rains come in September the irrigation is immediately broken off, to be resumed the following July), the payment of a 'daily wage' is meant to compensate those villagers who have worked as water guard more often than their companions that summer, even though the 'torno' will take up the following year where it left off the previous summer. The payment of a 'daily wage' also appears to be related to the fact that before 1974 the supervision of the irrigation did not go by cyclical rotation amongst the villagers, but was done by two villagers who worked the entire summer for a fixed daily wage. Villagers say that it was necessary to introduce the system of 'tornos' for the water guards when there were no longer any villagers willing to take the job of permanent water guard, since it did not pay 'a decent daily wage' and did not include 'un seguro' ('insurance', in the double sense of health insurance and old-age pension).

We seem to see two patterns clearly emerging in the past few years. The first is the disappearance

of specialist occupations such as water guard and goatherd. Until sometime in the 1930s (villagers say they cannot remember in which year precisely) each herd of goats was tended all year round by the same man, who was paid a wage. And the second pattern is the replacement of these occupations exercised by individual villagers on a more or less permanent basis by the cyclical rotation of turns by the systems of 'tornos' involving all, or nearly all, villagers. It would appear that the oldest village institutions to be ordered by 'tornos' are the turns for watching over the draught animals in that part of the common known as the 'dehesa boyal' in the months of May and June, and the turns for doing communal labour (both paid and unpaid) throughout the year. Yet to know which of these institutions was the first to be run by 'tornos' does not seem particularly important. Villagers say that both are 'de siempre', meaning that they have 'always' been run like that. What is important, however, is the fact that the villagers of La Nava have been able to adapt themselves to new situations by extending the application of the previously existing ordering principle of the 'torno'.

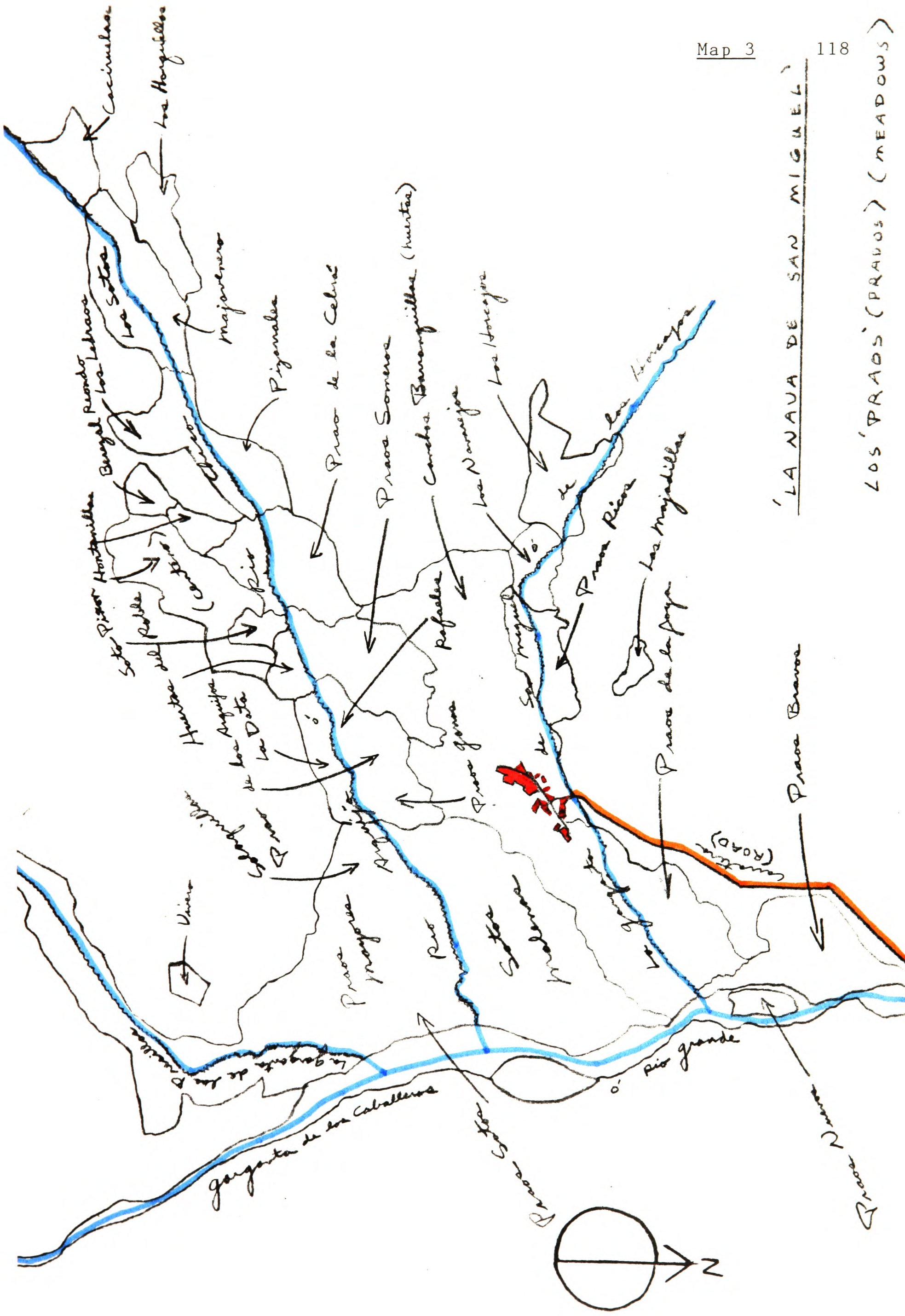
The amount earned by a villager working as

a water guard for three or four turns of 'half-day' during the summer is subtracted from the amount he is charged for the watering of his 'huertas', which depends on their size calculated in 'fanegas' and 'cuartillas'. A 'cuartilla' is a fourth part of a 'fanega', which is equivalent to 64 ares and 596 milliares. The 'fanega' is also the amount of grain needed to sow one 'fanega' of land. The villagers of La Nava calculate that a 'fanega' of wheat is equal to 44 kilos, though this is not so everywhere, even in Castile (cf. Susan Tax Freeman 1970).

The amount due from each villager for the watering is collected by the two 'presidentes' of the 'Hermandad del Agua' (literally, 'The Brotherhood of the Water'), who are elected every four years by all the members of the 'Brotherhood' (which means all the male heads of household) assembled in 'open council'. As with the 'Junta de la Sierra' and the 'Encargado' of the goats, the job of the 'presidentes' of the 'Brotherhood of the Water' is to ensure the smooth running of all connected with the irrigation of the vegetable gardens/orchards and the meadows. The 'presidentes' decide when the watering is to begin every summer and when it is to finish. That there are two 'presidentes' does not appear to be totally fortuitous

when it is remembered that the water guards always work in pairs, but the villagers seem to make no conscious connection between these two facts.

As was mentioned above, during the night the irrigation water is for the meadows (see Map 3). The situation is complicated, however, since while most meadows have a right to the water on certain days, or rather, nights of the week (and even to certain hours of the night), a few do not. And there is a certain amount of resentment on the part of a number of villagers, including those whose meadows have a right to the water on a fixed day, to what they consider was an injustice committed 'many years ago' (not specified) by 'the rich ones' against the interests of the rest of the villagers when 'four or five clever ones' arranged that their meadows would have a right to the water on six nights of the week, while the meadows of the rest would only have a right to the water on Saturdays. Although the version of events as given by the disadvantaged villagers seems too simplistic, it is clear from the municipal archives that there were quite marked differences in wealth, and thus, power, in the village in the past. And while the villagers' claim that 'Ahora somos todos iguales' ('Now we are all equal') is the ideal and



'LA NAUA DE SAN MIGUEL'

LOS 'PRAOS' (PRAOS) (MEADOWS)

not the reality, what they appear to be trying to express is the fact that there are no longer three or four families with the ability to manipulate the power structures to their own advantage, through gifts of 'cabritos y gallos' (kids and cocks) to the authorities, and thus capable of interfering with the wishes of the rest of the villagers as expressed in the assembly of the 'open council'.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that it is publicly acknowledged that villagers will 'quitar el agua' (take the water) of a neighbour when the other is not looking, even though the neighbour's meadow may have a 'right' to the water then. For this reason, various villagers are said to 'preferir los praos antes que la cama' (prefer the meadows to bed) and are known to spend the entire night in their meadow sleeping on a stone to ensure that no one takes their water. Other villagers are less concerned and will perhaps only visit the meadow before going to bed round about midnight, after which time it is less likely that a fellow villager will bother to steal their water. While the 'presidentes' of the 'Brotherhood of the Water' theoretically have jurisdiction over all matters concerning the water, the most they are able to do if a villager is persistently denounced

for taking the water of a neighbour is to have a word with him and, if he persists, make him pay a small fine. So we see that the controlled order of the watering of the vegetable gardens and orchards during the hours of daylight, ruled by the principle of equity, is contrasted with the lack of control of the watering of the meadows carried out during the hours of darkness, when the unequal distribution of rights to the water is not recognized as valid by the villagers who are at a disadvantage.

Two village families are no longer speaking to each other since they had a fight over water rights some three years ago. Disagreement arose over how much time their adjoining meadows should each be irrigated. Both meadows had originally been one meadow, with its corresponding right to a certain amount of time for irrigation, which had been divided and inherited by two cousins. One man was now claiming that the other was taking more than half the time which the original meadow had been allotted. Matters became so heated that the wife of one of them went to the house of the other man with a large kitchen knife and said she was going to kill him, but she was restrained by the other women present. The threatened man reported what had happened, and there was a trial at Piedrahita

and the woman was ordered to pay a fine and costs. The underlying problem of the water has not, however, been resolved.

As was mentioned above, there are a number of other co-operative village institutions ordered by the principle of the cyclical 'torno'. During the month of June when the sierra is closed to all animals and the cows are said to 'cucar' (which means 'to flee from the bites of the flies'), the pair of cows which most villagers keep in the village (the rest are still in Extremadura) as draught animals for 'la yunta' (team of yoked cows) are taken to that part of the common known as the 'dehesa boyal'.

There are two parts to the 'dehesa boyal'. The higher, known as 'Las Chozas', is part of the 'Sierra de Socios' and is open from the first to the twentieth of June to the cows of the 'yunta', is then closed for eight days to allow the grass to grow a bit, and is then re-opened to all animals at San Pedro. The lower, known as 'Majaltero', is part of the municipal common and is open from the first of June until the first of April, that is, all year round except for the two months of April and May in order to let the grass grow. A villager who has the usual two cows needed to form the team for ploughing will have a turn

to tend all the animals in the 'dehesa boyal' of 'one day' in every 'torno', while another with only one cow (he will team up with another villager who also has only one cow for the ploughing) will have a turn of 'a half-day', which means he will have to go to the 'dehesa boyal' for one day every other 'torno'.

In any one season the turns will start at either end of the village street, work their way to the opposite end of the village, and then jump back to where they began to continue in the same direction. The villagers state categorically that the 'tornos' of the 'dehesa boyal' must be completed, so that they may begin the following year with the turns going in the opposite direction from that in which they were going the previous year. The 'torno' will always begin at the opposite end of the village from where it began the previous year and, therefore, will always begin with the villager who took the last turn the year before. When asked why it is necessary to reverse the direction of the 'torno' from one year to the next, the villagers offer the practical explanation that it is easier to tend the cows in the 'dehesa boyal' at the beginning of June since they are too busy eating all the nice fresh grass to give much trouble, but that if the 'tornos' always began at the same end of the village, some

people would have a much easier job as cowherd than others taking their turns later in the month. However, other villagers reject this explanation and say that it is often precisely at the beginning of June when the fly which causes the cows to 'cucar' is most in evidence, and it may thus be more difficult to control the cows at the beginning rather than at the end of June.

Not only are the reasons given by different villagers for doing something in a particular way often contradictory, but the 'rules' governing the 'torno' are not completely rigid either. One year when the 'torno' of the water guards did not begin where it 'should have' begun (which was somewhere midway along the street), but instead began at the top of the village, it appeared as if the villagers were contradicting themselves. They explained, however, that since the daily wage for the job had been increased that year, it would have been unfair to continue the uncompleted 'torno' of the previous year which had been paid at a lower rate. They had decided that the fairest thing was to simply begin a new 'torno' at the top of the street.

It is interesting that when specifically questioned about which direction the turns go in when

going up the street, in the two cases where the order of turns loops into side streets (see houses 6 and 14 in Figure 4), most villagers said that they went 'a la izquierda' (to the left). However, when asked how the turns in general went up the village street, some villagers maintained that they went 'a la derecha' (to the right). What appears to be happening here is that the villagers conceive of the turns as ideally always going 'to the right', whether they are going down the street or going up it, but concede (when pressed by the ethnographer) that this may not always be possible.

Up until two years ago, two men would always go up together to the 'dehesa boyal' for the day, so that if anything happened to one of them (the cows when they are 'cucando' can be extremely dangerous), the other man would come down to the village to raise the alarm. Villagers say that they are trying out the new system of having only one man with the cows in the 'dehesa boyal' because June is a very busy month, and to have two men tied up all day doing nothing is a waste of two 'daily wages' ('jornales'). However, they are not convinced that one man on his own is sufficient, and say that this coming spring they may very well go back to the system of having

two men in the 'dehesa boyal' in the month of June. With two men going every day, it was necessary to have two complete 'tornos', whereas with one man as cowherd, only one complete 'torno' is sufficient to tend the twenty-odd 'yuntas' the twenty-odd days the cows are in the 'dehesa boyal'.

Yet another system which functions on the basis of cyclical 'tornos' is that of the 'trabajo vecinal' (communal labour), both paid and unpaid. At the beginning of August, when all the hay on the meadows has been gathered into conical haystacks and the threshing of the grain has yet to begin, the 'pregonero' (town crier) will announce that the mayor calls all the 'vecinos' to help 'cortar las zarzas' (trim the brambles) in the village lanes. Sometimes the whole village may be called out to work at the same time, but at other times the 'torno' will begin at the top of the village and work its way down the street ('always to the right') taking so many men each day. The 'torno' operates in the same way as the 'torno' of the 'dehesa boyal', which means that the next time there is some communal work to be done the 'torno' will begin at the bottom of the village and work its way up the street, though for any one job the 'torno' will always continue in the same direction

until the work is done.

Trimming the brambles is unpaid work, as is the mending of the stone-paved lanes and the village irrigation channels. On the other hand, the cleaning of the irrigation channels in the sierra in the spring is paid a daily wage of 600ptas, which is exactly what the water guards are given for two half-days of supervising the irrigation. Recently, however, there have been two much more lucrative instances of communal labour. In 1983, when running water was put into the village, all the village men were able to earn daily wages of 1200ptas. for digging up the village street and laying the pipes. And this year (1985) they are getting the same daily wage of 1200ptas. for paving the village street. All 'vecinos' have an equal right and an equal obligation to engage in communal labour. However, there are three men who are unable to participate in the communal labour since they go every week-day to El Barco to work as bricklayers. The father or father-in-law of each man is permitted to take his place doing paid communal labour in order to earn extra wages, but is then also obliged to take his son or son-in-law's place whenever there is unpaid communal work to be done.

A further instance of the application of the 'torno'

as organizing principle of a co-operative institution in the village was that of the 'porquero' (swineherd). In existence some twenty years ago, the system of turns for taking out all the village pigs went down the village street one year and up the street the following year, just like the 'torno' of the 'dehesa boyal' and that of the communal labour.

The village ideal of mutual assistance is most clearly in evidence, apart from times of emergency (such as the occasion mentioned above of someone's animal being injured in the sierra), at two important moments of the annual cycle: during 'el tiempo del heno', the hay-making season in July, which will provide the fodder to feed the cattle in the autumn and early winter; and at 'la matanza', the killing of the pig in December, which will provide food for the entire family throughout the year. On both occasions it is vitally important to have as many helping hands as possible. In the first case, to cut and quickly gather the hay into haystacks, since the 'almeal' (haystack) must be made in the heat of the day or the hay will be damp and will rot; and in the second, to prepare and salt the pork meat to provide the cured hams ('jamones'), paprika-flavoured sausages ('chorizos'), and salami-type sausages

('salchichónes') as rapidly as possible before the meat goes off.

In both cases, the family is the first to be invited to help; brothers will usually help each other get in the hay, and sisters will normally help each other wash the tripes, chop the meat, and stuff the sausages. Neighbours will also be invited to help. And just as all who help with the haying are invited to an especially good 'merendilla' (high tea) at the house of the villager they have helped, those who help at 'la matanza' are invited to eat up all the offal (head, tail, kidneys, heart, tongue, liver, etc.) in an atmosphere of great 'fiesta' which may last four or five days, as well as being given a good piece of meat to take home. Villagers are very careful to stagger their hay-making and pig-killing so that family and friends are available to help each other. It was mentioned above that a villager will sometimes help another during haymaking as 'payment' for having his cow impregnated by the other's bull, but this is never the case with the help given at the 'matanza'.

In this context, it is relevant to mention the 'Seguro de los Cochinos' (literally, 'pig insurance') by which a villager whose pig dies before the December pig-killing is reimbursed for his loss by all the other

villagers who have pigs. From the feast of San Pedro (29 June) until the end of August, a villager who loses his pig through illness, etc. is given a straight 5000ptas., with which he will buy another pig at the El Barco market to fatten up in place of the one he lost. From the first of September until the pig-killing in December, the owner will be reimbursed the full value of the pig, should the animal die. The dead pig will be weighed to determine its value, and the money in either case will come from a percentage of the value of each villager's pig when weighed at the 'matanza'. On the other hand, if a villager buys an already grown pig just before the pig-killing season and, for whatever reason, it dies, the other villagers will not give him anything to make up for the loss. So we see that the 'Seguro de los Cochinos' is a system of mutual assistance which is only activated, now and again, in moments of necessity.

Two further examples of mutual assistance which were formerly practised, but are now no longer necessary, were firstly, a woman's acting as wet-nurse to a neighbour's baby if the mother had not enough milk herself to feed the child, and secondly, the exchange of bread and live yeast when the village women still baked all their bread at home. In the

first case, there was no order by which assistance was given since it was impossible to foresee when a woman might need such help, and in the second, close relatives would arrange amongst themselves to take turns baking (each household might only have to bake once a week), and would then share what they had baked with the other members of the family, so that all households would always have day-old bread, because, as the villagers say, 'Agua fria y pan caliente, nunca hicieron de buen vientre', 'Cold water and hot bread never did anything good for the stomach'. A portion of live yeast would also always be given by the woman who had just baked to the one who was to bake the following day.

To sum up this part of the thesis, we have seen how the village ideals of co-operation and mutual assistance contribute towards the maintenance of the vitality of the community life of La Nava de San Miguel. We have examined how the rotating turns for all the institutionalized forms of village co-operation (the communal labour, the herding of the cows of the 'yunta' in the 'dehesa boyal', the herding of the goats in the 'coffee' and 'sierra' herds, the water guards for the irrigation of the 'huertas', and, in the past, the tending of the

village pigs) are always ordered by the principle of the cyclical 'torno'; and that the villagers conceive of their village as essentially having no beginning and no end, with rights and obligations rotating 'like a wheel which turns endlessly'.

We shall now examine, in Chapter III, the system of transhumance to Extremadura, the other pillar upon which rests the economic well-being of the community, and we shall see that, most significantly, the villagers do not use the word 'torno' to refer to the system of turns for tending the cattle on the other side of the mountains.

CHAPTER III

TRANSHUMANCE

If the cyclical 'torno' is the key to understanding the internal organization of La Nava de San Miguel, the annual cycle of transhumance to the pastures of Extremadura is that which defines the terms of the villagers' understanding of themselves in relation to the world outside La Nava.

