

Published in *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, 8 (1984), 93-98.

Author's Web site:

<http://bigfoot.com/~daniel.eisenberg>

Author's email:

daniel.eisenberg@bigfoot.com

The Editor's Column

“Una uña de la gran bestia”

by **Daniel Eisenberg**

There are, within Hispanic studies, few collections of source materials as valuable as *protocolos*. Notaries' record books, they contain, in marginally legible hands, full of abbreviations, every sort of document of which an official record might have been needed: contracts, loans, wills, inventories, bills of sale, and so on. The biographies of many authors and historical figures have benefitted enormously from these documents, which still contain abundant unexploited and fascinating information. I have in my possession, for example, a copy of the inventory of the books of Francisco de Robles, Cervantes' publisher (Cuesta was only the printer), and in it are itemized the *existencias* of

Cervantes' books, with the value assigned to each.¹

No one, I believe has ever known the *protocolos* as well as the great bibliographer Cristóbal Pérez Pastor, who has taken from them (and other sources) information published in *Bibliografía madrileña* (Madrid, 1891–1907), *Documentos cervantinos hasta ahora inéditos* (Madrid, 1897–1902), *Proceso de Lope de Vega por libelos contra unos cómicos* (Madrid, 1901), *Nuevos datos acerca del histrionismo español en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid, 1901), *Documentos para la biografía de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca* (Madrid, 1905), and elsewhere.²

After Pérez Pastor's death in 1908, the Real Academia acquired from his heirs his unpublished papers, and many of his notes were published as *Noticias y documentos relativos a la historia y literatura españolas*, *Memorias de la Real Academia Española*, 10–13 (Madrid, 1910–26). [p. 94] Without indices and only roughly arranged by topic, one must pour through many pages to find information; because of its diversity and the lack of indices the collection has

¹ Madrid *protocolos* are located in the Archivo Madrileño de Protocolos, Alberto Bosch, 4; I would like to thank Eric Naylor and Joseph Snow for helping me locate this archive, the staff of which has been very helpful. For an introduction to *protocolos*, see Agustín G. de Amezúa y Mayo, "Apuntes sobre la vida escribanil en los siglos XVI al XVIII," prologue to *La vida privada española en el protocolo notarial...de los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII* (Madrid, 1950), reprinted in *Opúsculos histórico-literarios* (Madrid: CSIC, 1951), III, 279–307.

² On him, see Florentino Zamora, "Un gran bibliógrafo: Pérez Pastor," *RABM*, 67 (1959), 661–75.

remained little known and is not often consulted.³ However, it gives off the invigorating odor of original source materials, and its very disorder gives it a certain charm. Many of the entries (a great many of which, though not all, are from *protocolos*) are only one or two lines long, others give a description of the document in question,⁴ and some of the most important ones are extracted at length.

The materials are so diverse that it is hard to give a quick overview of them. There are many items on eighteenth-century drama, such as

³ A few cases have come to my attention in which scholars have published materials almost certainly identified from this publication. The first is the “Diálogo del Capón” mentioned in volume I, 239 and published in *Revue Hispanique*, 38 (1916), 243–321 (see on the work Howard Mancing, “El ‘Diálogo del capón’ y la tradición picaresca,” *Actas del Sexto Congreso internacional de Hispanistas* [Toronto: Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Toronto, 1980], pp. 494–96). The second is Cervantes’ contract with Gaspar de Porres for sale of the plays *La confusa* and *El trato de Constantinopla y muerte de Selin* (I, 101), published shortly afterwards by Francisco Rodríguez Marín, “Una escritura inédita de Cervantes,” *Ilustración Española y Americana*, May 8, 1913, and reprinted in his book, *Burla burlando* (Madrid, 1914), pp. 417–24, and pp. 431–38 of the second edition (also Madrid, 1914); the document is also reproduced by Rodríguez Marín in his edition of the *Viaje del Parnaso* (Madrid, 1935), pp. 414–15. Many documents concerning Cervantes’ patron, the Conde de Lemos, published or summarized by Astrana *Vida ejemplar y heroica de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra* [Madrid: Reus, 1948–58], VII, 722–29), as well as the will of the Duque de Béjar’s father (V, 581), were surely identified from Pérez Pastor’s collection (I, 318–19 and 378). Ángel González Palencia and Eugenio Mele, publishing the catalog of Hurtado de Mendoza’s library [p. 98] in their *Vida y obras de don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza* (Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de don Juan, 1941–43), acknowledge that it was first published in this collection of Pérez Pastor (I, 170–86).

