

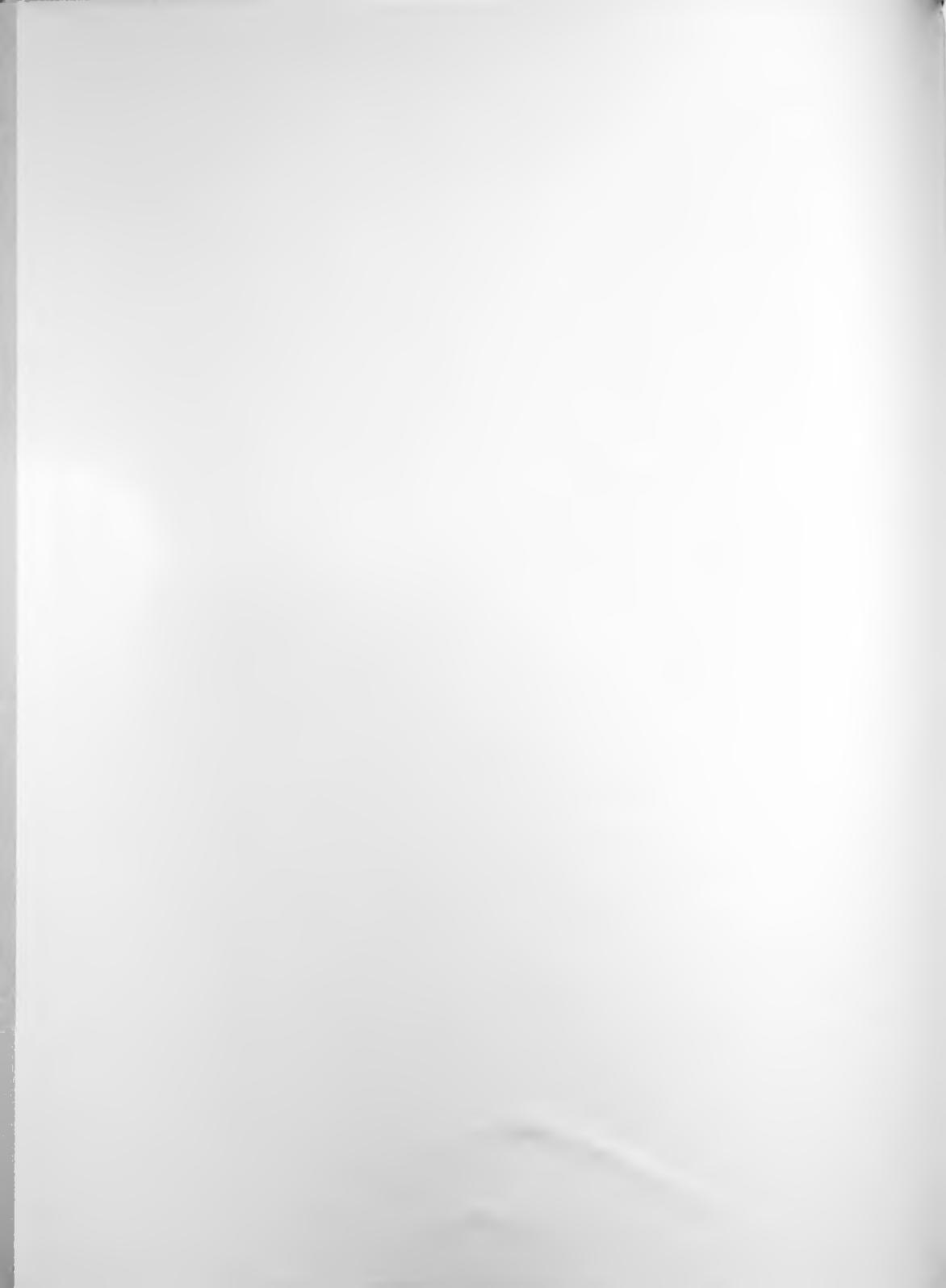
JOSÉ IGNACIO RODRÍGUEZ HERMOSELL

**A BRIEF  
HISTORY OF  
BARCARROTA**

English edition

Colección "ALTOZANO"  
Universidad Popular Barcarrota

Número 1



JOSÉ IGNACIO RODRÍGUEZ HERMOSELL

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HISTORY OF  
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Original title:  
BREVE HISTORIA DE BARCARROTA.

® José Ignacio Rodríguez Hermosell.  
I.S.B.N.: 84 - 923854-2-1  
Depósito lega: 303-98

Colección  
"ALTOZANO"

Edited:  
Universidad Popular de Barcarrota.  
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ESPAÑA

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## PROLOGUE

With great pleasure, I accept to writing the prologue of his play at the request of my good friend, José Ignacio. It is the first one in a collection called 'Colección Altozano' which has been put together by the Popular University of Barcarrota.

Talking about, José Ignacio, as my friend, is the same thing as talking about goodness, exquisite education and infinite patience and he knows why I say it.