Sometime in the month of February the cattle are taken to Extremadura. The actual date of starting out depends on the weather, since no one wants to be five or more days on the road in rain and snow, but also because there is no point in going to the winter pastures if the grass has not come up yet. In fact, so bad was the drought in the winter of 1980-81 that it was not until the rains came at the beginning of April and the grass began to grow that most villagers decided to take their animals south. However, this was an exceptionally bad year in a series of bad years and not at all what usually happens. One villager, the one who has fifty cows, takes them all down to Extremadura in November, since he has not enough hay

to feed them all in the village until February.

Since no one at La Nava owns pastureland in Extremadura, all villagers must come to an agreement, either individually or as a group, with the owner of a 'finca' (property, estate) who is prepared to let their cattle graze on his land for a fixed price per animal. This winter (1985) the price has varied from 10000 to 12000ptas. per cow, depending on the size of the property, the quality of its grass, and the number of cows which are put on it. The man who takes his cattle to Extremadura in November pays 15000ptas. per head. According to the villagers, these agreements are always made in writing. The 'becerros' (calves less than one year old) and the 'añosos' (yearling calves) are charged at the rate of half a cow, while the 'erales' of two years of age and the 'novillos' or 'chotos' of more than three years of age are charged at the full rate. Each villager may bring one or two 'sementales' (breeding bulls) free of charge, any more than that will be charged the full rate as a cow. In exchange for the free grazing, the bulls are expected to 'service' the cows of the entire group.

Groups of villagers will arrange to take their cows together to the same property. These groups are not family-based; sometimes brothers will take their

cows together to the same place, but often brothers will be in different groups. Sometimes villagers of La Nava will join up with men of other villages, usually either Navaleones or La Laguna, to rent the same property for the season. These arrangements are normally agreed to when all the men of the region are together at the cattle fairs at El Barco. There are one or two cases of relatives living in different villages co-operating in this way, but in general the criteria for membership of the transhumant groups seem to be that the men involved consider each other 'amigos' (friends) and all get on well with each other, and all trust each other to look after the cattle of all of them as if they were one's own. What is important to emphasize is that there is no prescribed manner of forming these transhumant groups, and that individual election is paramount.

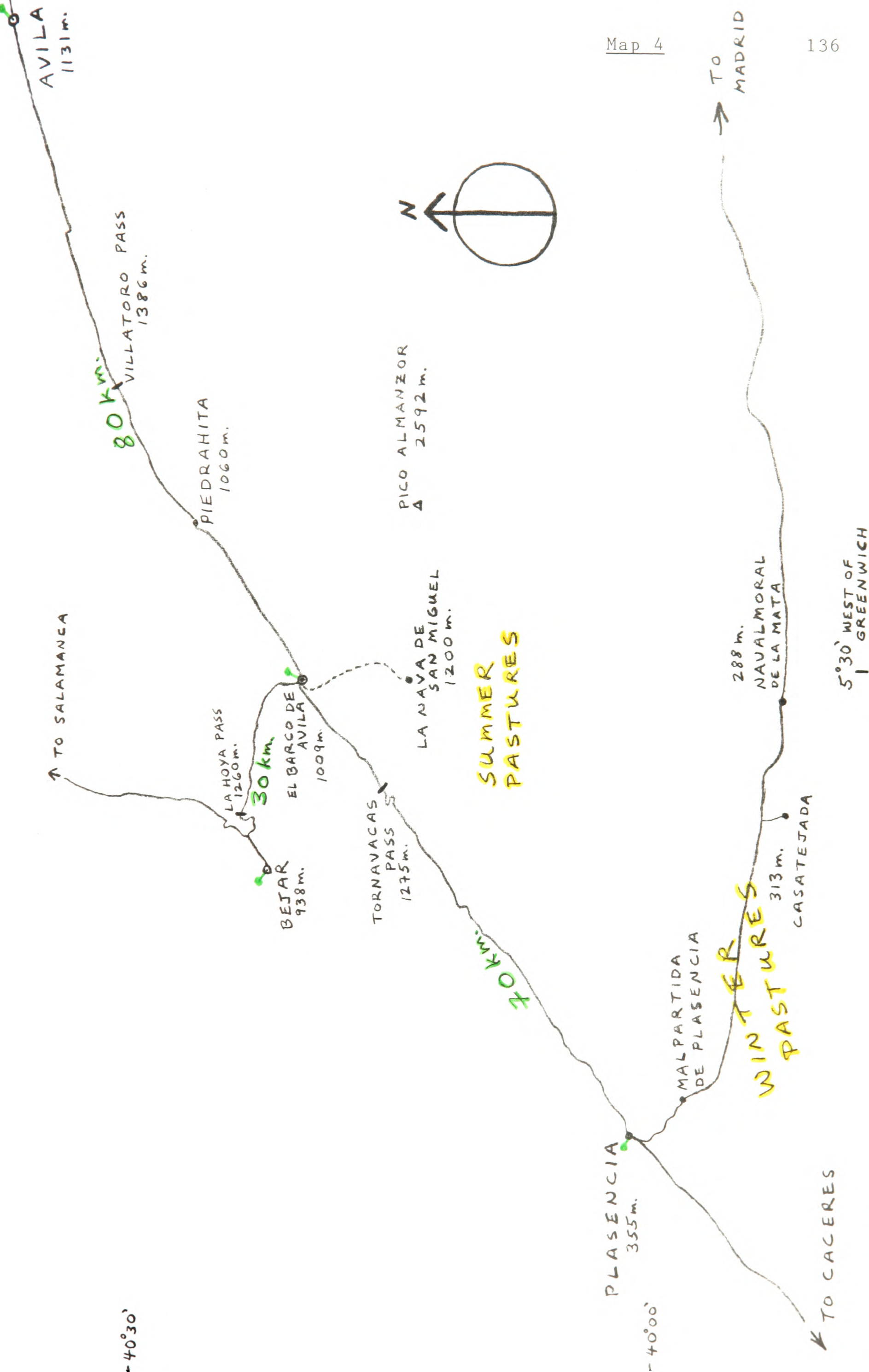
The composition of the various transhumant groups often remains stable from one year to the next, though it is not infrequent for a man to decide to go with another group, if the property is large enough to admit his cows without prejudice to the cows of the others, should he feel that the rate was too high or his cows did not eat enough where they had been the previous year. The villagers who have rented

the same property together will always take all their cows down and bring them back as a group, uniting their animals into one large 'piara' (herd, though in other parts of Spain the word is mainly used for pigs).

Three groups of village men have been going to the same three places for the past fifteen years or so, though one group has had to change to another property this year since the owner of the pastures they had been going to has bought cattle himself and can no longer rent his pastures to the villagers.

Although it may be only two hours by car, walking with the cows to the nearest 'fincas' takes at least five days and twice that or even three times as much for those few villagers who go for the winter as far south as Mérida or Alburquerque in the province of Badajoz. Villagers have taken their cows to properties near such towns as Coria, Montehermoso, and Alcántara, though the preferred places are between the towns of Malpartida de Plasencia and Navalmoral de la Mata, all these in the province of Cáceres (see Map 4).

The route followed is that of the 'cordeles' (cattle tracks) used for half a millenium, from the thirteenth until the nineteenth centuries, by the



all-powerful 'Honrado Concejo de la Mesta', already mentioned in Chapter I. Today the 'cordeles', of a stipulated width depending on their category, are under the supervision of a state body known as I.C.O.N.A. (Instituto para la Conservacion de la Naturaleza). They frequently follow roads, or rather, the modern roads often follow the line of the ancient cattle tracks, and although the cattle have precedence over wheeled traffic, the Civil Guard will fine those cattlemen whose animals occupy more than half the roadway, despite the fact that it is difficult for four or five men to control a hundred cows so that they do not spread over the entire road and obstruct the traffic. All the 'cordeles' of the valley of the Jerte pass down the centre of the villages, by the 'calle mayor' (high street), though they may occasionally be diverted round the village by the municipal authorities. This is usually not minded by the cattlemen, though there have been frequent problems along the present route with landowners who have put up barbed wire fencing blocking the right-of-way. On more than one occasion the officials of I.C.O.N.A. and the Civil Guard have had to be called to cut the barbed wire to reopen the way.

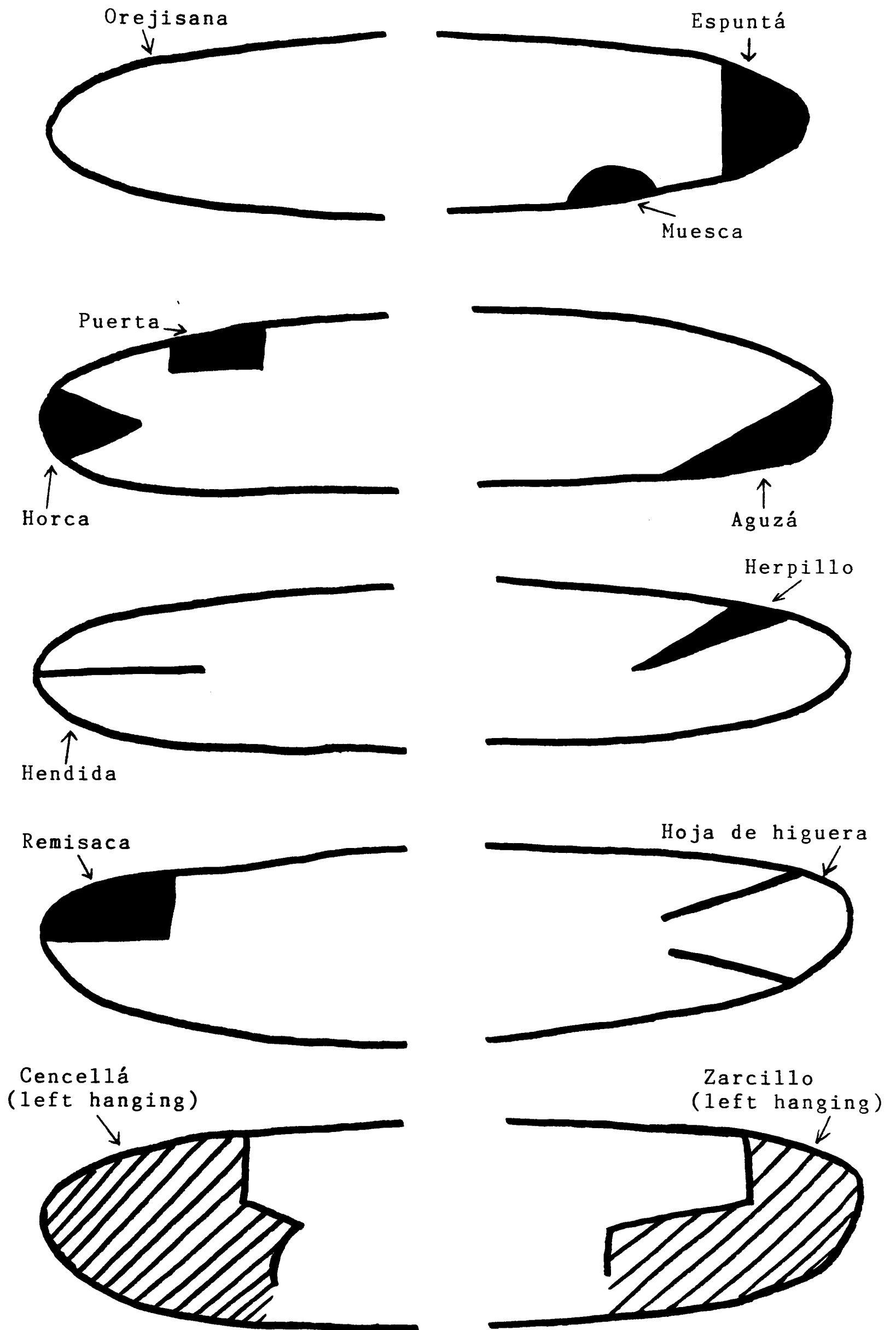
Up until some ten or fifteen years ago, most

villagers would bring the cows (and the sheep, until they were all sold in the 70s, as was described in Chapter II) down to Extremadura in winter and back to the village in June directly over the mountains, rather than, as today, by the pass of Tornavacas and the valley of the Jerte. The route over the sierra might save three or four days travelling, but could be very dangerous if the weather suddenly turned bad. The father of one present-day villager lost his life on the mountain route to Extremadura, frozen to death in a snow-storm. Although two or three men still use the trail over the mountains, villagers say that they no longer use this way very frequently as they have become too 'señorito' (in this case, meaning 'too spoilt'), particularly as one of the advantages of following the route of the 'cordeles' is the possibility of spending the night at one of the 'ventorros' (inns, roadhouses) along the way. Villagers will always stop at the same inns, each a day's march from the next, and while the animals will spend the night in the yard or in a nearby field, the men will all bed down together on the kitchen floor of the inn.

The trip is made by both cows and men walking. The horses are brought along to carry the blankets, provisions, etc. Cows about to give birth and calves

less than ten days old are sent by lorry, as are the Charolais breed of bull which the villagers keep as stud animals. The bulls of the autochthonous 'raza Avileña', on the other hand, are usually up to the strain of the journey and walk along with the cows. There is no possibility of confusion as a result of the mixing of cattle of various villagers and even of cattle from different villages, since apart from the fact that cattlemen know their own animals very well and the cows all have names, such as, 'la reonda' (the round one), 'la guinda' (cherry), 'la bizca' (cross-eyed), 'la mariposa' (butterfly), 'la muñeca' (doll), etc., all animals are branded on their right flank and have their ears cut in a distinctive manner soon after they are born. Most village animals have an 'O' branded on their right flank, though four villagers have their own 'hierro' (branding-iron) with the first letter of their Christian name, thus 'B' for Bonifacio, 'H' for Hermenegildo, 'A' for Angel, and 'D' for Domingo. Some examples of ear-markings, known as 'señales', used by the villagers of La Nava are given in Figure 7.

Both ears may be cut or one ear only, the other being left as 'orejisana' (literally, 'unharmed ear'). Both ears may have the same 'señal' or each



ear may have a distinct marking. The 'señal' of each villager is personal, and he will mark all his animals, goats and sheep, as well as cattle, in exactly the same way. The youngest son of the family inherits his father's 'señal', while the other children will either inherit secondary family 'señales' or invent their own. When asked the reason for the youngest son's inheriting the ear-marking of the father, the villagers reply that 'it is the custom', and give no further explanation.

Before leaving the village to go to Extremadura or simply to go to the market at El Barco, the cows need the 'Guia de Sanidad', which is a form signed by the veterinary certifying that the animals to be moved are not suffering from disease. The 'Guia' is originally valid for five days only, but is renewable up to five times more through a 'refrenda' (endorsement) by the mayor or Civil Guard of the town they are going through. A villager will get one 'Guia' for all his cows walking to Extremadura, and four or five men will get one 'Guia' for the 20 or more cows that they are sending by lorry. The cows must also have the 'Certificado de Vacunación' (valid for six months) against the 'fiebre aftosa' (foot-and-mouth disease). This is normally done a few days before leaving for Extremadura

so that the cows will not have to be vaccinated again while in Extremadura. When they return to the village, and before going up to the sierra for the summer, the animals will be vaccinated against 'carbunco' (anthrax).

On the morning of the day decided upon, the men and cattle leave the village sometime about eight o'clock and slowly walk down the valley towards El Barco de Avila. However, before reaching El Barco they will take another road passing the village of La Laguna, which takes them directly into the Aravalle. There they may be joined by men and cows of other villages who have previously arranged to go to the same property with them for the winter. They will then follow the Aravalle to the last village at the head of the valley, which is called Puerto Castilla (literally, 'the gate of Castile'). The cows will be shut in for the night in a meadow owned by an ex-mayor of the town, who does not charge the villagers for this. The three or four men who are to take the cows all the way to the property will spend the night in the hayloft of one of this man's stables. He does all this out of 'amistad' (friendship), explain the villagers of La Nava.

What is very important to note is that all the men whose cows are going down to Extremadura

accompany their animals during the first day of the trip as far as Puerto Castilla and then, late at night, after a big dinner together, return to the village. When asked why they do this, they reply that perhaps the cows may be a bit nervous the first day of the trip and more men may be needed to control them. This sounds convincing until it is learnt that they do exactly the same thing when the cows return from Extremadura, that is, all the men will go to Puerto Castilla to meet their cattle and walk with them back to the village. When pressed on this by the ethnographer, they confessed that no, it really was not in the least bit necessary for all the men to accompany their animals in the first day of the trip to Extremadura nor on the last day of the trip back to the village, but that 'nos gusta' ('we like doing it').

There seem to be two reasons why they do this. The first and more obvious is that going to Puerto Castilla is a perfect excuse for a holiday; if they are with the cows the men cannot be expected to do any other work those days. In fact, there is quite a bit of an atmosphere of schoolboys let out for the day about the whole business; the men drink a good deal from the 'botas' (leather wine-bottles) which are handed from man to man, and they tell jokes and

laugh a lot as they slowly walk along with the cattle. When they stop for lunch, alfresco on blankets just off the 'cordel', they offer each other their home-made 'chorizos' and 'salchichones' to try as the 'botas' circulate even faster. And, on the evening of the first day of the trip down, the dinner at Puerto Castilla has all the feel of a grand 'fiesta' with the men all sharing one another's food and drinking enormous quantities of wine. At the end of the meal the brandy will be passed round and all will light up a cigar. The jollification goes on for hours. The men's conversation, normally only concerned with cows, will turn to matters which, even after consuming equal or greater quantities of alcohol at the bars of the village, are rarely, if ever, touched upon. The feeling of freedom from the control of women, wives or mothers, is patent. These normally prudish Castilians will openly discuss the attractions of the numerous 'clubes' in the towns near the properties where the men take the cows. The villagers refer to such places as 'casas de fieras' ('zoos', but literally, 'the houses of the wild ones'), so as not to say 'casas de putas' (brothels).

The second reason, while not consciously expressed by the villagers, seems clear from the

circumstances. The very name of the village gives us a clue, since Puerto Castilla ('the gate of Castile') really is the very last village of Castile, sited just before the tremendous precipice, the border with Extremadura, dropping down the valley of the Jerte to Plasencia. Precisely on the border is the pass of Tornavacas (which significantly means 'return of the cows'), from which one looks down in February or March from a land still firmly in the clutch of winter to the riot of cherry blossoms in the valley far below. Puerto Castilla is the end of the region of El Barco de Avila, and for the villagers of La Nava it is the end of the world of the village, of the world of winter, while the pass of Tornavacas is the edge of the other, warmer world below of Extremadura. It does not seem at all surprising that they would wish to see their cows safely to the border of that other world and that they would wish to greet them again at the frontier upon their return. In fact, in the past when most villagers took their cattle over the mountains to Extremadura (unless forced by deep snow to go by the valley of the Jerte), all the members of the group going to the same property would accompany the cattle on the first day to the top of the pass (the border with Extremadura) to see

them off and would also go up to meet the cows on their way back in June.

The following morning the cows will slowly wind their way down the Tornavacas pass, and that night will be put in a meadow while the men sleep on the floor of a 'caseta' (shed), for which they will pay four thousand pesetas to the owner of the meadow and the shed. On the third night, the animals will be put in pens, the men will be given a good supper, and they will sleep on the floor of the kitchen of the inn; all for five thousand pesetas. On the fourth day, the man and animals will have descended the entire length of the valley of the Jerte to Plasencia, and the routes to the various 'fincas' then separate. Those going to the nearest have only one or two more days to walk, while others have many more days to go, as well as many more nights sleeping on the floors of bars or inns (if they are lucky) or otherwise 'al aire libre' under the stars, on the 'cordel' itself, taking turns to keep watch over the animals throughout the night.