⁴ For example, “Arrendamiento que hace el Ayuntamiento de Madrid en favor de Pierres Cosin, impresor de libros, de un pedazo de una callejuela que está en la calle mayor, para poner allí una tienda para vender sus libros durante diez años, pagando seis reales cada año. Madrid, 3 marzo 1574” (IV, 203).

an inventory of “comedias remitidas a D. Leandro Fernández Moratín, impresos, manuscritos, borradores” (I, 126), and including many receipts, e.g. from 1723, 300 reales “que se me dieron por la música que puse nueva para el Auto intitulado *La vida es sueño*” (I, 245). There is a small section of documents on “moriscos, pícaros, ganapanes, ladrones y vagamundos” (I, 429–46) and nearly 100 pages (III, 75–169) on the early ecclesiastical history of Palencia whose relevance to the *Mocedades de Rodrigo* has been examined by Alan Deyermund.

A large section of the collection deals with the book trade, authors, printers, booksellers, and the like. There is a commission given to the historian Pedro Mantuano to “expurgar” the library of the Conde de Lemos (I, 239), and a “Memorial de Pedro Mantuano natural de Málaga, a S.M. para que se recoja el libro de la *Defensa de P. Mariana*, por D. Tomás Tamayo de Vargas, y que se haga pronto pues ya había impresos en Toledo 1.400 ejemplares, que no aguardaban sino la Tasa para publicarse” (I, 239). There are many contracts for the printing of books (a good example, IV 219–20),⁵ for the purchase of paper for that purpose, and many financial items related to the sale and circulation of books. There are many references to inventories of books, such as those of Juan de Amezqueta (I, 372), and those purchased at the death of Pedro Fajardo, Marqués de los Vélez, “para la librería Real de San Lorenzo del Escorial” (I, 362).

Reference is made to the purchase of a black slave by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (I, 125); the document of sale of another by the

⁵ Although published in a different work of Pérez Pastor (*Documentos cervantinos*, II, 566), I must mention the revelation of a printer who could not “firmar.”

printer Luis Sánchez is published (IV, 380–81). Also mentioned is the 1544 document for the “venta de 200 esclavos negros cogidos [p. 95] en Cabo Verde” (I, 347). There is an inventory of a collection of swords, with the names of the swordmakers (II, 285–87); after the “Ordenanzas de los sombrereros” and preceding the “Ordenanzas de los pasteleros de Madrid” we find, from 1589, the “arrendamiento y condiciones de la casa de la mancebía de Madrid (calle de Toledo)” (II, 485).

Most interesting, at least to me, are those which reveal something of daily life, with detail rarely available for this period. One such is the budget submitted in 1500 for “el despacho de las dos carabelas que sus altezas [Fernando and Isabela] mandan ir con xproval [Cristóbal] guerra a la tierra nuevamente descubierta” (III, 29–32). Listed are all the men, their occupations, and their salaries: *un piloto, un maestre, un contra maestre, catorce marineros* (among whom were *un calafate, un carpintero, and un tonelero*), *dies grumetes, tres pajes*, and *dies ombres de armas*. All the kitchen utensils of the boat are itemized, and all the necessary provisions, together with the quantities and estimated prices of each: *biscocho, vino, vinagre, azeyte, garbanzos, fabas, tocino, tocinetas, pescado, sardinas, azúcar rosado, queso, ajos y cebollas, mostaza y oruga y otras menudencias*. There was also for each man a “boca o pipa.”

