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"ANDAR A CAÇA DE PERDIZES CON BUEYES"

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The method of hunting described by Pármeno's remark that 'El falso boezuelo con su blando cencerrar trae las perdices a la red' (*Celestina*, XI) has been explained by Dorothy S. Severin, who quotes the accounts given by the *Celestina comentada* manuscript of the second half of the sixteenth century and a seventeenth-century Italian source.<sup>1</sup> The identity of the avian quarry of this peculiar technique has been established by Keith Whinnom.<sup>2</sup> It remains only to establish that the use of the *buey* was indeed known in fifteenth-century Spain for the explanation of the commentator to be accepted as the definitive interpretation of Pármeno's allusion.

Independent corroboration of the use of this method is provided by no less an authority than Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *halconero mayor* of King Juan II. Carrillo describes an incident in 1420 in which he took possession, aided only by Diego López de Ayala, of the virtually unguarded castle of Montalbán on behalf of King Juan. Having left Diego López to secure the gate, Carrillo entered the keep:

E sobió por otra escalera que abía otros tantos escalones, con vn puñal en la mano, fasta ençima de la torre, donde tenía el alcaide su cama. E desde fúe suso, non sentió que abía ome ninguno; e vido al alcaide andar a caça de perdiçes con bueyes.<sup>3</sup>

The *Refundición de la crónica del halconero* contains a similar account:

Y subió fasta lo alto de la torre, donde el alcaide tenía su cama, y non falló persona que lo estoruase. Y desde lo alto de la torre vió al alcaide andar a caça de perdizes con bueyes.<sup>4</sup>

The modern editor of the two chronicles concerned suggests that 'La escena del castillo de Montalbán . . . está escrita, por lo menos, diez años después de la hazaña del halconero' (*Refundición*, p. xcvi), and marvels at the author's prodigious memory; but Carrillo's account of what the absent *alcaide* was doing while his castle was being taken has the ring of truth. Besides describing an activity which was related to his own professional interests, although unfortunately without any of the details given by the sixteenth-century commentator of *Celestina*, he is describing what must indeed have been a most memorable moment in his life. We may thus accept that hunting with *bueyes* was practised at Montalbán in the 1420's.

Even if, however, Pedro Carrillo de Huete had embroidered the historical reality by making the *alcaide* appear in his account doing something spectacularly inappropriate given what was happening behind his back, his allusion to the use of *bueyes* to hunt *perdizes* would still be important evidence of the existence of the practice in Spain at the time of writing the chronicle. Carrillo's presentation of this activity without any explanation as to what the cryptic phrase 'andar a caça de perdizes con bueyes' actually involved suggests that the concept was familiar enough at that time to require none of the kind of elucidation for which we are indebted to Prof. Severin. There are, however, some residual problems, for Carrillo's reference to plural *bueyes* suggests that this method of hunting did not invariably use a single decoy as shown in the illustration reproduced by Prof. Severin and Professor Whinnom and as implied in Pármeno's phrase; nor is it clear whether the *alcaide* was disguised as an ox, or merely directing operations, although the fact that he was identifiable from the top of the keep might favour the latter interpretation.

These questions do not, however, affect the value of Carrillo's testimony for students of *Celestina*, and the chronological problem posed by the date of the accounts previously known is resolved by his information.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> "El falso boezuelo", Or, The Partridge and the Pantomime Ox', *Celestinesca*, 4, i (1980), 31-33. For the date of the *Celestina comentada*, see P. E. Russell, 'The *Celestina Comentada*', in *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton*, edited by A. D. Deyermond (London: Tamesis, 1976), 175-193, at 178-80. (Spanish translation in Russell, *Temas de 'La Celestina' y otros estudios del 'Cid' al 'Quijote'* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1978), 293-321, at 300-302).

<sup>2</sup> 'Dr. Severin, the Partridge, and the Stalking horse', *Celestinesca*, 4, ii (1980), 23-25.

<sup>3</sup> *Crónica del halconero de Juan II, Pedro Carrillo de Huete*, edited by Juan de Mata Carriazo, Colección de crónicas españolas, VIII (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946), 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Refundición de la crónica del halconero por el obispo Don Lope Barrientos*, edited by Juan de Mata Carriazo, Colección de crónicas españolas, IX (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946), 40.

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