In recent years, the villagers going to properties between Plasencia and Navalmoral have arranged that a lorry carrying hay in bales will, on the day the cows start out, travel down the entire

route leaving enough hay at each of the places at which the cows will be stopping for the first three nights. Before the villagers started doing this the animals were 'en ayunas', that is, they were made to fast all the way down until they reached the property, where they arrived weighing many kilos less. There is no problem on the way back up in June since there is plenty of grass for them to eat along the way.

One of the main advantages of the system of the men taking their cattle together to the same property is that not all of the men need stay down in Extremadura for the entire winter. The number of days a villager has to spend in Extremadura depends on the number of cows he has in relation to the total number of cows on the property. Those with more cows will have to spend more days tending the entire herd. While those villagers with few cows and, thus, few days, may wish to do all their days at one go, it is more usual that the total number of days any one man is expected to do during the entire four months that the cattle are in Extremadura, will be broken up into various periods of a week, ten days, or a fortnight, all in proportion to what the other men have to do, when he will take his turn to go down to tend the

cattle, and then return to the village when replaced by the next man.

Shortly before starting down to Extremadura, the men will draw lots to see in which order they will go. Significantly, the order by which the men rotate turns to go to and come from Extremadura is never referred to by them as 'torno'. The villagers explain that 'torno' always refers to a fixed order, and since the turns to go to Extremadura will vary from year to year depending on the number of men going to any one property, the number of cows each of them is bringing, and the number of days the cattle will be in Extremadura, the use of the word 'torno' in this context is inappropriate. I think we can also explain the non-use of the word 'torno' by the fact that although going as a member of a group to a property in Extremadura and taking turns to tend the cattle there are obviously co-operative undertakings, they are what we might call 'individualistically co-operative', in the sense that where one goes in Extremadura and with whom one goes are free decisions made by individual villagers each year, in complete contrast to what we might call the 'communally co-operative' institutions of the village, where there are no free decisions made by the individual villagers, since the direction

and the order of the 'torno' are totally outside their (individual) control. It is also noteworthy that the internal decisions of each group in Extremadura, such as when to go and if and when to change 'finca', are reached informally by discussion of all the members of the group amongst themselves, whereas decisions relating to village institutions are taken (at least in theory) by the formal mechanisms of the elected members of the 'Junta de la Sierra' or the 'Brotherhood of the Water'. And finally, it is significant that the transhumant groups are quite open to 'forasteros' (outsiders, men from other villages), whereas the village institutions are decidedly not open to outsiders. It seems clear that the word 'torno' is only used in the context of something that belongs to the community of La Nava as community, and therefore, since the transhumant groups do not so belong, the word 'torno' is not used to refer to the order of the turns the villagers take to tend the cattle in Extremadura.

There will usually be two men tending the cows at any one time, but if the animals are many, it may be necessary to have three men as 'vaqueros' (cowherds). Since each man in the group probably has a different number of cows, their turns will tend to overlap; so it is not often that two men will spend

exactly the same days on the property with the cattle. The preferred time to go to Extremadura is early in the season, in March or April, rather than later, such as in May or June. The villagers say that there are two reasons for this: firstly, there is far more work to be done in the village, ploughing, and sowing the beans and potatoes, etc., in the latter period than earlier in the year; and secondly, that it is far more agreeable to go to the 'calor' (warmth or heat) - this is one of the key words by which the villagers characterize Extremadura - when the village is still under a blanket of snow, than later when spring has arrived on the northern side of the sierra. The men have many times told me of the pleasant shock it is for them to leave the lifeless winter landscape of the village at 1200 metres above sea level on the northern sunless side of the sierra and suddenly plunge into the warm, flowering landscape at a bare 300 metres above sea level on the southern side of the mountains. And while walking with the cows is a somewhat slow introduction to the warm world over the mountains, when the men go by coach from El Barco to Plasencia or, more frequently now, in their own cars, to take their turns with the cattle, the impression caused by the very great change in climate and landscape

experienced in the short space of a few hours is, they have confessed to me, tremendous. But what affects them even more, they say, is to spend ten or fifteen days below in March or April, living in full springtime, and then return to their cold, high, 'dead' village still deep in winter. From this (often repeated) experience springs the villagers' vision of Extremadura as a world radically contrasted with La Nava; while the one is seen as being warm, sunny, and fertile, the other is considered to be cold, dark, and lacking in fertility. They point out that while in their village they are only able to grow beans, potatoes, and apples, those living in Extremadura are able to grow tobacco, figs, grapes, olives, peppers, asparagus, and other things completely impossible for the climate and altitude of the northern slopes of Gredos.

A house is always included in the rental fee of the property, but all expenses (food, fuel, etc.) must be met by those renting the property. Since village men who go to a property on a rotating basis never take their wives with them (Extremadura, like the sierra above the village, is a man's world), all must know how to cook, sew on buttons, etc. In fact, some village men are particularly proud of their

culinary abilities and are cited by the other men as being the preferred 'cooks' of the group.

Some villagers, the poorer ones, go as cowherds for the season (five to six months) to tend the cattle of others. They are paid a monthly wage (something like 40000ptas.) and are permitted to bring their own cattle along to graze on the property free of charge. The money saved during the season enables such people to finance new cattle purchases. Those who go to Extremadura to tend the cattle of others will arrange such a thing at the cattle fairs at El Barco, and the agreement is always 'de palabra' (verbal). The 'amo' (the boss, the owner of the cattle) is also always a person from the northern side of the mountains.

Some of these cowherds may be alone on the property with the cows for the entire five or six months, with their transistor radio as their only companion, and their nearest neighbours kilometres away. If the man is married and has no children of school age, he may have his wife with him. However, the difficulty of sending the children to school usually means that the wife must remain behind in the village with the children while the husband is in Extremadura. Even without children it is often

necessary for the wife to stay at home if there is no one else available to tend the goats, etc. Such circumstances mean that things such as the christening of a new-born child must often await the father's return from Extremadura, though it seems that the 'amo' will sometimes take the cowherd's place for a few days, as would happen in the event of the death of a close member of the family.

When the villagers go to a property in Extremadura as a member of a group which has rented the pastures, there are always at least two of them tending the cattle at any one time, so that control of the animals is a relatively easy task. However, when one man goes as cowherd to tend the cattle of another for the season, he may have up to a hundred cattle to look after on his own, with only his dog to help him. This can be particularly dangerous when he is cutting the ears of the new-born calves with the mark of the owner, since the cries of the animal will bring not only the mother of the young one, but many of the other cows as well. To protect himself from the attacks of the well-horned cows, the cowherd will carry a special 'porra' (club) made of holm-oak about 70 cm in length and bulbous (about 5 cm in width) at one end.

It is quite clear that, on a purely economic

level, the annual cycle of transhumance is of very great importance to the villagers of La Nava. They state categorically that without transhumance they would not be able to own even half the number of animals they have today, and say that they would all keep 'suizas' (milch cows) rather than the 'Avileñas'. Even with the easy availability of the high pastures of the 'Sierra de Socios' for the summer grazing and of the grass on the meadows and the hay in the haystacks for the autumn grazing, the villagers admit that, without the possibility of taking the cows to the pastures of the rented properties in Extremadura for the winter grazing, the high cost of feed would make it economically impossible for them to maintain so many cattle during the winter. A few villagers go so far as to say that they might very well be able to maintain their present style of cattle-raising even if they did not have the 'Sierra de Socios', but that there was no chance of their doing this without annual transhumance to Extremadura. And they quite firmly state that the cows 'need' Extremadura; that a cow which did not go to Extremadura for the winter, but was kept locked up in the stable, would have fewer calves, since she would miss 'la libertad y la clima' (the freedom and the climate) on the

other side of the mountains.

Yet the importance of transhumance for the villagers of La Nava lies not only on the economic level since, as we have already hinted, Extremadura is for them something akin to the 'Promised Land'. But before moving on to examine in Chapter IV just what we mean by that statement and the implications of such a claim, it is necessary to briefly look at what is the fourth pillar of the cattle-raising economy of La Nava (along with the 'Sierra de Socios', the meadows round the village, and transhumance to Extremadura), the cattle market at El Barco de Avila.

Like the Nuer, the villagers of La Nava consider the cattle to be their dearest possession, and village men admit to being very concerned about their cows. They will often spend many nights sleeping in the stable (in the hayloft above) when a cow is due to give birth, to be on hand in case anything goes wrong, and they will call the veterinary at the slightest sign of illness in a cow. A cow will normally live from fifteen to eighteen years and will produce a calf a year, which in six months time may be worth from 60000 to 100000ptas. depending on its weight, so a good cow is a very valuable animal. In fact, apart from pointing out that their cows all have

different 'character', some villagers actually claim that their cows 'tienen alma' (literally, 'have souls'). However, when cross-examined on what at first sight appears to be an alarmingly unorthodox theological position for Spanish Catholics, what the villagers are in fact saying is that 'the cows, like all living things, have souls'. When asked whether the 'souls' of their cows survived death, the villagers thought that they probably did not, but then usually added 'vete a saber' (who knows?).

The cattle market at El Barco de Avila is where the villagers usually sell their calves and buy breeding bulls. There is a cattle market at El Barco every Monday of the year, but the most important buying and selling is done at the 'ferias' (cattle fairs) held in January, May, August, September, and October. The cattle fairs of August and October are considered to be of great importance, and that of October, referred to by the villagers as the 'Feria de Santa Teresa' since it is always held a few days before the feast day of the Saint (15 October), is said to be the most important of the year, with buyers coming from as far away as Galicia. In fact, many villagers will fatten their best calf for the August or October fairs, for it is then that they expect to

get the best prices for their animals. The calves will be given some twelve kilos of feed every day, whereas a fully grown cow will normally only eat some four to six kilos of feed per day.

Some villagers pay the 500ptas. per head to have their animals taken to El Barco by lorry, which takes less than half an hour, while others prefer to walk the animals there themselves, which takes about three hours. Those walking will leave the village at half-past four in the morning, those going by lorry will leave at seven. When the animals cross the mediaeval bridge over the river Tormes at the entrance to El Barco de Avila, their owners pay 'el punto' (literally, 'the point'), which is a small tax of some 50ptas. per animal, to the town clerk who is sitting at a table at the end of the bridge. Having paid 'el punto', the owner is then free to bring his animals to 'el teso', which is the name given to the place where the cattle fair is held.

At the fair, the men will stand round with the animals waiting for buyers. They will have brought cold meat, sausage, cheese, bread, and wine for their 'almuerzo' (second breakfast), which they will have standing next to the animals.

The actual dealing itself often has the appearance

of a theatrical performance, with the buyers appearing and re-appearing with almost ritual precision. A buyer will turn and walk away and then come back perhaps three or four times before an agreement is reached or negotiations are definitely broken off. There is a great deal of haggling over the price, with all the bystanders giving their opinions, and there is always someone playing the role of the 'disinterested party', he is said to 'terciar' (mediate), trying to get one side to raise his offer and the other to lower his price. He will grasp both men by the hand and try to get them to shake hands, thus symbolizing that an agreement has been reached, if he sees that the difference which separates the price asked from that being offered is very small. He will often try to get both parties to agree to 'la mitad' (half).

No money will change hands at the moment of concluding the deal, but rather at the end of the morning when the buyer has loaded the calves onto his lorry. The money is always counted three times, first by the buyer, then by an intermediary, and finally by the seller. In the past year or two there has been an interesting change in the manner of payment for cattle bought at the fairs which is likely to soon

do away with the sight of a cattle dealer counting out bank-notes from a roll of notes of a million pesetas or more. Now the dealers deposit their millions of pesetas at the bank in the morning and, when they have agreed to a sale, simply write out a cheque for the amount and hand it to the man selling his animals. Not until the seller has been to the bank and cashed the cheque will the animal or animals be handed over to the buyer.

It is relevant to mention here the importance of the bars at all the cattle fairs. It is at the bars that much business is done and where, over a glass of wine or beer, that the men of different villages agree to go together to the same property in Extremadura with their cattle for the winter, and where the poorer villagers agree to go as cowherds with the cattle of richer men.

At the end of the day, if the calves have been sold, the villager will go to the feed warehouses to pay off the outstanding debt run up over the previous months. Often these bills are only paid off from fair to fair, which means that the distributors of animal feed are performing an important role by extending credit to the villagers for periods of months at a time. Not only do the villagers pay

the bills for the feed of the animals when they have the ready cash from having sold one or more of them, but they will also pay their outstanding accounts at the shops, they will buy new things, such as shoes and scythes, and they will place orders with blacksmiths, harness-makers, and the like.

Those villagers who have walked the animals to market must walk the cows back home to the village, since the calves will not walk to El Barco in the morning if the mother cows do not accompany them. If the calves have been taken to market by lorry, the cows are not brought along, but must be brought down from the sierra if cow and calf are there. And in either case the cows must be shut up in the stables for about four days after the calves are sold, since they become very aggressive and dangerous and make a terrible effort trying to escape in search of their calves.

Since 1979, the Asociación Nacional de Criadores de Ganado vacuno selecto de raza Avileña-Negra Ibérica, the association of cattle breeders for the improvement of the autochthonous breed, has organized a cattle show on the day before the October fair. At the first show, first prize for best bull was won by an animal owned by a villager of La Nava, and every year since then

the first or second prizes in one category or another have been won by animals owned by villagers, which says quite a bit about the quality of the animals La Nava produces. This is even more remarkable when it is remembered that La Nava is one of the smallest villages in the region of El Barco de Avila. The villagers may joke that all they are really interested in is the prize money, but they are very pleased to be photographed with cups and diplomas standing next to their prize animals every October.

CHAPTER IV

EXTREMADURA AS 'EARTHLY PARADISE'

Before examining the significance of the title of this part of the thesis, it is necessary to analyse much more closely the manner in which the villagers of La Nava conceptualize the world, meaning the villagers' view of the village itself and their life in it, their view of outsiders who come to the village, and their view of themselves in relation to the world outside the village.

As was mentioned in Chapter II, the villagers say that 'Ahora somos todos iguales' ('Now we are all equal'). This claim, while not strictly true in economic terms, is to a great extent true in the sense that there are few outward indications of greater or lesser wealth amongst villagers. Dress, as we saw in Chapter I, is more dependent on age than on income, and the speech and behaviour, as well as the house, of the man who owns fifty cows are identical to that of his neighbour who has only five. Although, as we have seen when looking at the irrigation of the meadows, all is not sweetness and light in the villagers' relations

with each other, the egalitarian ideal is more than cosmetic. As was also seen in Chapter II, the predominance of the 'torno' as organizing principle of the life of the community does mean that all villagers are, in this respect, very much on an equal footing. Yet this apparently banal vision of egalitarianism and social cohesion in a small mountain community is far from having always been the case. In fact, the villagers of La Nava firmly put the emphasis on the 'ahora' (now) when saying that they are all equal, in clear distinction to an 'antes' (before) when they were not.

Elderly villagers greatly stress the poverty they suffered when they were young and they will recount how they were so poor that they would collect firewood and 'escobas' (brooms) in the sierra to make charcoal and sell it at El Barco for use in the braziers. For this reason, the nickname by which the people of La Nava are known in the region is that of 'Los Carboneros' (the charcoal-makers). As the village saying goes: 'Con lo negro comprabamos lo blanco', 'With the black (i.e. the charcoal), we would buy the white (i.e. the flour).' They will also tell how they used to exchange their cured hams for 'tocino' (fatty bacon), which they would eat fried

as 'torreznos' (rashers), at the rate of three kilos of bacon for every kilo of ham. They would also exchange their home-made linen for factory-made cotton at the rate of two metres of the manufactured stuff for every metre of their cloth. And they would even not eat the eggs laid by their hens, but would save them for sale at El Barco.

Villagers tell of how they were sent, when young, to be servants in the houses of richer people, either in the village or in other nearby villages. Villagers say that forty or fifty years ago the rich ones were the parents of this or that present-day villager, and they explain that these 'ricos' did not pay the other villagers they had working for them as servants, but would merely give them bed and board. The girls would work as servants in the house, while the boys would work as shepherds or cowherds. Not surprisingly, the incidence of illiteracy amongst older villagers who spent their youth serving in the houses of others is very high.

A number of the poorer villagers went to Argentina. Some, such as Julian 'Patagonio' and his family, did not return, but most, after a number of years of working and saving, did. So while the villagers of the 1960s, as was mentioned in Chapter I, did not heed

the call of France or Germany, a number of their fathers and grandfathers had responded to the enticements of Argentina or Cuba. Yet while villagers talk about the differences of wealth that existed, they are equally quick to point out that, at La Nava, there was never a case of a villager who lived without working, 'como un señorito' (like a gentleman), nor as a 'mendigo' (beggar).

There appear to be four factors which explain the attenuation of these clearly marked, though not extreme, differences of wealth in previous generations to arrive at today's situation. The first is the fact, already mentioned in Chapter II, that older villagers now receive old-age pensions which they do not spend but give to their children. The second was the increased possibility of earning a daily wage, either as road-mender or fire-spotter, or more recently, as bricklayer. Villagers are envious of those who earn a wage, and the wage earners and their families are tremendously proud and always boasting of the fact of having a wage. Such village women, after showing a visitor their beautiful hand-embroidered linen, bring out, as the *pièce de résistance*, something bought, which is usually not even very good. In general, the villagers consider something which is bought to have

much more value than something which is hand-made. The villagers have great wealth, in land, in houses, and in animals, but move and handle money infrequently. Living in a nearly self-subsistent economy, a family with an income from grandfather's pension or father's wage (which would not go very far in Madrid) will easily be able to save enough money for a grass-cutting machine, a car, or more cattle. The third factor is that nearly all the families of the so-called 'ricos' of the 20s, 30s, and 40s were large ones (five or six children was the norm), so that with equal inheritance by all children, both male and female, even the wealthiest man's estate was immediately partitioned in the next generation. And the fourth factor is that there are many cases of children of 'the rich' marrying children of 'the poor', which leads one to believe that 'the rich' were never so rich, nor 'the poor' ever so poor, that they were ever totally separate strata of the same community, as would be the case in the villages and towns of Andalucia. But not only do we witness a general levelling out of the economic position of all the villagers over the past twenty years or so, but we also find the village moving towards an even greater equality only within the past few years with the introduction of the system of 'tornos'

for the water guards (in 1974) and the 'coffee goats' (in 1977). It does not seem far-fetched to posit this greater equality as one of the factors which has helped inhibit emigration. Comparison with the situation of neighbouring Navaleones is relevant here.

With the population remaining constant at approximately 800 from the turn of the century until the early 60s (reaching a peak of 870 in the years 1956-57), Navaleones has now barely 500 inhabitants, and the young people are still leaving. There seem to be two main reasons why Navaleones has lost so much of its population in the past thirty years and La Nava has not. The first is that although the 'Sierra de Socios' at Navaleones is larger than the 'Sierra de Socios' at La Nava, it is not proportionally larger in relation to the size of the population. This means that while the total number of cows owned at Navaleones is greater than that at La Nava, the number of cows per family is lower at Navaleones than at La Nava. And the second reason is that great differences in wealth are still very much in evidence at Navaleones; 'Algunos tienen todo, mientras que otros nunca comen caliente' ('Some have everything, while others never have a hot meal'), the present priest told me. The villagers of La Nava say exactly

the same when they talk about Navaleones; 'Unos con mucho, muchos con nada' ('A few with a great deal, many with nothing').

As was already mentioned in Chapter I, La Nava depends for administrative purposes on Navaleones; though it was also pointed out that this is very far from making the two villages effectively one. Quite the contrary is the case, in fact, with the villagers of La Nava constantly speaking badly about those of Navaleones, saying that they are 'falsos' (insincere, dishonest) and the worst people in the entire region. When they talk this way one is often reminded of the anecdote of Julio Caro Baroja, cited by Julian Pitt-Rivers (1984), about the village in the north of Spain which erected a large sign at the entrance to the village during their annual fiesta which read: 'A warm welcome to all outsiders, except those from X'; 'X', of course, being the neighbouring village. The people of Navaleones are said to 'presumir mucho' (meaning they show off) with new houses, new cars, etc., but they are really up to their necks in debt with 'muchacha letra' (instalments).