In the inventory of the personal property of María, Queen of Hungary, sister of Carlos V, we find in her tapestries (II, 291–95) a collection of early narrative. The oldest, as they are described as “paños viejos,” are “la ystoria de Alexandre” and “adán y eva, con muchos letreros.” In addition, among the others she owned are the following “paños de tapicería:

la ystoria de moysés (diez paños)
la ystoria de paris (ocho paños)
la ystoria de tobias (ocho paños)
la ystoria de coriolanus (dos paños)
la ystoria de benus (diez + dos paños)
la ystoria de siches [Psyche] (dos paños)
dos pieças pequeñas de ation [Acteón]
una pieça de calisto, para entreventanas
Sant Pablo (siete paños)
la ystoria de la ciudad de damas (seis paños)
la ystoria de hercules (doce paños)
la ystoria de heneas (siete + nueve paños)
la ystoria de Calisto (dos pieças)
la historia que nombran de hermofrodito (tres paños ricos)
la historia de la Reina hester (tres paños) [p. 96]

We also find a description of her bed (II, 295–96) and everything else belonging to her bedroom, her musical instruments and music books, and “un libro en castellano que se intitula *Menosprecio de corte*” (II, 311).

Many more books were owned by Doña Juana, daughter of Carlos V, whose possessions were inventoried at her death in 1573 (II, 315–80). Old lists of books, always incompletely described, are frequently puzzling: what sort of work was the *Discursos de las cosas aromáticas* (No. 222),⁶ and why did she have “ocho libros de la

⁶ [Of Juan Fragoso, 1572. It is found in Pérez Pastor’s *Bibliografía madrileña*.]

Segunda parte de Diana” (No. 219)? The most expensive book in her library was an elaborate *Horas de Nuestra Señora* “con algunas iluminaciones, que la primera es San Juan, con las cubiertas de oro esmaltadas, de colores, que tienen en ellas y en el arriaza noventa y ocho rubíes, tablas y veinte y dos diamantes, y en la broncha otro diamante, y en la cubierta tiene dos redondillos que se levantan, que en el uno está un reloj de sol que le falta la mano, y en el otro un espejo de cristal de montaña; y abiertas las puertas, por partes de dentro tiene Dios Padre y Nuestra Señora, con un dragón esmaltado de trasflor, con unos escritos de esmalte negro. Tiene una cadenilla de oro con que se cuelga” (No. 62). In addition to a large collection of paintings, Doña Juana also owned musical instruments clavichords, flutes, a harp, “una trompetilla italiana para despertar de camino,” “un orgánico de madera de Alemania, con flautas de estaño,” eight *vigüelas* and 446 strings for them, described as “añejas.”

Especially entertaining, however, was the 1599 inventory of the goods of Diego Fernández de Córdoba, comendador mayor de Calatrava (I, 311–15). His books were not itemized; we find merely that he had 300 “libros y Horas de diferentes lecturas.” He was seemingly a collector, as he had 330 “piezas de vidrios” from Venice, Cuenca, and Barcelona, 59 “sombrosos y gorras,” and 200 “pares de anteojos de diferentes maneras.” Cautiously noted, along with “una [figura de la] muerte de coral” and “una muerte de oro” are “doce crucifijos que parecen de oro.” He must have liked gadgets, for besides an “hoja de espada ancha del Perrillo” (mentioned in *Don Quijote*, II, 17 and “Rinconete y Cortadillo”), he had “un cuchillo con un secreto en el cabo, que son dos cuchillos,” and also “un hierro de invención para adelgazar pelotas.”

But what left me chuckling the rest of the afternoon, trying to imagine what it could possibly be, is found at the beginning of the [p. 97] inventory, which is arranged in a rough order of importance. The second item, following “un retrato de S. M. “ but ahead of “un retrato de D. Juan de Austria, is “una uña de la gran bestia.” If anyone can identify what sort of artifact this was I would be very grateful.⁷

Su verdadero servidor

⁷[After publication of this column, F. Robben, of the Katholieke Universiteit of Nijmegen, kindly wrote to call my attention to the description of the “gran bestia” in the *Diccionario de autoridades*: which is, according to him, the *cervus alces* or elk: “Adolece de continuo de mal caduco, y para librarse de él, mete la uña del pie derecho en la oreja, y así se cura, y por esto son estimados para remedio de este mal, los anillos que se hacen de los pedazos de esta uña.”]