Quite unlike the strained relations between La Nava and Navaleones (they are said to be 'siempre a tiros' (always quarrelling)), are the very cordial relations existing between La Nava and the village of La Laguna.

While the nickname of those of La Laguna is 'Los Rayos' (because lightning is said to strike there frequently), those of Navaleones are called 'Los Potros' (colts), meaning 'little brutes'. While Navaleones plays the role of 'enemy' village, the village of La Laguna (pop. 300), like La Nava in a lateral valley off the main valley, is that of a 'friendly' village. While the people of Navaleones are said to be 'falsos', those of La Laguna are described as being 'sinceros' and are always spoken of very highly. The men of La Nava will often go to a property in Extremadura with friends from La Laguna, and will go to the neighbouring village every day for a few weeks in the autumn to earn money picking apples. The priest, who serves all three villages, says that the people of La Nava and La Laguna are much more alike in character than are those of Navaleones like either village. As the people of La Nava say regarding themselves and the people of Navaleones: 'Aunque todos somos bautizados en la misma pila, ya se sabe que somos completamente diferentes' ('Although we were all christened at the same font, it is obvious that we are completely different').

But quite aside from any posited differences in character between the two populations, what seems

to be at the heart of the much emphasized antipathy between the two villages is simply the fact that control of the affairs of the smaller village has always been, to a greater or lesser extent, in the hands of the larger village. Only one of the six members of the 'concejo municipal' (town council) is a man from La Nava. This political dependence, united with the religious dependence we shall examine below, has meant that the villagers of La Nava have been regarded (or, at least, have thought they were regarded) by those of Navaleones as something like second-class citizens.

That this is so is made clear by the constant references to the mayor of Navaleones made by the villagers of La Nava to the effect of his not being the least bit interested in La Nava unless it is to make some dishonest profit at their expense. While distrust of the motives of the authorities is not an unusual attitude in many countries, and even less surprising in Spain, where throughout the Franco regime all mayors were appointed by the central government (through the Privincial Governor) and the town councillors were mainly co-opted, the virulent tone of the villagers' comments on the mayor of Navaleones is striking. If the 'alcalde' passes

nearby, the men will either stop talking or will lower their voices and mutter darkly that he (the mayor) is out to 'eat' (i.e. take advantage of) the village. It is claimed that the former mayor did not notify those of La Nava of the first municipal elections since the Civil War so that they could not vote and oust him from office. They state categorically that when the electricity to the village was changed from 110 to 220 volts, the mayor of Navaleones sold the copper of the old installations and pocketed the profits. And when it came to putting in the running water, the villagers blamed any delay on the mayor, saying that he had probably stolen the money that the provincial government had given the village for the work. That the problem is one of the structural relationship of the two villages, rather than the behaviour of one man, is clearly demonstrated by the very similar stories that the villagers tell about the mayor before the last one. And this year (1985) villagers were telling me with absolute conviction that the delay in beginning the paving of the village streets was a clear sign that the new mayor had stolen the budget!

A good example of how the villagers view this relationship of official dependence was the big argument which broke out at the 'open council' held outside

the old bar after mass on the feast of Corpus Christi last year. The villagers had decided that they wanted to build an 'embarcadero' (a platform for loading animals onto lorries) in order to facilitate taking the calves to market at El Barco. One villager, however, suggested that perhaps the mayor of Navaleones should be consulted as to where and how this should be done, since they might have trouble with the provincial authorities at Avila if they did not. The reaction of the rest of the men was instantaneous. They all began shouting that the village could very well do what it wanted without needing to consult anyone. One man said: 'If one or two villagers alone did it, there might be trouble, but not if the whole village decides.' Others made similar references to 'la ley del pueblo' (the law of the village), claiming that 'the village makes its own law'. What they all seemed to be trying to say was that there was such a thing as 'the will of the village' and that this was expressed by the decisions taken by the 'open council'. In the end, the loading platform was built by the villagers of La Nava and the mayor of Navaleones was informed of the fact afterwards.

Until the 1950s, the chapel was only used to celebrate mass on the feast day of San Miguel and

on one or two other important feasts during the year, such as Easter Sunday and Corpus Christi. The priest now comes (almost) every Sunday to say mass, while formerly it had been necessary to go the nearly three kilometres to Navaleones if one wanted to go to mass. Villagers say that before the Civil War, when everyone went to mass on Sundays at Navaleones, two men would always stay behind in the village as guards in case of fire, etc. If it is true that most of the villagers went to Sunday mass in the recent past, as is quite common in Castile, it is in marked contrast to their behaviour today. While villagers say that going to mass is 'a good thing', they use the excuse of having too much work to explain why they do not go. Apart from the few important feast days, such as San Miguel, Easter, Corpus Christi, and the Ascension, when all the villagers (men, women, and children) are there, it is a very rare occurrence that a man (and he will always be old) will go to Sunday mass. From simple observation, I would hazard the guess that the only criterion by which the women decide whether to go to mass or not is the weather; if fine, a dozen or more will be there, if not, perhaps only two or three. The village children are the only ones who are usually there in force every Sunday.

Villagers say that they do not go to mass because they have 'often been disappointed by the priests'. One woman of seventy said that when she was a girl two priests 'from outside' would come to the village every year, shortly before Easter, to hear confessions. The priests would charge the villagers two eggs for each confession, and would then issue a document (obligatory at the time, say the villagers) stating that such-and-such villager had confessed. On one occasion, said the woman, one of the priests began making jokes about 'huevos' (eggs, but also meaning testicles) with a young woman who was cooking for them, and he tried to seduce her. According to the story, the girl gave the priest a kick and he apologized. Villagers also tell about a former priest at Navaleones who would fine (50ptas. or so) any villager he saw working on a Sunday or a feast day, yet was himself forced to leave Navaleones (and later the priesthood) because of involvements with various girls of that village. Another former priest of Navaleones is said to have tried to seduce one of the women of that village while her husband and son were with the cows in Extremadura. According to the story, when these two returned home and learnt what had happened, they went to the house of the priest,

and after giving him a thorough beating, dragged him to a nearby fountain and pushed his head into the drinking trough and, had other villagers not intervened, would have drowned him. Another priest is described as having been a great drunkard, etc.

As with the stories of the corruption of the mayors, all of this has to be taken with a certain dose of skepticism, since anti-clericalism has had a very strong tradition in Spain. However, what does appear to have been a clearly contributory factor to the villagers' lack of interest in going to Sunday mass was the character of the parish priest of Navaleones just before the present one. A man of rather pronounced authoritarian views, he had the added disadvantage, from the villagers' point of view, of being a native of Navaleones. And not only was he from the 'enemy village', but he was constantly criticising the villagers of La Nava in his sermons and comparing them unfavourably with the people of Navaleones. This priest once confided to me that the people of La Nava needed to go to confession badly, and he added: 'The village is lost.' His sermons were always full of apocalyptic references to war, the devil, eternal fires, and that 'modern' priests are 'false prophets'. But all this, I am sure,

bothered the villagers much less than being told that because they were so wicked San Miguel was sure to send them bad harvests. And even that was not as bad as being told that while they were bad, those of Navaleones were good and pious. Is it at all surprising, then, that the villagers of La Nava were not very keen to go to Sunday mass? This man had been parish priest at Navaleones for a short time some thirty years ago, had been living since then in another village of the diocese of Avila and had only been sent back to his natal village (although he was due for retirement) because no young priest could be found for the parish. Villagers recount that such was the dislike of the old priest that when the bishop appointed him, against the wishes of both places, even those of Navaleones, as well as the people of La Nava, refused to go to mass for many weeks in protest. The new priest is both a much younger and a much more open man than the former priest, but it is still too early to tell whether this change of style will get the villagers to go to Sunday mass as they did in the past.

The religiosity of the villagers of La Nava seems to be best expressed on the occasion of the death of a fellow villager. When there is a death, the women of the family dress the dead person either

in his or her best clothes or in a shroud. A white or cream cord, 'such as Christ wore', they say, with knots in it in the form of a cross, is tied round the waist of the body. The body is then put in an uncovered coffin. On the night of the death, there is a 'velatorio' (wake) and all the villagers come at various times to sit with the close relatives of the deceased. Prayers are said, and the rest of the time the family and friends talk quietly. Villagers say that if the stomach of the dead body begins to swell, they put something made of steel, usually a pair of scissors, though it could be needles or anything else of steel, open in the form of a cross on the chest of the dead person and the swelling is supposed to subside. At daybreak those who have spent the night praying by the body are given chocolate to drink. That morning there is the 'entierro' (burial) in the nearby cemetery with all the village men and women in attendance. Women are often buried with their valuable gold ear-rings from Extremadura; the heirs do this to show their disdain for the material advantages accruing to them through the death of their relative. On leaving the cemetery the village women all give a few coins to the close female relatives of the dead person. This money is to pay the priest to say masses

for the soul of the dead person.

The following day there is a funeral mass attended by all the villagers. For three nights after the death, the family and the majority of the women of the village come together, after they have shut away the goats for the night, in the house of the recently deceased to say the rosary and special prayers for the dead known as 'oraciones de encomendación'. One village woman who knows the prayers by heart leads the others. On the fourth day after the death, relatives and neighbouring women come to help the women of the family clean the room in which the death occurred. The women who come are those whose houses are physically nearest and so, as was mentioned in Chapter I, are members of the same 'corrillo'. The women clean the bedclothes, including the mattress, which is taken apart so that the wool may be washed, dried, beaten, and then replaced. The room will be thoroughly cleaned, the walls will be whitewashed, the bedstead will be scrubbed and everything will be disinfected. Today they disinfect with a spray, but only a few years ago they did so by boiling quicklime for some time in the closed room. When the cleaning is done, the women who helped are invited to lunch by the family.

What is very important to note is that the

village cemetery has only existed since the 1960s. Before that, all the village dead were buried in the cemetery at Navaleones. Older villagers recount how they had to carry the coffins from the village to Navaleones on the back of a donkey, wedged between two sacks of straw. One man told me how he had had to take the body of his father in this manner through snow drifts in winter. So we see that while up until some twenty or thirty years ago the villagers of La Nava were completely dependent in matters of official religion on Navaleones, they have since then taken matters into their own hands. It is even significant that the new priest who now comes to the village lives not at Navaleones, but at La Laguna.

While the villagers of La Nava may go to mass infrequently, they take very seriously other aspects of their religion, such as the prohibitions on eating meat on Maundy Thursday and on working on San Miguel, San José, San Isidro, or the Ascension. The villagers are still very strict in their observance of 'luto' (mourning) for a dead relative: for a parent or son or daughter, the women will wear black for three years; for a brother or a sister, two years; and for a cousin or a brother- or sister-in-law, about three months. Widows will wear black for the rest of their lives.

All the older women are dressed permanently in black. Village women will often say that they are unable to sing or dance because they are in mourning. In fact, just before the feast of San Miguel last year an entire family actually left the village and went to Extremadura for five days simply to be out of the way while the fiesta lasted, since they were still in mourning for the death of the wife's father, which had occurred some few months previously.

As is usual in Roman Catholic countries, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to the saints is very strong. For many years the villagers had an image of the Virgin known as 'La Virgen Milagrosa' which was taken from one house to another, where it would remain for one day and on the following day would be taken to another house. Villagers say that not all households participated and that the order by which the image went from house to house did not follow the village street. It seems that interest in continuing the custom suddenly waned some years ago when it was discovered that money had gone missing from the collecting box attached to the image. The importance of the two favourite village saints, San Miguel and San Antonio, will be looked at when we come to examine the division of space made by the villagers.

Other saints are normally important only to an individual, and not to the community as a whole. Naming a child after the saint on whose day he or she was born is said by the villagers to ensure the protection of that saint. Not giving the child the name of the saint is considered offensive to the latter, with the possibility of unfortunate consequences as a result. Therefore, taking children's names from the calendar was formerly the norm at La Nava, as it was throughout rural Spain. For this reason, there are villagers called Restituto, Hermenegildo, Sotera, Celestino, Heliodoro, Urbano, Florencio, Primitiva, Cirila, Florentina, Faustina, Jacinto, Maximino, Albino, Feliciano, Teofilo, Pelegrin, etc. However, this practice has lost much of its force in the past twenty years or so. What happens today when a child is born on the feast day of a saint with an 'unusual' name is that the parents will give the child the name of a more 'common' saint whose feast day may be a few days before or after the actual birthday of the child. Yet even today, and in Madrid as well as at La Nava, the day of one's 'santo' is always celebrated while one's actual birthday (unless it is the same day) is often not celebrated.

Without doubt the most important celebration

in the village is that of a wedding. Practically everyone in the village participates to some extent in a wedding. A wedding at La Nava some forty years ago lasted for about five days. Even today the festivities last a good two or three days. Though, in fact, the symbolic joining of two previously separate families to form an entirely new family begins long before the actual wedding day.

The period of 'noviazgo' (engagement) at La Nava may often be quite long; four, five, or more years is still not uncommon. If the young man is not a native of the village, he will be required by the young unmarried village men to pay 'el piso', a sum of money sufficient to pay for a 'convite' (party) for all of them. Payment of 'el piso' gives the outsider the right to court a village girl.

After the couple have been 'speaking' for some time, the young man will begin coming to the house of the girl on Thursday and Sunday evenings to have tea ('merienda') with the girl and her family. This is known as 'entrar en casa' (enter the house), and from this moment on the engagement is formal and public. It is relevant to mention here that the villagers strongly disapprove of an engagement made for convenience and not as a 'love match'.

About a month before the wedding the family of the man makes a formal visit to the family of the girl. This meeting, at which the date of the wedding is set and the families decide how much cattle they are each going to give the new couple, could very well be regarded as the first part of the wedding celebrations. It is an extremely important and formal act. Both families will be in their Sunday best, and the family of the man (parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins) will all ceremoniously march together from the man's house to the girl's house, there to be received by the parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins of the girl. It is important that there are exactly the same number of people present from both families.

The family of the man will carry special baskets, only used on this occasion, in which they will bring 'los cumplidos', gifts which usually consist of clothes and jewellery for the girl and, the essential gift, a 'roscón' (a ring-shaped cake). Formerly, the almond-covered 'roscón' was made in the clay oven all houses have, but is now ordered from a bakery at El Barco. Nevertheless, the villagers still follow the custom by which it is the obligation of the mother of the man to provide the eggs used to make the cake.

The number of eggs used must be either twelve or twenty-four (depending on the size of the two families), and no other number of eggs will do. The man's mother will receive gifts of eggs from relatives and neighbours in order to make the cake. Villagers say that she is given eggs since she may not have enough herself, though it would appear quite clear that the reason for the giving of eggs is not merely a practical one. The villagers say that they have no idea why the number of eggs must be either twelve or twenty-four; they simply say that 'it must be done like that'.

Most significantly, at the meeting of the two families the 'roscón' is divided into two equal parts and each family will keep half of the cake. Later, each family will divide their half of the 'roscón' into pieces which they will distribute amongst the households of relatives and friends. Those to whom pieces of the cake are given are precisely the households which have made, or will make, the same gesture in return in the event of the marriage of one of their members.

The family of the man will also bring to the family of the girl several more baskets with small cakes known as 'rosquillas' and 'perrunillas' and one large cake ('tarta'). The 'tarta' is always eaten

then - symbolizing a communion of the two families - and all the other cakes are shared equally. That the '0'-shaped 'roscón' (a symbol of unity) is divided and shared amongst the members of the two (until then, alien) families would appear to symbolize the creation of a new unity, the new family, brought into being by the union, the marriage, of two complementary halves.

A few days before the wedding all the young unmarried women go to the house of the girl to 'hacer la cama' (make the bed). They will prepare the nuptial bed with the special set of bedclothes, known as the 'sábanas de vistas', which the bride-to-be has spent months embroidering. She will use the most expensive cloth she can afford and she will embroider the most elaborate and original design that she is capable of doing. What is certain is that these special nuptial bedclothes are never, in fact, meant to be used at all, but are passed down from generation to generation as treasured heirlooms. On the wedding night the 'sábanas de vistas' will be replaced by a set of ordinary bedclothes more suitable for the rough treatment they will receive from the practical jokes played on the newly-married couple by the unmarried young men and girls of the village.

While the young women are trying to make the

nuptial bed as pretty as possible, it is the job of the young men to get in their way and make the task as difficult as possible. The men will unmake the bed while the girls try to make it, the girls will then struggle with the men, and men and girls will all fall wrestling onto the bed. There is always a lot of shouting. Afterwards, all the young men and girls are invited to coffee and cakes by the family of the bride-to-be.

On another evening some two or three days before the wedding there is the 'despedida de soltero' (bachelor party), when the man and girl invite all the unmarried men and girls of the village to a party at which the couple take leave of the society of the single, now that they are about to join the society of the married. Also sometime during the two or three days before the wedding the bride-to-be will show her 'ajuar' (trousseau) to all the women, married and unmarried, in the village and serve cakes, etc. at her house.

Up until about fifteen years ago a wedding was celebrated entirely in the village. Today the principal wedding banquet is held at one of the hotels at El Barco de Avila. Formerly it had been necessary, some few days before the wedding, for the men to collect

a great quantity of firewood needed to cook the wedding meals, and for the women to borrow from friends and neighbours plates, glasses, and cutlery sufficient for all the guests invited. When the main meal was had in the village, all members of the families invited would attend; now, however, invitations to the wedding banquet are from either the family of the man or the family of the girl, and are in the manner of 'two from your house', 'three from your house', etc., depending on the closeness of the relationship of the families involved. Two days before the wedding both the family of the man and the family of the girl would each kill a ram and a billy-goat; these four animals made up the wedding banquet. Each family would also kill another billy-goat to feed their own relatives the day before the wedding at midday.

On the evening before the wedding both families, plus relatives and friends, would dine together. This was logical since the cooking was always done together, either at the house of the girl or at the house of the man or at a third house if neither was large enough to admit all the wedding guests. Today each family has supper separately on the night before the wedding. However, what is still done on the evening before the wedding is that all the women wedding guests

will sit in the kitchen with dishes on their laps and they will shave chocolate from large tablets. There is a great deal of banter, telling of jokes, and singing of songs.

On the morning of the wedding all the guests are invited to chocolate and 'bizcochos' (sponge fingers). If it rains on the wedding day, the villagers say that this is because the bride is mean. Later all the unmarried women go to dress the bride. They put pearl-headed pins into the hem at the back of the bride's dress and take great care to put sufficient pins for all the unmarried girls of the village. As soon as the bride comes out of the church as a married woman, the girls lift the hem of her dress and they all take the pins to ensure that they themselves will marry someday. Today the bride wears a white dress, while her mother was married in a black dress, and her grandmother wore the brightly coloured embroidered skirt and shawl and the black silk and velvet mantilla of the traditional regional dress.

Once she is dressed, the girl is taken aside by her mother and father to be given 'la bendición de los padres' (the blessing of the parents). The ritual is a solemn and emotional one, with the girl being told of the responsibilities of married life

and the sacrifices her parents have made to bring her to this day; the girl invariably comes out crying.

Shortly before the time fixed on for the wedding the groom and all his family ceremoniously march together from their house to that of the bride, and then both families march together to the chapel for the wedding, the bride on the arm of the 'padrino' (godfather) and the groom escorting the 'madrina' (godmother). The 'padrinos de la boda' (wedding godparents) were traditionally always a married brother or sister of the groom and his or her spouse. However, at the last wedding held at La Nava (in November 1984) this tradition was broken and the godfather was a brother of the bride's father and the godmother was the sister of the groom. Whether this 'city style' of choosing the wedding godparents becomes the norm at La Nava remains to be seen. It is the usual practice that the godparents of the wedding will also act as the 'padrinos de pila' or 'de bautizo' (christening godparents) to the first child of the couple.

All the villagers (except those who are ill or in mourning) go to the chapel for the wedding and mass. The bride carries a bouquet of flowers; sometimes she prefers to carry artificial flowers which are later put into the left hand of the image of San Miguel in the

chapel. After the mass the villagers throw rice at the couple and the godfather throws sweets to the children. Then they all march back to the village with the women (all the village women, not just the women wedding guests) singing special wedding songs which praise the newly married couple and the godparents and which remind the couple of their new obligations. After every third or fourth song the monotony is broken by the women singing one of the two choruses, at the end of which they all give a loud joyful whinny. A selection of these traditional wedding songs is given in the Appendix.

To have the wedding banquet at a restaurant at El Barco is now common practice, but the rest of the wedding celebrations are still held in the village. The young unmarried men and women who were not invited to the wedding banquet held in the village were traditionally entitled to a leg of mutton, two or three loaves of bread, and three or four litres of wine. The wedding banquet held at El Barco is not paid for equally by the parents of the bride and the groom; rather each family pays for the guests that they have invited.

Although not done at the wedding celebrated in 1984, it was the traditional practice to place

a table outside the house at which the wedding was being celebrated and, after the wedding banquet, the guests would give the wedding gifts to the bride, who would place them on the table for all the village to see. The bride would then dance a 'jota' (a type of dance, originally from Aragón) with the person who had just given her the gift. The women would sing and make music by rubbing a fork on an empty anis bottle with a diamond-shaped relief and by hitting a mortar with the pestle. This gift-giving ceremony is known as 'el ofrecijo'.

Later, in the evening, the godparents invite all the wedding guests to another meal known as 'las alborás' (in standard Spanish, 'alboradas'). Although now it is an evening meal of ham, 'chorizo' sausage, cheese, and wine, 'las alborás' of some years ago consisted of both the evening party ('convite') and chocolate and cakes had at dawn, as the name itself indicates: 'alborada' refers to both the dawn and to a song sung at dawn, an aubade. These dawn songs are sung, not to the bride, but to the godmother. A selection of these 'alboradas' is given in the Appendix.

The singing and dancing continue during 'las alborás', and the bride and groom are forced by the unmarried men and women to drink disagreeable things,

such as a mixture of cocoa and orange juice, and their lips are rubbed with hot peppers. And, most significantly, they are forced to mount a donkey - the bride facing backwards with her legs over those of the groom - and are taken up the street to the top of the village (where the donkey is made to drink at the fountain) and then down the street again with all the young people running alongside and making fun of the couple. That this is a public proclamation (up and down the village street) that the couple are from now on to be a sexually active pair is evident enough, while much of the rest appears to be done in a spirit of making the couple pay beforehand for the pleasure they are going to have together later. The groom at the last wedding held at the village explained to me some time later that the most important thing was for the couple not to become angry at the abuse they were made to suffer, but to go along with everything with good humour.

It is especially important for the unmarried men and women not to let the bride and groom out of their sight, so that they do not escape. If the bride and groom do manage to escape, the unmarried men and girls will noisily search the entire village for them, since the newly-weds will have usually arranged to spend their wedding night at a house other than that

where they will live as a married couple. And if the couple are found, they will be forced out of bed and into the street 'desnudos' (naked), say the villagers, meaning in their underwear. Salt, saffron, and paprika will be thrown on the bedsheets. The young men and women will 'kidnap' the bride, and the groom will have to pay a ransom of some 5000ptas., known as 'los estilos', in order to be left in peace with his bride. The young people will use the money of 'los estilos' to buy more wine, etc. in order to continue their 'juerga' (binge, spree, carousal). The groom at the last wedding at La Nava did not have to pay 'los estilos' since the couple managed to escape by car to a hotel at El Barco for the night.

When the wedding banquet was held at the village, the guests would stay the day after the wedding to eat the leftovers of the banquet. Two days after the wedding all the unmarried girls would come back to take away the plates, etc. which they had lent for the banquet, and they would have another party with all the food that remained. They would do a lot of singing. The young men and girls would spend at least a few more nights molesting the newly-weds by singing outside their bedroom window, before finally leaving them alone as man and wife.

In the event of a widow or widower remarrying, the villagers would hold a 'cencerrada' (charivari), which is a serenade of pans, trays, and cow-bells played at night under the window of the couple. The young people would also prepare a 'desajumorio' (in standard Spanish, 'sahumerio') by burning a mixture of foul-smelling substances in a tin. Then, with a bellows, they would blow the smoke under the door into the house.

That a marriage is precipitated by the pregnancy of the girl is a very common occurrence at La Nava. Villagers will immediately supply the names of seven or eight couples who married when they did because the girl was already pregnant, and explain with a smile that it is relatively easy for a couple to be alone together in the stables when they go to shut the goats in for the night. Yet if the couple marry before the child is born there is little stigma attached to their behaviour, and the fact that they had a rushed wedding may only be remembered when another couple does the same thing some time later.

It is relevant here to examine the villagers' views on contraception. Village women say that while taking the pill or using any mechanical means of contraception is 'disgusting' and 'immoral', the

practice of 'marcha atrás' ('reverse gear', i.e. coitus interruptus) is quite all right. Though the women admit they have no idea of how the contraceptive pill works, they are sure that taking it produces serious diseases in the woman and malformed children. Having sex during the woman's period is not done, since it is not 'clean', say the villagers. The use of condoms is thought to be particularly 'shameful' since it is associated with visiting prostitutes. Young married women confess that their mothers told them nothing about sex, even the day before their wedding. One woman said that on the morning of her wedding her mother had simply told her: 'Debes aguantar todo lo que te haga tu marido', 'You must endure all that your husband does to you', and with no further explanation given. This is not very surprising, given the fact that the villagers are, in general, very prudish. As was mentioned in Chapter III, even the men will rarely discuss sexual matters unless they are outside the village, either up in the sierra, at El Barco, or down in Extremadura. And even then it is often only to affirm that having 'too much of it' is bad for one's health.

It was mentioned in Chapter I that the decrease in population at La Nava over the past fifteen years

is almost entirely due to a lower birthrate rather than to emigration away from the village. The lower birthrate is partially explained by married couples consciously limiting the size of their families; no village family at present has more than four children and most have only one or two (see the table of the composition of La Nava households on p.22). Yet the factor which has had the greatest influence on lowering the birthrate at La Nava has been that of the large number of young people in their twenties and thirties who have not married. Since 1977 there has been only one marriage in the village of a couple planning to remain in the village, and during the same period only seven children have been born in the village, and only two of those were born since 1979.

The reasons for non-marriage at La Nava are complex, though there are a number of factors which appear to point to a possible explanation of the phenomenon. One can agree with Brandes (1976b) that it is not considered abnormal in Castile for a man or a woman to have no sex life whatever. This fact, combined with the difficulty of finding a suitable partner within the village, where everyone knows everyone else 'too well', and where marrying an individual is marrying a family with all its virtues

and all its faults, seems to permit the young people to let the years go by without making any particularly strenuous efforts to get themselves a spouse.

Previous generations may have had the same difficulties, but at the same time suffered much greater pressure to marry due to the necessity to produce children, both to help work the land and to assure their parents' old age. Today, however, with the intensification of cattle-raising at the expense of agriculture, and with the advent of old-age pensions, this previous need to marry and have children has lost much of its urgency. An old single person is today a very welcome addition to the household of a married brother or sister, not only for the pension he or she will bring in, but also because of the customary law of the village (already mentioned in Chapter I) which says that the property of an unmarried man or woman (or childless widow or widower) living with a married brother or sister will be inherited entirely by the latter and his or her children, rather than by other brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces.

In the village one is always, so to speak, 'on show'. A consequence of this is the village custom of always announcing where one is going and often, in a general way, what one intends to do. So that when

walking past, a villager will say something like 'Voy para abajo' ('I am going down', the where not specified) or 'Voy a los chotos' ('I am going to the calves') or 'Voy a segar' ('I am going to harvest', whatever).

It is not what they say, but the fact that they always say something, which is important. It is as if every time a villager meets another he or she is saying:

'Look, I am off to do something socially approved and I am not getting up to any misdeed.' The inevitable other side of the coin of this constant public justification of one's actions before the community is the intense secrecy with which villagers conduct their everyday affairs. When walking in the street villagers will always try, if it is possible, to hide the things that they are carrying. If it is something small, the men will carry it under their pullovers and the women under their large aprons.

If something is carried in a basket, it will always be covered with a cloth. Villagers will never give gifts in the presence of a third party, but will go away and return later to give what they had brought; and they will never look at something they have been given, but will immediately hide it somewhere on their person and only open the parcel when they have got home. When either giving or receiving anything, they

will always say: 'But do not tell anyone.' When asked why not, they reply that it is best not to say anything in order to avoid 'envidia' (envy). Villagers often complain of the secretiveness of others, but are just as secretive themselves. This need for secrecy to maintain privacy means that they will never refer to any business they have with one, even the most innocent, in front of a third party, unless the other person is a family member or a very close friend.

While there is no real social differentiation made between an unmarried girl of, say, eighteen and another of twenty-five, for young men of these ages there is a very real difference. Before a young man has done military service, he is not considered to be of marriageable age. So that for the village men the experience of military service, and all that precedes it, may properly be regarded as a true 'rite de passage'. A young man will normally do his military service when he is twenty-one. However, he will have been preparing for such an important step for some time before. For most men, their time in the 'mili' will probably be, apart from their short stays in Extremadura, the only time they will live outside the village in their entire life. The year before they go, the men are known as 'los quintos', which

means conscripts or recruits and derives from 'la quinta' ('the fifth part'), which refers to the time when only a fifth part of the young men were called to service. The 'quintos' will act as a group, often with great tolerance on the part of the rest of the village, in organizing the fiestas and other 'juergas' (binges, spree, carousals). But before that, when the young man is nineteen, he must undergo the ordeal of 'la talla'.

'La talla' refers to the height of a person and also means a measuring rod. It is always held at the town hall at Navaleones on the second Sunday in March. The occasion is a very formal one. The young men, accompanied by a crowd of male relatives, all dressed in their Sunday best, are examined by the village doctor in the presence of the town clerk and the fathers of all the boys. The other men wait outside in the street. The young men first stand, one by one, next to the measuring rod to have their height measured. Then the town clerk asks each of them his weight. Then the doctor measures their chests and finally listens with a stethoscope to their heart and lungs. At one point during a 'talla' I witnessed, there was great tension in the room when the doctor spent a long time listening to one boy's heart

and asked him if he had had rheumatic fever or got tired while exercising. The boy said 'no'. The doctor then told him to go into a corner and do some knee-bends. The doctor then listened to his heart again. There was not a sound from all the men assembled in the room. When the doctor finally said that the boy was fit for military service, everyone heaved a sigh of relief. When the doctor has finished examining the boys the door is opened and the crowd of male relatives in the street listens to the town clerk announce in a loud voice the result of the 'talla'; he gives the height and weight of each boy and whether or not he is fit for military service. Then each boy is required to sign the official papers. Finally, all the boys and their male relatives go to the bars to celebrate. The mayor invites the town clerk, the doctor, and all the town councillors to a 'dulce' (sweet cake) and 'copa' (glass of brandy or anis) at his house. Later, the father of each boy invites all his relatives who have come to witness the 'talla' to a celebration lunch.

One of the most curious activities of the 'quintos' acting as a group is to 'pedir la longaniza' (literally, 'beg for the sausage') on 'martes de carnaval' (Shrove Tuesday). The young men dress

themselves in outlandish costumes and put on masks. They then go from house to house asking for eggs and sausages, with which they will afterwards have a party. What is interesting is that they always start with the first house at the top of the village and work their way down the street exactly as does the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats', that of the water guards, etc.

In Chapter I, we mentioned how very monotonous the diet of the villagers is, but it is also relevant to point out that there are certain things that they will normally eat and other things, although available, that they will never eat. Things that the villagers will eat are potatoes, beans, pork meat, eggs, cheese, bread, and apples. Things that they will never eat are those that grow wild in the village, such as mushrooms, blackberries, watercress, sorrel, and aromatic herbs growing near the village such as thyme. And they will rarely eat fruit or greens. The fact that the villagers do not eat mushrooms or blackberries could very well be explained on the grounds that eating wild things might be dangerous; particularly in the case of mushrooms, since they know that every year a few goats will die from eating poisonous ones. The villagers also say that fruit is not real food

and that eating it can be harmful. However, this still does not explain why every year they leave tonnes of plums and cherries to rot on the trees. When asked why they let the fruit rot, they say that since they cannot get a good price for their fruit, they cannot be bothered to pick it. When it is suggested that perhaps they could pick the fruit and make it into jam, they reply that that is not necessary. Yet they buy jam. They are not pressed for time, the men spend hours every day in the bar and the women sit for hours every day chatting in the street, and could easily pick all the fruit on their trees and make it into preserves if they really wanted to. It might be suggested that perhaps sugar was neither cheap nor common until very recently and therefore the villagers do not have a tradition of jam-making. This may be true, but it is not the whole explanation. What appears to be behind the behaviour of the villagers of La Nava is an attitude quite contrary to the waste-nothing philosophy supposed to be typical of European peasant societies. In fact, they seem to maintain the attitude that it is 'not elegant' to try to take advantage of all possible opportunities. We might say that they are not 'economic maximalists'. It is considered 'shameful' to do something that is not

absolutely essential for the economic survival of the household. One loses dignity by trying to profit from everything, just as one would by rummaging through dustbins. Villagers will tell, in a very elegant manner, how they have let the fruit rot on the trees rather than pick it. They will say 'No me vaga', which means 'I do not have time for that sort of thing'. A perfect example of this attitude was seen one day when a man from another village in the valley, on a visit to La Nava, saw some village children picking blackberries, for which an outsider had offered to pay them 30ptas./kilo. The man from the other village commented with an air of superiority that the people of his village had no need to do such things. The village men who were present were very embarrassed and quickly said that, of course, that was only something that the children did and that they had no need to do such things either.

While villagers are very generous with things such as potatoes, apples, walnuts, and chestnuts, which they cannot easily convert into money, they are not very much less generous with things such as beans, cheeses, 'chorizo' sausages, and eggs, which are convertible into money and are very valuable. In the village it is very bad to be considered mean

or ungenerous, and villagers always try to look open-handed. As was mentioned in Chapter I, it is quite impossible for the guest of a village man ever to buy a round of drinks at the bar. If he did, the reputation of his host would suffer.

The fact that the villagers are not 'economic maximalists' was nicely shown a few years ago when some hunters from Madrid arrived one Saturday in March to shoot wild boar in the woods above the village. The hunters hired the village men for the day as beaters, and the shoot went so well that eighteen wild boar were bagged. The hunters only took the heads as trophies and gave the carcasses to the villagers, who instead of saving the meat and curing the hams (the weather was cold and this could still have been done), ate most of it in a great orgy of feasting which lasted four days! The ten thousand pesetas which the hunters had given the villagers for acting as beaters was all spent on wine, and only when the villagers could eat no more boar did they make the rest into 'chorizos'. In fact, of the eighteen boar shot, two were left abandoned in the woods above the village because, said the villagers, 'We had enough already'. Such Obelix-like behaviour on the part of people who spend the entire year in fattening one pig

for the 'matanza' in December can only be understood as the response to a gift that has dropped out of the sky and with which it would be intolerably inelegant to include in everyday economic calculations.

The view of the world outside La Nava which the villagers have is based on the very limited travelling they have done, the influence of radio, and to a lesser extent television, and the visits of outsiders to the village. The attention villagers pay to the information coming to them through the medium of television is directly related to age, the older ones showing scant interest and the younger ones showing increasing interest with decreasing age. I have observed many times that when the television is switched on in a bar full of village men and boys, the men over fifty give no sign of having noticed the existence of the television, those between thirty and fifty years of age may occasionally glance at it, though they will normally carry on their conversations with their backs to the screen. However, those under thirty, and especially those under twenty, will sit and watch the programmes intently. Some families have bought a television, but it appears that, at least up until now, they watch it little. It is only to be expected, however, that as the younger members

of the community grow up, this will change.

There seem to be two main reasons why the villagers still watch very little television. The first is that because the village is surrounded on three sides by mountains, television reception is not very good even at the best of times. In fact, it is only possible to receive Channel One and not Channel Two. The second reason is that Spanish television presents a world which has very little in common with life as lived by the people of La Nava. While Channel One is mainly American serials dubbed into Spanish, it is precisely Channel Two which has (the still very few) programmes which deal with things (such as farming and cattle-raising) which are of interest to the villagers. And to make matters worse the independent television of the autonomous government of Castilla-León, which also produces programmes of interest to the villagers, is broadcast only on Channel Two. This year (1985) the mayor of La Nava has written to Spanish Television explaining the situation and requesting them to put a small booster station at the mouth of the valley to resolve the problem. He has, as yet, had no reply.

No one in the village reads a newspaper, but people tend to be very well informed about such things

as accidents and terrorist attacks since they listen to the news bulletins (referred to as 'el parte') on the radio. It is ironic that, again due to the physical situation of the village, it is far easier to pick up French and Portuguese radio stations than Spanish ones. However, the villagers state that even though the music (they call it 'el cantico') is much louder and clearer on the foreign stations, they never listen to them since they do not understand them. I have yet to see a book in any villager's house, though a few of the women occasionally buy one or the other of the women's magazines when they go to the Monday market at El Barco.

The only travelling that the village woman ever does with any frequency is precisely to El Barco for the Monday market (and not to the cattle fair, which is men's business). Very rarely, and always accompanied by men of the family, the women go to Plasencia to shop for something special, such as a wedding dress. They will only go to Avila to be seen by medical specialists or to give birth. Many of the older women have never been farther than El Barco in their lives. The village men travel just as rarely to Avila, but may need to go to Piedrahita occasionally to pay taxes. They go to El Barco with

greater frequency than the women and, most importantly, spend various weeks every year in Extremadura. For the village men their time in the army is probably the only time that they have seen any other part of Spain besides their region, Avila, Béjar, or Extremadura. Madrid, at just over two hundred kilometres distance, is considered by the villagers to be very far away indeed.

Of the few young people who have gone to Madrid, the girls to work as servants, and the young men to work in bars and in restaurants, most have returned to the village after a short period, sometimes within only a month or two of leaving for Madrid. Of the girls, four have married Madrid men and have, it would appear, settled there permanently. Yet when one girl's Madrid husband was recently afraid of being laid off his job at a printing firm, the couple were very seriously thinking of leaving Madrid and settling in the village, since they could live in the parents' house and they would have a right to take cattle to the 'Sierra de Socios' just like any other villager. Of the men who have gone to Madrid, all except one have since returned to the village. The young man who is still in Madrid tells me that he would very much like to return to live in the village, but that

his father is very authoritarian and does not let him make any suggestions or take any decisions with regard to the cattle, farming, etc. The married girls in Madrid are rarely, if ever, visited by their family, but will usually themselves come with husband and children to the village several times a year to visit.

For all these reasons, it is not surprising that some older villagers wonder why foreign visitors to the village 'do not speak normally' (i.e. in Castilian), or ask whether 'Inglaterra' (standard Castilian for England is 'Inglaterra') is a small or a large 'ciudad' (city), and even young men of thirty are incredulous when told that, although very near sea level, countries like Denmark have a lot of snow in the winter; they say that such a thing cannot be true since they know that it only snows in high places with mountains. Many of the older villagers appear to have no very clear idea of what a country is, and they confuse the rest of Spain with the rest of the world. Their ideas of geography can be reduced to two concepts: 'far away' and 'very far away'; the first referring to any place which may be reached by travel overland, and the second to any place which, in order to get there, it is necessary to 'cruzar el mar' (cross the sea). So one day when some villagers asked me whether

one had to cross the sea to get to England and I said 'yes', the quite natural reaction was: 'Well, England must be like Argentina then, very far away.' When a visitor to the village said that he came from the United States of America, he was asked by the villagers whether he had come by aeroplane or by car. Only a very few villagers have seen the sea, other than on television, and these are all men who during their military service were posted near the coast.

Such limited knowledge of the world outside the village, while not terribly surprising in people over sixty (when one is aware of the level of rural education throughout Spain in the 20s and 30s), is a bit more surprising for those some twenty or thirty years younger. What happened, though, was that from 1955 to 1960 no schoolteacher could be found to come to the school at La Nava, so that a number of young men now in their thirties and forties have had very little formal schooling. One intelligent young man in his thirties once explained to me with complete seriousness that trout died when bleach was put into the river, not through poisoning, but because the bleach killed the 'micobrios' (standard Spanish, 'microbios') that the fish needed to 'breathe'.

Some of these young men have an inferiority

complex about their knowledge of the world outside the village and about the Spanish they speak, which, although it contains a number of archaisms, is generally quite good. And while they are proud of their life and their village, the young people are aware that this view is not universally shared. A schoolteacher at El Barco, discussing one day the people of the area, said: 'These people are ignorant and illiterate and cannot be educated. It is a waste of time trying to educate such beasts.'

While there are still (in 1985) nine children at the village school, the older children (twelve years old and up) have been going to the regional school at El Barco (they travel there and back every day by schoolbus) for the past three years. There they mix with all the other children of the region and will no doubt develop quite a different view of their village in relation to the outside world than that of their parents and grandparents.

The only village children who have gone to secondary school are the daughter (an only child) of the owner of the 'old' bar and two sons of the man who still keeps sheep. The girl was sent to a convent school at Salamanca because her cousins, who live at El Barco, were sent there as well, and the

boys were sent to trade schools because their father is the village man who expresses the most dissatisfaction with his way of life, and he does not want his children to have the same life as he had. His two boys are regarded with suspicion and are criticized by the other young men of the village; the village boys resent the air of superiority and the disdain for the village shown by the two who study outside. While the parents of the girl have had to pay for their daughter's schooling, the two boys have been able to study with scholarships; the same scholarships which have been offered to all other able children of the village, but which have been rejected by their parents.

In the summer of 1979 the villagers were very worried by news reports of the imminent fall of the Skylab space station. Most of the older people had no clear idea that the earth is round, or of where the continents are in relation to each other. One woman said that it was a very bad idea to explore space because 'they will find such a fearful mystery'; another thought that it would be far better to give the money spent on such things to the poor people of the world, rather than to waste it trying to find out about 'the people on the moon,

who are probably not interested in us anyway'. Other villagers said that it was silly to send machines to explore what is 'the region of God'. One middle-aged villager told me with complete conviction that it was impossible for a man to have reached the moon since, as he put it, 'going at about 50km/hr it would probably take years to arrive'. The young people had a somewhat clearer idea than their parents and grandparents, and said angrily that the Americans were always doing things for which other people had to suffer the consequences.

The villagers' ignorance of the outside world produces an attitude of fear and a feeling that most things that come from outside are probably inimical to their interests. While quite justified in the case of the Skylab, this attitude causes the villagers to come out with such seemingly paranoid statements as: 'All diseases in the village are brought in by outsiders.' That such a comment is not really paranoid is clear from the fact that two of the older villagers are deaf as a result of having had the chicken-pox when they were already adults. Because La Nava was so isolated, such diseases only came to the village once every twenty-five years or so, say the villagers, and they were probably brought in by someone from outside.

Therefore, people did not always catch such diseases as children but when they were mature and liable to suffer permanent injury. With the greater frequency of travel since the road was built in 1929 this no longer happens, but such experiences have taught the villagers to be wary of the outside world.

The villagers claim that the insects which eat their potato plants were never seen in the village until some twenty years ago, when they were 'brought by aeroplanes from Africa' by the companies which make the insecticides to deliberately spread the insect in order to infect new areas and thus make more profits. Whether this is true or not, the villagers are convinced that they are the passive victims of the machinations of the outside world.

Although the Civil War (1936-39) hardly affected La Nava (no one was killed and the one man who was shot in the leg is now a hale and hardy grandfather), it is not at all surprising that after nearly forty years of the Franco regime most older villagers consider politics to be, as one man put it, 'a dangerous thing'. Since Avila fell immediately into the hands of the Nationalists at the beginning of the war, the village men were obliged to fight for Franco whether they were committed to his cause or not. Because most had

a very hard time during the war, and suffered strong indoctrination, the majority of older village men have an intense fear of 'los rojos' (the reds) and a great respect for the military and the para-military Civil Guard. Their fear, combined with their limited knowledge of even the rest of Spain, was clearly expressed one day when discussing the political problem of Basque terrorism. One villager said that 'they should all be shot'. When it was suggested that shooting all the Basque terrorists might be difficult, the man (one of the nicest in the village) replied: 'Not just the terrorists, all the Basques.'

In the first democratic elections since the Civil War the villagers had all voted for the then prime minister, firstly because he was from Avila, and secondly because 'he looks and talks like a "señor"'. They did not believe that the leader of the socialist party had been to university. Afterwards the villagers were disappointed with the prime minister who was from Avila because he had not done anything (that they could see) for them or their village. Villagers informed me that in the last general election they had all voted for the conservative party; except for one young man who said that he had voted for the communists 'as a joke'.

While villagers do identify, to a certain extent, with the label of 'abulenses' (people of Avila), they do not identify with such a place as 'Castile', and were extremely annoyed when the new autonomous government of Castilla-León decided to change the feast day of San José for that of 'Los Comuneros de Castilla'. That the government had decided to declare an important feast day to be a normal working day was intolerable, particularly when the villagers identified the sixteenth century 'comuneros' with the present-day 'comunistas'. The villagers decided not to work on San José, but rather to celebrate the fiesta as they had always done.

Their political attitudes are not the only things posed in stark black/white opposition. I only learnt of one of their strongest grounds for suspicion of an outsider when it was too late to do anything about it. It was not until about a year after I began my research that one of the older men, a former mayor of La Nava, apologised to me one day for not having been friendlier when I had first come to the village. When I assured him that I had not taken it amiss since, as a foreigner, I could not expect to be immediately accepted into the community, he replied that the problem had not been so much that I was a foreigner but that

one could never know what to expect from a man with a beard.

That the villagers initially reacted with caution to the presence of the ethnographer is even more understandable when it is known that the first foreigner to have come to live in the valley, a German who married a girl of Navaleones, was, unfortunately, also a criminal. It was a very traumatic experience for the village, since the man is said to have beaten up his father-in-law and to have forced his wife into prostitution. The German is now in prison in Avila for robbery, and the entire family of the girl has emigrated to the north of Spain.

Fortunately for the villagers, not all outsiders have been equally unpleasant. Some twenty-five years ago a group of young men of the Catholic religious order known as the 'Maristas' began coming to the village in the summers and set up their tents in a meadow near the river below the village. A few years afterwards they bought a number of meadows from the villagers ('for nothing', the villagers complain today) and built themselves a house where they would come for weekends and the summer. In the beginning they were very much interested in village affairs and helped the villagers build the three fountains on

the village street, where before all the water had to be got from one fountain at the very top of the village. The 'Maristas' would also bring gifts for the village children at Christmas-time and would regularly show slides at the village school of the missionary activities of the order ('of savages who eat their dead', according to the villagers).

As time went by, however, the priests and brothers began to have less and less to do with the villagers, and are now said to be only interested in bringing schoolchildren from Salamanca to their house near the river as a business. Recently the 'Maristas' organized a raffle to help repair the village chapel. The first prize was a tablecloth embroidered by one of the village girls and the second prize was either a bicycle (no one in the village owns such an object) or a small computer (ordenador). No one in the village had the slightest idea what an 'ordenador' was. The idea of the 'Maristas' was obviously to sell the raffle tickets to the children at their school at Salamanca, since, as one wit put it, they would have more use in the village for an 'ordeñador' (milking machine) than for an 'ordenador'.

Some six or seven years ago the only other

sign of outsiders in the village were the people from El Barco who came to the bridge below the village for the day on Saturdays and Sundays in the months of July and August to go swimming in the river. These people would rarely come up to the village, and if they did, they would only go to the bar for a drink, and they would have little or no contact with the village people. However, in the past few years outsiders have been coming with their tents to camp for a month at a time on the meadows near the river. In the beginning the villagers were a bit slow to take advantage of this, and feeling it inelegant to ask for money, let the outsiders camp for nothing. Yet very soon the man who owns the old bar (somewhat more cunning and more mercenary than the rest) began charging the campers a few thousand pesetas to put four or five tents on one of his meadows. Things have developed to such an extent over the past few years that he is now asking several thousand pesetas per tent. The other villagers have reluctantly followed his example, though most will still not ask for money but will take what is offered to them by the campers. Since the summer tent population has gone, in the short space of five years, from two or three to two or three dozen in both July and August

(and now people are beginning to come in June as well), the villagers are gathering in the hay on their lower meadows much earlier than they would have some years ago in order to let them out to campers.

Apart from providing a bit of extra income for those villagers who own meadows near the bridge, these summer visitors ('veraneantes') seem to have had, as yet, not all that much effect on the village. The village children are still not permitted to go swimming (the water is too cold, say their mothers), though one or two of the more daring adolescents have bought themselves swimsuits and taken the plunge. For the older men, most of whom have most certainly never seen a naked woman, not even their wife, in their entire life, the sight of the female summer visitors coming into the bar in bikinis has been quite a shock, they have confessed to me privately. This, and the fact that a number of the outsiders have been seen sun-bathing nude is considered by the villagers to be 'indecent' and 'ugly'.

The reaction of the villagers to the summer visitors has undergone an interesting transformation in just a few years. At first the villagers thought that the outsiders must be poor people 'or why else would they have to live in tents like gypsies?',

they asked. But when the villagers noticed the large cars and the spend-thrift ways in the bar which most of the outsiders have, they then decided that the outsiders must all be rich. The villagers seem to regard the summer visitors as having as much in common with them as visitors from outer space. What upsets them, though, is the disdain with which they are treated by some of these outsiders (workers at the textile factories at Béjar).

Other occasional visitors to the village go unnoticed. The president of the Spanish Association of Private Banks, a man who in Madrid never goes anywhere without a police escort, has been to the village a number of times with a friend or two to go climbing and afterwards have a meal in the kitchen of the old bar. None of the villagers knows who he is.

The sudden presence of so many unknown people in the village in the summertime appears to have provided a motive for unease on the part of the villagers. They say that it is dangerous to leave the door unlocked to go out, but quickly add that 'of course no one from the village would take anything'. And I once witnessed a long discussion between various members of a family who had been winnowing as to whether they ought to leave the tools there for the

following day or take them home for the night. In the end they decided to bury the least valuable implements under the pile of chaff and take the more valuable tools home. Again, when questioned, they said that 'no one of the village would take them'. On another occasion a father and his son left their grass-cutting machine in the field where they had been working, hidden under a pile of new-mown hay. Just how much of this caution is motivated by fear of outsiders is difficult to say.

A few years ago a young couple from Madrid came to the village looking for a house in the country. The father of the bar-owner offered the couple a house he had at a rather inflated price, and was the first to be surprised when the young couple agreed without the bargaining which is usual in these cases. The couple were very friendly and soon were on good terms with all the villagers. The village men spent many nights helping the couple do up their house. The father of the man was an army colonel, and this had made a very favourable impression on the villagers since they have an enormous respect for the army. After coming to their house at the weekends for about a year, the couple suddenly stopped coming. Then, after a few months, the man turned up one day, but

with another girl. When the villagers asked him where his wife was, he said he did not know, but that it did not matter since they had never been married anyway. The reaction of the villagers was astonishment followed by great anger. They felt they had been 'tricked' and made fools of by those they had accepted as 'good people', but were now revealed to be 'immoral people'. The man came once or twice more to the village, but such was the cool reception given him by the villagers that he finally had to put the house up for sale.

About a year ago a middle-aged man came to the village looking for a meadow to buy on which he could build a chalet. No doubt encouraged by his sale of the house, the father of the bar-owner (perhaps significantly, not himself a native of La Nava) offered the outsider a meadow at a price which astounded all the other villagers. The man accepted and bought the meadow. Then came the question of connecting his meadow to the recently inaugurated system of running water. The villagers came together in 'open council' and decided that they could not let him have the running water as that would be 'setting a precedent', and if instead of one house, the man built four houses and a swimming-pool, the

village might be left without running water. How much the decision of the villagers was motivated by concern about the man's taking all the village water and how much by the fact that he was an artist (a painter), divorced, and living unmarried with a German woman, it is difficult to tell. The meadow is up for sale.

One night there was great shouting at the bar. A group of young married and unmarried men were very angry with two of their number who had agreed to act as beaters again for another wild boar shoot. It seems that after the shoot of the previous year, when the Madrid guns had already left, a small group from El Barco had tried to make away with some of the wild boar carcasses. They were stopped by the village men, there was a great confrontation, and the others left without the boar. The problem now was that these same men from El Barco had been invited back, and the village men had decided to boycott the shoot in protest. The two men who were keen to earn some money as beaters and have the possibility of eating more wild boar were told by the others that they were 'chaqueteros' (turncoats), 'egoistas', and ultimate insult, were not 'caballeros' (gentlemen). When one of them replied to the effect

that he had the right to do whatever he bloody well pleased, the others shouted back: 'Not against the interests of the village!' The following day no village man acted as beater, and the shoot was a complete fiasco. Not one boar was killed. They shot at a fox, but it got away. The village men were delighted; 'It serves them right', they said. That night all the young men had a big meal to celebrate. They killed a goat.

That the villagers are not, despite what they often say, the passive victims of the machinations of the outside world is made abundantly clear from the foregoing stories, as it is from the following. Two years ago a Madrid man (a top civil servant) told the villagers that he wanted to rent the shooting rights to the 'Sierra de Socios' in the autumn and winter, and sent what he considered to be the fair offer of 200000ptas. The villagers were very annoyed at the Madrid man's way of going about things, and they replied that they wanted 210000ptas. The civil servant at first said that he would not pay the little bit extra, but later visited the village and agreed to give the villagers what they were asking. The villagers in turn said that they were not interested in his money, and that they were not going to let out

the shooting rights to the sierra (to him) at any price.

As was schematically outlined in Chapter I, the land surrounding the village may be divided into various bands of territory both above and below the village. We saw that starting from the river and going up the mountainside there are: the lower meadows; the lower gardens/orchards known as 'La hoja de abajo'; the village; the upper gardens/orchards known as 'La hoja de arriba'; the upper meadows; the municipal common; the 'Sierra de Socios'; and finally, the earl's estate. We can extend this structuring of space by regarding the earl's estate as being a species of 'no man's land' between what is properly 'village land' (the 'Sierra de Socios') and Extremadura on the other side of the mountains. In much the same way, we see that there is a parallel 'no man's land' or march below the village between La Nava and Navaleones, the broad, flat flood-plain from the river to the other side of the valley where the lower meadows of Navaleones begin, which acts as a sort of buffer between village land and the world outside.

But, more importantly, we can identify each of these areas as being part of what the villagers of La Nava consider to be the world of men or the

world of women. As was mentioned in Chapter I, no village woman has ever been to the 'laguna' (mountain lake) which is on the earl's estate. Villagers, women as well as men, state firmly that the sierra is 'de los hombres' (of the men) and is not a place where women should go. When asked why not, they reply that 'a woman would only be in the way'. As we saw in Chapter II, the only time during the year when the women and girls are allowed to tend the goats (though always assisting a man) is in the months of May and June, precisely when the goats are not permitted to enter the upper pastures of the 'Sierra de Socios', but are kept down to the border area where the municipal common ends and the sierra proper begins. We also saw that when the women and girls looked after the sheep, they would never go above the area of the municipal common, and the women themselves state that they were the ones to tend the sheep, while only the men tended the goats, precisely for the reason that the sheep were never taken very far above the village, while the goats were daily taken up to the sierra and brought back again in the evening.

While the meadows and the gardens and orchards, both above and below the village, may be seen as areas

where women as well as men are to be found, the women and girls will usually (though not always) be accompanied by father, husband, or brother. The river and the border area between La Nava and Navaleones are, again, considered to be part of the men's realm, and if a female is there she will either be with a male member of her family or with a group of females.

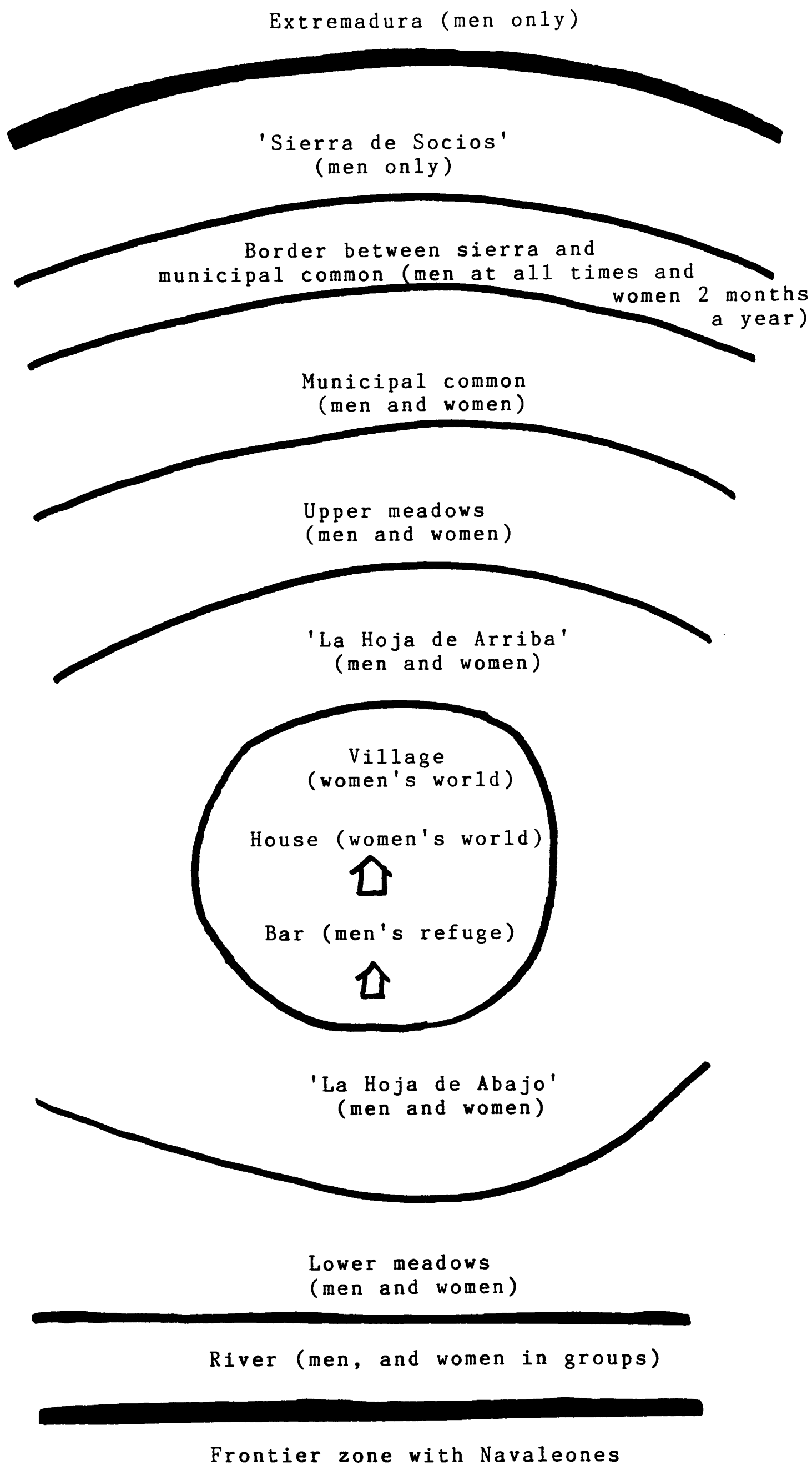
The village, on the other hand, is quite consciously regarded as the realm of the women. The house is clearly the centre of a woman's world, and all the village men, even the most boisterous, will always have a sheepish air about them if visited at home; and wife or daughter will rarely let husband or brother get a word in edgeways if the conversation takes place inside the house. The men's refuge in the village is the bar, where they will often spend many hours a day, in summer as well as winter. It is not too much to say that a man of La Nava is to be found either in the sierra, in the gardens/orchards, in the meadows, or in the bar, and never, unless he is ill, 'en casa' (at home).

The bar is the only place in the village where a man really feels 'at home'. The bar is not a place for women. The village women themselves say that 'women cannot go to the bar', and it is true that

the women do not enter the bars except to buy things to take away. The bar is the forum where the men play their role of decision makers, though it is completely obvious that the wives know all about the men's business, and in many cases are the ones who decide matters. But however much the women may really control everything, in public it is always the men who must discuss things and appear to be taking the decisions.

The villagers' conception of physical space as social space can be extended to include Extremadura, which as we saw in Chapter III is clearly part of the world of men. Village women will occasionally go with their husbands to Plasencia to get something special, a wedding or first communion dress, for example. However, they will never visit the properties where the cattle are, except in the very few cases, as was mentioned in Chapter III, when a man goes to a property for the entire season, and he may take his wife with him if the couple have no children of school age. All these ideas of the sexual division of space may be seen in Figure 8.

That the villagers appear to conceptualize the world of the women as being 'inside' (inside the house, inside the village, and inside the chapel)



and the world of the men as being 'outside' (outside the house, outside the village, and outside the chapel) seems to be nicely shown by the annual procession of the image of San Miguel on the feast day of the patron saint.

The saint is served by two 'mayordomas'; two girls whose responsibility it is to clean and look after the chapel. The elder of the two is known as the 'mayordoma mayor' and the other girl is the 'mayordoma menor'. The girls must be unmarried and at least fifteen years old. A village girl will usually serve as 'mayordoma' when she is seventeen or eighteen years of age. However, if there are no young girls of the appropriate age available, the previous 'mayordomas' may be required to serve for more than one year. The two new 'mayordomas' always take over from the two previous 'mayordomas' on the first Sunday after the feast of San Miguel.

Two days before the feast of San Miguel, late in the afternoon, the two 'mayordomas' go to the top of the village and work their way down the street, going from house to house following the order of the 'torno' of the 'coffee goats', of the water guards, etc. Each girl carries a linen sack. At each house visited, the housewife fills her two biggest dishes with grain,

one with wheat and the other with rye, and pours the contents into the linen sacks. The 'mayordoma mayor' carries the sack for the wheat, the 'mayordoma menor' the sack for the rye. As the grain is poured into each sack, the two 'mayordomas' say in unison: 'San Miguel bendito se lo pagara' ('Blessed St Michael will repay you'). The offering is known as the 'ofrenda'.

On the afternoon before the fiesta the 'mayordomas' and the other village girls put their best embroideries (with the girl's initials embroidered in a conspicuous place) on the pedestal of the saint, and they place the image of the saint on the 'andas' (portable platform), which they decorate with flowers (real and artificial) and with ribands given by different families (formerly they would put an arch over the image and suspend the ribands from that). The girls then 'wash' the saint's face with 'aguardiente' (a type of rough brandy) to make the face shine. A bouquet of artificial flowers (carried by a village bride on her wedding day) are in the left hand of the saint.

Except for those who are ill, all village men, women, and children go to the mass on the feast day of San Miguel. The women and children go early

and find themselves seats, while the men and the boys all march together from the village to the chapel with a four-piece band playing 'pasodobles' (the music played at the bullfight). The boys and young men shoot off rockets. The men invariably arrive after the mass has started, and just as invariably, are told off by the priest. The men stand either at the back of the chapel or in the porch outside. There is always a certain amount of chatting amongst the men at mass. On one occasion the priest had to stop the mass three times to tell them to shut up. The mayor of Navaleones and the mayor of La Nava sit together up beside the altar. The band always plays the national anthem as the priest raises the host at the consecration. No adult male ever takes communion, and it is very rare for a woman to do so. However, all the village children who have taken their 'first communion' will take communion.

After mass the image of San Miguel is first carried from its pedestal on the right-hand side of the sanctuary (on the left as seen by the congregation) to the door of the chapel by the two 'mayordomas', the 'mayor' on the right-hand side of the saint and the 'menor' on the saint's left hand, assisted by one female relative of each girl carrying the back half

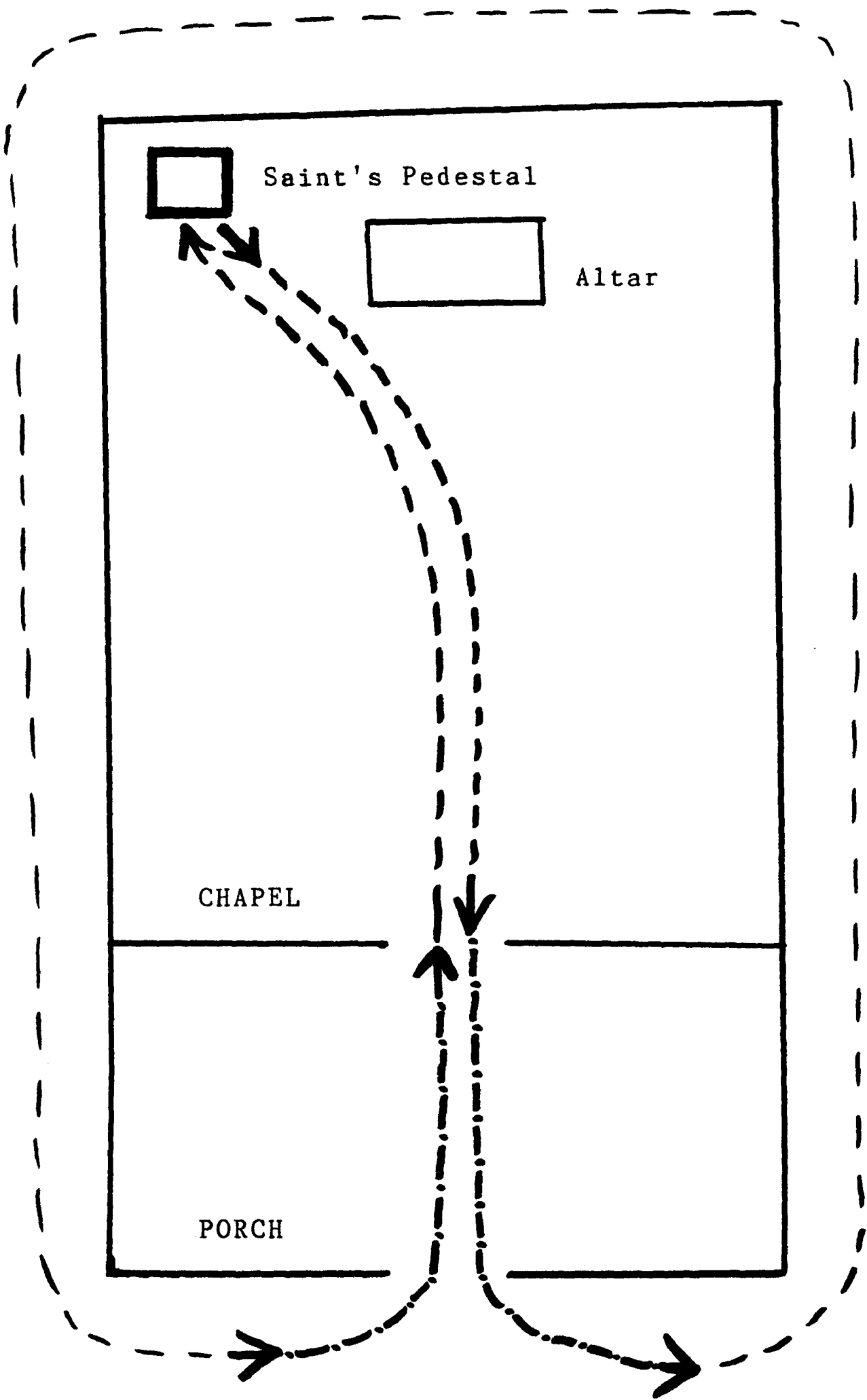
of the platform behind the girl of her family who is 'mayordoma'. The one helping may be a sister, a cousin, or the girl's mother. At the door of the chapel, the four women are substituted by four men ('los hombres'); the two on the right will be relatives of the 'mayordoma mayor', while the two on the left will be relatives of the 'mayordoma menor'. The men may be brothers, cousins, the girl's father, or (occasionally) her fiancé. Aside from the girl's parents, all relatives, both male and female, who help the 'mayordomas' carry the saint must be unmarried. The four men carry the image from the doorway of the chapel across the three or four yards of the covered porch in front of the chapel and through the archway to begin the circle round the chapel. The procession is always led by the 'mayordomo' (verger, sacristan, sexton) carrying the 'estandarte' (banner, standard) of St Michael on a long staff topped with a cross. The boys let off many rockets. As was mentioned in Chapter II, the procession is said to go 'to the right'; for the villagers, this means in a counter-clockwise direction.

Once the image has been taken through the archway, it may be taken by any villager. In theory, both men and women are said to be free to carry the image.

However, in practice the saint is always carried by the women and the girls, with the men and boys of the village marching as a separate group in front of the massed group of women carrying the image. Since the procession no longer goes up the village street and down again (as it did before the Civil War), but merely circles the chapel, the women and girls must each carry the saint for only a few steps if all are to have the chance of carrying San Miguel (see Plate 10). Women who are in mourning do not carry the image of the saint.

Some five yards before the procession reaches the archway of the covered porch attached to the front of the chapel, the image will again be taken by the four male relatives of the 'mayordomas'. The men carry the image back to the door of the chapel, where they hand the saint back to the four women, the two 'mayordomas' and their two female relatives, who carry the image back to its place alongside the altar. The route of the procession and who carries the image of the saint at each stage may be seen in Figure 9.

What seems perfectly clear is that the procession expresses in a metaphorical way that the women, from their world 'inside', deliver the saint (male) to the men to take to the men's world, which is 'outside'.



- — — Image carried by 'mayordomas' and female relatives.
- . - . - Image carried by male relatives of 'mayordomas'.
- — — Image carried by 'all the village'.

The men later return the saint from their 'outside' world back to the 'inside' world of the women. That the image is handed out of the chapel and handed back in precisely at the doorway does not appear to be gratuitous. The procession of San Miguel appears to be clearly underlining, amongst other things, that all a woman's dealings with the world outside the house and outside the village must be mediated through a man of her family.

The procession no longer goes up to the top of the village as it did before the Civil War because, say the villagers, a former priest decided that it was too much bother. At the end of the war the image was carried up and down the street in thanksgiving for the fact that no one in the village had been killed in the war. The only other time the image has ever been taken into the village other than on the feast day of San Miguel was on the occasion of a drought 'many years ago' when the saint was carried up to the upper fountain (the only one then in existence) so that the rains would come. When the procession went up and down the village street it would always make a counter-clockwise loop round the chapel before re-entering the building on its way back from the village. This single circle round the chapel 'to the

right' is all that remains today of the much longer procession of the past.

Villagers emphasise the importance of the physical image of the saint by recounting the story of the old image of St Martin that a neighbouring village decided to replace with a new one. When the villagers of that place tried to burn the old image, it would not burn, so the story goes, and when they threw it into the river, the image kept returning. Finally, when the new image of the saint was found to be rotting, the old image was brought back to its place in the church with great solemnity.

When the procession of San Miguel re-enters the chapel all the villagers follow behind. Shortly afterwards, they all come out again; this time putting money into the hat or small basket held by the 'mayordomo', who is standing at the entrance to the porch. The money of this 'colecta' (collection) is used to buy things for the chapel, such as candles, altar wine, etc. Immediately afterwards, the 'aguacil' (bailiff) auctions the two sacks of grain collected two days previously by the 'mayordomas'. Again, the money raised in this way goes to pay the expenses of the chapel.

It was mentioned in Chapter I that the chapel

is located at a point from which the saint, as the villagers say, 'can see and control all that goes on in the village'. The image of the saint inside the chapel really does face the village, and although the chapel is actually on the same level as the village, the people of La Nava describe it as being 'en lo alto' (high up). That the chapel is sited at a point we could consider to be a spiritual border or frontier is clear from the fact that not only is the village first seen from there on arriving, but that the road, which has been steeply climbing ever since it crossed the bridge on the valley floor below, suddenly becomes completely level from the chapel right up to the entrance to the village. And although I am not aware of anyone's having investigated the question, I have often noticed that, at least in Castile, village chapels are sited at a certain distance outside the villages, and always at a bend in the road; it would appear that this is so in order to be in the best position to defend the village from any harmful influences coming from outside.

But if San Miguel protects the northern, valley entrance to La Nava, we might wonder who protects the southern, sierra entrance to the village. The answer seems to be: San Antonio. When something,

or someone, is lost and has not been discovered by nightfall, a villager will go beyond the top end of the village to the threshing grounds ('las eras') and, facing the mountains, shout a special prayer ('responso') to San Antonio. Once the prayer is said, one must stop looking for the thing, or person, lost (the matter is in the hands of the saint), and not look again until the following morning. Villagers tell how some years ago a child was lost, and since he had not been found when night fell, his mother said the prayer to San Antonio. When the child was found the following morning he said he had been all night with a man with a staff and a dog and the long habit of a monk: he described San Antonio as he is depicted in 'las estampas' (holy pictures). The child was given the nickname, by which he was known for the rest of his life, from that part of the sierra where he said he had spent the night with the saint. The prayer to San Antonio is said by the villagers to be very powerful, and secrecy is necessary. In fact, the village girls say that it is considered so powerful that mothers will not tell it to their daughters, but have it written down and hidden.

And as if having one saint to guard the bottom of the village and another to guard the top were not

sufficient, the villagers have two stone crosses, one standing nearly at the top of the village and facing the mountains and the other carved on the stone wall of one of the last houses at the bottom of the village, to protect both ends of the street. Villagers tell stories about having been followed down the mountainside by wolves (wolves were numerous in the Sierra de Gredos some fifty years ago), but upon reaching the village, and the cross, the wolves turned back. And when the procession of San Miguel still went up the village street, it would go as far as the upper cross before turning round and returning to the chapel. To demonstrate the powers of the cross, villagers state that the ash tree is proof against lightning since the branches of the tree form a cross. Also good against lightning (other than a small piece of quartz crystal carried in one's pocket) is a small cross made of lavender known as 'los tomillitos'.

In the past, say the villagers, children were warned of the dangers of the sierra by being told of the wolves. Today, when there are no more wolves, children are told of the wild boar. But parents have always, it seems, warned their children to be careful of 'the smake'. And the snake to which they refer

is not one of the many poisonous vipers which exist in all the area round the village, but is a snake ('culebra') 'the size of a man and completely covered with hair', which is said to live in a cave at the beginning of the sierra. When it is known that the sierra is clearly identified as the realm of the men, it might appear that the 'hairy snake' which guards the entrance to the sierra is a phallic symbol. Yet things may not be as simple as that.

The danger below the village is identified as having been 'la mora' (the moorish girl). The villagers say that they do not know who 'la mora' was or when she lived. She is said to have lived in a cave that exists near the river. Villagers claim that it is very dangerous to enter the cave. When questioned, they tell the story of a dog which went into the cave and reappeared quite some time later at the village of La Laguna on the other side of the hill. The village men say that it is all a story, but the village women say that they are convinced it is dangerous to enter the cave.

Felix Barroso (1985) says that throughout the northern part of Extremadura there are caves, always near springs or rivers, said by the local people to have been inhabited by 'la mora'. One day,

so the legend goes, a shepherd passed a cave outside of which was a moorish girl with various articles spread out on the ground in front of her. The girl invited the shepherd to choose what he liked best. When the shepherd said he liked the scissors, 'la mora' angrily cut off his tongue with them. The girl had been enchanted, and to break the spell and reach the fantastic treasures she guarded in her cave, the shepherd ought to have asked for her hand in marriage. The use of the scissors is interesting, since we saw how the villagers will place a pair of scissors, opened in the form of a cross, on a dead body to cause the swelling of the stomach to subside. The villagers also say that it is very dangerous to hold a pair of scissors during a thunderstorm; they should be placed, opened in the form of a cross, on the floor behind the front door of the house. Even more interesting is that there is, according to Barroso, a variant of the legend which says that sometimes 'la mora' appears in the form of a large snake. So rather than being opposed dangers of male snake above the village and female 'mora' below the village, what I think we see is a common danger - which we might call 'the wild' - kept away from the village by the combined power of the two saints and the two crosses.

As we saw in Chapter II, the street forms the main axis of the village, and as is made quite clear by the various systems of 'tornos', is the most important structuring element of village space. The street runs approximately on a north-south axis, so that the upper end of the street (and thus, the village) is at the southern end of the axis, and the lower end is to the north. The fact that two of the four systems of 'tornos' which follow the village street always start at the top of the street (the southern end of the village) may somehow be related to the importance the villagers give to Extremadura over the mountains to the south. Or what appears to be the greater importance given by the villagers to the top of the street may be due to an assumption of the superiority of that which is higher over that which is lower. The villagers point out that while the responsibility for the upkeep of the dry-stone boundary walls between fields is equal for the owners of the fields on both sides of the wall if the ground is level, if the ground is sloping the top man has responsibility for the maintenance of the wall. It will also be remembered that the villagers used the argument that water always flows downhill to justify the fact that the 'torno'

of the water guards always starts at the top of the street and works downhill, but never goes uphill. This argument, which implies, if not superiority, at least precedence in time of higher over lower, is only reinforced when it is realized that, up until less than fifteen years ago, the only source of pure drinking water in the village was one fountain which was right at the top of the street. The up-down polarity in relation to the village street is also seen from the fact, already mentioned in Chapter II, that the goats of the main herd (the 'sierra herd') are counted on the day before the feast of San Pedro at the very top of the street, while the 'coffee goats' are counted at the opposite extreme of the village at the very bottom of the street.

Now that we have looked at the manner in which the people of La Nava regard the world outside the village, the outsiders who come to the village, and the village itself, we can finally turn our attention to the title of this chapter: Extremadura as 'Earthly Paradise'. We have already tried to show how annual transhumance to the winter pastures of Extremadura is a key factor in the economic vitality of the village of La Nava. Yet, as was hinted at in Chapter III, Extremadura means much more to the

villagers than simply a place to feed the cattle in the wintertime.

It was mentioned that the most characteristic word the villagers use with regard to Extremadura is 'calor' (heat). But what they mean by this is not simply heat as measured in degrees of temperature on a thermometer, but heat in the sense of fertility, of something which produces life. The villagers consider that there are two sorts of heat; probably best understood as 'bad' heat and 'good' heat. Villagers say that a woman who is menstruating should never make cheese nor help with the preparation of the meat of the pig-killing, since in such a condition she is 'hot' and will cause the cheese to ferment and the meat to go off. The villagers say that the beans must always be sown at the hottest time of the day so that they will germinate faster and grow better. On the other hand, the potatoes must always be planted at the coolest hours of the early morning or they will 'cook' in the earth, meaning that they will rot. That it is not, in fact, true that beans need to be sown in the heat of the day and potatoes planted in the cool of the morning is not important. What is interesting is that the villagers claim that they do and act accordingly.

I think we can differentiate between what the villagers regard as 'good' heat and 'bad' heat by seeing the first as promoting fertility and germination and the second as causing decay and putrefaction. The 'heat' of Extremadura is 'good' heat. The villagers of La Nava talk about the grass in Extremadura as being 'this high' (as they hold their hand about a metre above the ground), and they add: 'Las cortas y echan leche' ('You cut it and milk flows'). They say that the potatoes in Extremadura are 'like that' (indicating something the size of a large melon), and that when the cows are taken to Extremadura 'they always become pregnant'. All these marvels are due, they say, to the 'heat' of Extremadura. The fact that this is only partially true only makes it more interesting.

One of the mistaken ideas the villagers have about the geography of Spain is that there are only mountains to the north of them and only plains to the south of them. That the villagers of La Nava conceptually oppose the 'heat' of the world of the plains on the other (southern) side of the mountains to the 'cold' of their (northern) mountain village is only too obvious. They constantly talk about all the things which grow in Extremadura and which

they cannot grow in their village. They mention tobacco, grapes, figs, olives, peppers, asparagus, tomatoes, aubergines, and cork. In the village, they say, 'all we have is beans, potatoes, and apples'. They radically contrast the village, regarded as cold, dark, and lacking in fertility, with the warmth, sun, and fertility of Extremadura. They say that when the cows return from Extremadura, 'vuelven con la vida' ('they return full of life').

So essential is the relationship with Extremadura that during the infamous 'years of hunger' immediately following the Civil War when all basic foodstuffs were controlled directly by the State and strictly rationed, the villagers risked their lives in crossing the mountains in order to trade the flour which they produced, and which those of Extremadura did not have, for the oil and wine which they lacked, but which were produced on the other side of the mountains. This smuggling was neither a question of necessity nor simply a question of profit-seeking. The enormous risks of such crossings, of being caught and beaten by the Civil Guard and thrown into prison or of being caught in a snowstorm and frozen to death, were faced, I believe, because the villagers found it impossible to cut their relations with what we might

very well call their 'other half': this 'other half' whose mysterious attraction consists precisely in that it is all that they are not. It is the very complementarity of the two regions which leads the villagers of La Nava to conceive of Extremadura as an 'Earthly Paradise'.

In Extremadura land is divided in a most unegalitarian manner into huge estates owned by very rich families, many of whom belong to the nobility. The consequence of this is that the majority of the people in Extremadura are working on the estates of the rich for a wage. In theory, the villagers of La Nava are in an advantageous position in relation to those living in Extremadura since the villagers own their land and their cattle. However, I have many times heard them express their envy of the people in Extremadura because there one can earn very good wages for the (very hard) work of collecting tobacco, olives, peppers, etc. In fact, of the three families of villagers who have emigrated as a whole, all three are earning wages on big estates in Extremadura, and all boast considerably of it every time they visit the village.

The people of Extremadura are considered to be 'good people' and of the sort one could marry without

problems. At the moment there are two men from the village who have married girls from Extremadura and have settled there, and at least two more were going with girls from Extremadura but, in the end, did not marry them. And a number of village girls have had, or still have, boyfriends from Extremadura. The villagers say the the people of Extremadura are 'menos falsos' (less insincere) than the people of Avila.

There is no feasting in the village where attempts are not made to remember, sing, and dance the traditional songs the villagers have learnt in Extremadura. When asked to sing or dance something of their own folklore they will often offer to sing or dance something from Extremadura instead, saying: 'You will like it better.' Exactly the same thing happens when they are asked for 'refranes' (sayings).

That the cathedral city of Plasencia, capital of northern Extremadura, is a beautiful place there is no doubt, but much more than beauty is attributed to it by the villagers of La Nava. The village depends for all administrative purposes on the equally beautiful city of Avila, capital of the province, and located at approximately the same distance from the village as Plasencia, but in the opposite direction (north). Yet the villagers only go to Avila when

forced by unpleasant circumstances, such as dealing with affairs related to the central State or to go to hospital, where they always give birth and frequently die. On the other hand, all shopping for luxuries such as jewellery and clothes for weddings is done, whenever possible, at Plasencia. Nothing better can be said about any bought article than that it was bought in Plasencia.

In other words, when what is lacking in La Nava de San Miguel must be sought outside, one goes to:

Avila (north) - for affairs associated with
disease, death, pain, and suffering.

Extremadura (south) - for affairs associated
with enjoyment, life, and wealth.

I have tried to show how the villagers of La Nava conceive of 'their world' as consisting essentially of two complementary halves: the village, and what lies on the other side of the mountains. That they attribute ideal properties to Extremadura is, I believe, only the consequence of such conceptual division and of the complementary character of the two halves which meet at Puerto Castilla. If, within the village, affairs are organized according to the principle of the 'torno', and are therefore considered to function following a movement of rotation, all relations

with Extremadura move up and down in a lineal direction, which does not ensure equity, but fertility. We might almost describe it as a nuptial movement; the coming together of two complementary halves to produce fertility and the continuity of an entire way of life.

A village girl, now settled in Madrid, once made the remark that for the people of La Nava, Extremadura is 'un espejismo' (a mirage, an illusion). But, one might add, a necessary illusion.

EPILOGUE

The spring and summer of 1985 witnessed the appearance of four factors which could affect the future of La Nava de San Miguel.

The first was the signing of the documents by which Spain is to become a member of the European Economic Community on the first of January of 1986. While it is still too early to predict what effects the joining of the Common Market will have, there is already much talk of a special Community subsidy for underdeveloped mountain regions. But even more interesting is the fact that the autonomous government of Castilla-León has been making very optimistic predictions about the future of cattle-raising in Castile once Spain is a member of the E.E.C.

Yet it may be precisely these rosy predictions of a greatly increased market for beef-cattle which have encouraged the earl who owns the estate behind the 'Sierra de Socios' to suddenly claim as part of his estate a large section of the sierra which the villagers of La Nava have always considered to be theirs.

The source of the whole problem is that the boundary between the earl's estate and the common of La Nava is not well defined; the document of 1878 simply states that the 'Sierra de Socios' 'borders on' the estate, and gives no further attention to the matter. The earl's claim has greatly upset the villagers, since they realize that if he succeeds in his pretensions, they will be seriously hampered in their cattle-raising.

The law in Spain favours the villagers, since it stipulates that continued use of a piece of land over a period of more than thirty years gives the user ownership, even if the land did not previously belong to him. Yet whether the villagers will be able to stand up to the earl and defend their right to the Sierra, remains to be seen.

A third factor which may affect the future of La Nava is the building this summer of a new bridge farther down the valley to replace the narrow mediaeval bridge which until now has been a bottle-neck limiting traffic into the valley.

And while outsiders will now be able to get to La Nava much more easily, the fact that there are, at the moment, ten cars in the village (when there was only one, that of the bar-owner, in 1976) means

that the villagers themselves are much more mobile than they ever were before.

However, improved access to the village has not only had positive effects. Every summer the number of visitors coming to La Nava has increased; and this rapid increase now means that the visitors are beginning to get seriously in the way of the usual activities of the villagers. This summer there have been a number of unpleasant confrontations between villagers and summer visitors who have left their cars blocking stable doors, drinking-troughs, etc. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the outsiders often show contempt for the way of life of the villagers. And the outsiders cause conflict between villagers since the campers will often throw their rubbish into the field adjoining the one they have rented; the owner of the field sees his animals endangered by tins, etc., while his neighbour makes the profit by renting to the outsiders. The constant comment this summer was that things were sure to 'end badly', and a number of villagers talked seriously of requesting the authorities to ban all camping.

The villagers were very frightened one night when a group of young campers from a working-class district of Madrid smashed up one of the bars at

Navaleones, beat up a number of the young men there, and endangered the honour of the village girls by locking them in the school. The Civil Guard had to be called to escort the outsiders out of the valley when the villagers of Navaleones attempted to exact vengeance the following morning.

So although the village has a number of assets which would make it suitable for development as a tourist resort, such a possibility is not contemplated by most villagers. However, there is a strong movement (in Madrid) in favour of declaring the Gredos Mountains a national park. In the plan put forward the village of La Nava would be on the very edge of the park and included in what is called an 'area of protection and control'; this would have the effect of making the village even more attractive to outsiders than it is today.

APPENDIX

A. WEDDING SONGS

1. Songs sung outside the chapel after the ceremony.

Buenos dias tengan Ustedes
el señor cura y los novios
con el cuerpo de Jesús
se han desayunado todos.

Good morning to you all
the priest and the newly-weds
with the Body of Christ
you have all broken your fast.

Despídete de las mozas
clavelina colorada
despídete de las mozas
que te vas con las casadas.

Say farewell to the single girls
you red carnation.
say farewell to the single girls
now you go to join the married women.

Cuando entrastes en la iglesia
entrastes moza soltera

y ahora sales casadita
como flor en primavera.

When you entered the church
you entered a single girl
and now you come out married
like a flower in spring.

Madrina de tanto rumbo
y de tanta fantasia
¿como no has traído el coche
para llevarte a la niña?
El coche no le he traído
no le he querido traer
porque la novia no es coja
y puede ir por su pie.

Open-handed and generous godmother
why have you not brought the carriage
to take away the bride?

reply:

I have not brought the carriage
I did not want to bring it
since the bride is not lame
and is able to walk on her own.

La madrina es una rosa
 y el padrino es un clavel
 y la novia es un espejo
 y el novio se mira en él.

The godmother is a rose
 and the godfather is a carnation
 and the bride is a looking-glass
 in which the groom is reflected.

La madrina es un manzano
 cargadito de manzanas
 el novio las 'arrecoge'
 la novia baja la rama.

The godmother is an apple-tree
 laden with apples
 the groom picks them
 the bride lowers the branch.

Desde el poniente al saliente
 desde Madrid a Granada
 no he visto novia tan guapa
 ni madrina tan salada.

From the west to the east
 from Madrid to Granada

I have neither seen such a beautiful bride
nor such a charming godmother.

Cuando del altar bajabas
la miraste, te miró
palabra de amor le diste
palabra de amor te dió.

As you descended from the altar
you looked at her, she looked at you
a promise of love you gave her
a promise of love she gave you.

Cuando del altar bajaban
la dama y el caballero
parecia una rosita
cortada en el mes de enero.

As the lady and the gentleman
descended from the altar
she looked like a pretty rose
picked in the month of January.

Muy triste llevas el traje
y más triste el corazón
porque no has tenido un padre
que te eche la bendición.

Very sad is your dress
 and even sadder your heart
 without a father
 to give you his blessing.

El novio ha dado a la novia
 un anillo de oro fino
 la novia dió su palabra
 que vale más que el anillo.

The groom has given the bride
 a ring of fine gold
 the bride has given her word
 which is worth more than the ring.

Ya se sientan a la mesa
 resuenan los tenedores
 ya se sientan a la mesa
 los dos ramitos de flores.

Now they sit at the table
 now the forks begin to clink
 now they sit at the table
 the two bouquets of flowers.

Vivan los recién casados
 y el cura que los casó

el padrino y la madrina

los invitados y yo.

Long live the newly-weds

and the priest who married them

the godfather and the godmother

all the guests and me.

Repeated choruses:

Que te canto y te digo y te vuelvo a decir

que la novia se lleva la flor del jardin

que te canto y te digo y te vuelvo a cantar

que la novia se lleva la flor del rosal.

Now I tell you and I sing it and I repeat to you

that the bride has picked the best flower of

the garden

now I tell you and I sing it and I repeat to you

that the bride has picked the best rose on

the rose-bush.

(Whinny)

Que crezca en el campo la espiga dorada

que crezca el honor de la recién casada

que crezca en el campo la espiga de trigo

que crezca el honor del que ya es su marido.

Let the golden grain grow in the fields
 let the honour of the new bride increase
 let the grain of wheat grow in the fields
 let the honour of her husband increase.

(Whinny)

2. Songs sung the morning after the wedding to
 the godmother ('Alboradas').

Levántate madrinita
 a darnos las alboradas
 levántate morenita
 que está fría la mañana
 levántate
 que ya es de día
 que ya se ve.

Get up, godmother
 and give us the 'alboradas'
 get up, dark beauty
 the morning is cold
 get up
 the day has come
 it is now light.

Las albarcas traigo rotas
 y las medias del revés
 levántate madrinita
 que 'me se' enfrian los pies
 levántate
 que ya es de dia
 que ya se ve.

My sandals are broken
 and my stockings are on backwards
 get up, godmother
 my feet are getting cold
 get up
 the day has come
 it is now light.

La madrina está en la cama
 más fresca que una lechuga
 y el padrino eatá con ella
 gozando de su hermosura
 levántate
 que ya es de dia
 que ya se ve.

The godmother is in bed
 fresher than a lettuce

and the godfather is with her
 delighting in her charms
 get up
 the day has come
 it is now light.

Esta calle está empedrada
 con onzas de chocolate
 que la ha empedrado la novia
 para que pase su amante
 levántate
 que ya es de día
 que ya se ve.

This street is paved
 with bars of chocolate
 paved by the bride
 for her beloved to pass
 get up
 the day has come
 it is now light.

Al pasar por el arroyo
 tira la rienda al caballo
 que no se caiga la niña
 a lo profundo del charco

levántate
 que ya es de día
 que ya se ve.

As you cross the stream
 pull in the reins of your horse
 do not let the bride fall
 into the depths of the pool
 get up
 the day has come
 it is now light.

B. OTHER SONGS

Viva la media naranja
 viva la naranja entera
 viva mi novia la guapa
 que va por la carretera.

Long live the half orange
 long live the whole orange
 long live my pretty sweetheart
 coming along the road.

Cuando se llega a La Nava
 lo primero que se ve

es la cruz de los Maristas
mirando 'pa' San Miguel.

As you arrive at La Nava
the very first thing you see
is the cross of the Marist brothers
facing St Michael (the chapel).

La Nava es muy chiquitito
chiquitito pero grande
no hay ninguna señorita
pero hay mocitas con aire.

La Nava is a little place
a little place but great
there are no ladies there
but pretty girls instead.

El dia que subí a la sierra
puse mi mano en la nieve
vale más lo que te quiero
que lo que tu padre tiene.

The day I climbed to the Sierra
I lay my hand upon the snow
my love for you is worth more
than all your father owns.

Morena soy yo lo sé
 la culpa tuvo la nieve
 que no me ha querido dar
 la blancura que ella tiene.

My skin is dark, I know
 the snow is to be blamed
 for it refused to give me
 the whiteness that it has.

En lo alto de la sierra
 lo moreno es lo que vale
 lo blanco lo quema el sol
 y lo colorado el aire.

On the heights of the Sierra
 only dark skin endures
 white skin is burnt by the sun
 and a rosy complexion by the wind.

El galán que a mi me ronda
 gasta pantalón de pana
 sombrero de copa alta
 y un cordón a la guitarra.

The man who serenades me
 uses corduroy trousers

a high crowned hat
and a strap on his guitar.

Estribillo:

Arrierito mi amante de cinco mulas
tres y dos son del amo
las demás tuyas
las demás tuyas niña
las demás tuyas
arrierito mi amante de cinco mulas.

Muleteer of five mules is my lover
three and two belong to his master
the rest are his
the rest are all his, my girl
the rest are all his
muleteer of five mules is my lover.

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GLOSSARY

Words are listed with their local pronunciation and meanings. Where local usage differs from standard Spanish, this is indicated.

aguacil: bailiff (standard Spanish, 'alguacil').

aguador: water guard (in standard Spanish the word means 'water seller').

alborás: party held on the night of a wedding paid for by the 'padrinos' (standard Spanish 'alboradas' refers to the dawn and to a song sung at sunrise).

alcalde: mayor.

alcalde pedáneo: mayor of a dependent hamlet.

aldea: hamlet.

almeal: haystack (standard Spanish, 'almiar').

ayuntamiento: town council; town hall.

cabeza de familia: head of the household.

cabrada: herd of goats. The goatherd is the 'cabrero'.

cañada: cattle track.

casilla: stable (in standard Spanish the word refers to a hut or shed).

catrasto: property register used for tax purposes (standard Spanish, 'catastro').

comarca: region, area.

concejo abierto: literally, 'open council', all the heads of household assembled to decide matters affecting the village.

corrillo: a ring or circle of people; the women whose houses are physically nearest one another and who help one another in time of need.

cumplidos: gifts given by the family of the groom to the family of the bride; gifts given by the neighbours to a mother on the birth of her child.

dehesa: pasture, meadow.

era: threshing floor.

estilos: money for wine, etc. given by the bridegroom to the unmarried youths and girls on the wedding night (in standard Spanish 'estilo' means style, manner, fashion).

fanega: a 'fanega' of capacity is the quantity of grain needed to sow a 'fanega' of terrain. The 'fanega' of wheat is 44kg.

forastero: outsider; visitor.

huerta: irrigated vegetable garden and/or orchard.

huerto: small irrigated vegetable garden.

jornal: day's wage.

junta: the 'Junta de la Sierra' is the four-member governing body of the common mountain pastureland known as the 'Sierra de Socios'.

majá: sheepfold (standard Spanish, 'majada').

matanza: the annual killing of the pig.

mayordoma: one of two young unmarried women who serve for a year cleaning and decorating the chapel and who carry the image of the patron saint on his feast day (29 September).

mote: nickname.

mozo (moza): young unmarried man (woman).

novio (novia): fiancé (fiancée); bridegroom (bride);
newly married man (woman).

ofrecijo: the public giving of gifts to the bride
on the wedding day (in standard Spanish the word
means 'an offering', and is normally only used
in a religious context).

ofrenda: the offering of wheat and rye collected by
the 'mayordomas' from every household two days
before the feast of San Miguel, and which is
auctioned on the feast day after mass by the
'aguacil'; the proceeds are for the chapel.

padrino: godfather, either '_ de bautizo', for a
christening, or '_ de boda', for a wedding.
The godmother is the 'madrina'.

padron: municipal census of inhabitants.

paso: money paid to the 'mozos' by an outsider who
wishes to court a village girl.

pastoria: herd of sheep. The shepherd is the 'pastor'.

partido judicial: judicial district.

peonada: the tract of meadowland a man can scythe
in a day.

piara: herd of cattle. The herdsman is the 'vaquero'.

pitos: beans, also known as 'alubias' or 'judias'
(in standard Spanish the word means a whistle
or a cigarette).

practicante: medical assistant qualified to give
injections, etc.

- prao: meadow, pasture (standard Spanish, 'prado').
- pregonero: town crier.
- quinto: age-mate; military conscript.
- regadera: irrigation channel (in standard Spanish, the word refers to a sprinkler or a watering-can).
- regadío: irrigable land.
- regador: water guard, man who supervises the irrigation of the 'huertas'.
- secano: unirrigated land.
- secretario: town clerk.
- señorito: one who does little or no work (in standard Spanish the word refers to a young gentleman; a toff; a young swell).
- suelo: salary.
- termino: the area within the jurisdiction of an 'ayuntamiento'.
- trillo: a wooden flint-toothed threshing sledge. The ancient Roman 'tribulum'.
- torno: a complete cycle of turns of a co-operative village institution.
- vaca suiza: milch cow.
- vecino (vecina): neighbour; village resident. Often used to refer to the 'cabezas de familia'.
- veraneante: summer visitor.
- zagal (zagala): boy (girl) who goes as assistant to a shepherd or goatherd.





