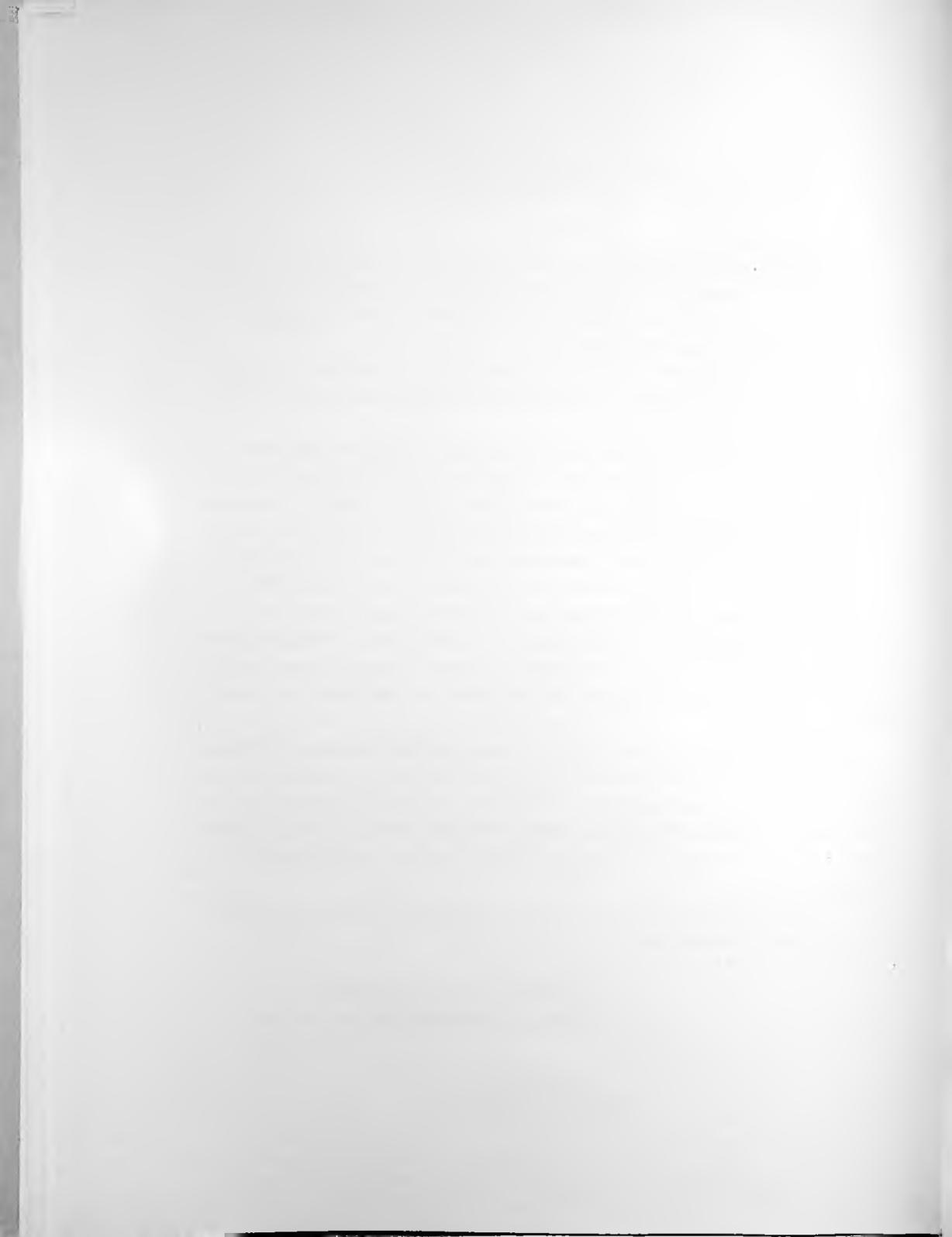
Talking about him, as a librarian, is much better than leaving it to their friends, their children, to whom he is instilling the habit of readings which later we will value, when these children became illustrious adults thanks to someone who knew how to resolve doubts and advising them about the most suitable book. He is both satisfying their intellectual curiosity and the simple pleasure of entertainment.

José Ignacio as historiographer, I praise his research efforts and his ability to systemize and synthesize. Certainly, we can disagree with him regarding some precise matter but, How can we avoid it? we disagree with Menéndez Pidal, Vicens Vives or Herodoto too, can't we?

The fact is that, in your hands, readers, is the first play dedicated to the History of Barcarrota and this praise for ever go to José Ignacio. The other history, the biggest, and the most elaborated history, is still being writing without knowing when it will be finished. It es possible that it will be even more complete, specific and accurate play but not be the first one.

My congratulations to the author and my wishes for a long life to the 'Colección Altozano'.

Antonio E. Torrado Visedo  
Official Chronicler of Barcarrota.



# INTRODUCTION

In the humblest of ways, I present this book, 'A Brief History of Barcarrota', although I know some people will have sound arguments in order to refute my statements.

In making the book known to readers, I will tell you, its understanding placed in charge of the Council of Barcarrota, given the lack of general studies related to matters that have always interested our neighbours.

Therefore, my work focused on the recuperacion, analysing and systematization of all the partial attempts brought out until this time; as well as, including dates offered by experts and specialists in the History of Barcarrota.

Taken up, by this compiler enthusiasm and leaving the investigation of direct sources, such as public and private archives, because in is a scientific work. Getting into any text which could have the slightest reference to the sometimes dark, History of Barcarrota, whose bibliography is to be found at the end of the book.

For this reason, it is possible to find mistakes, which can be corrected by experts in these questions or controversial matters of the history in which we are only allowed to make conjectures and interrogations.

In any case, I am very grateful for the unintentional and inestimable collaboration of those authors, taking into account their responsibility and knowledge and especially the help and interest of our official chronicler D. Antonio E. Torrado Visedo; the driving force and coordination of the director of the 'Colección Altozano D. Francisco Pérez González and the sponsorship of the Popular University of Barcarrota.

The author.



# RECONQUEST AND FOUNDATION



Apart from the possible Roman origin of the population, it is after the moslem domination when there is reliable evidence of the existence of Barcarrota. In a manuscript of friar Mateo Ortiz de Tovar (XVIIIth century, Monastery of Guadalupe) it talks about the Roman foundation of Bacacis (1) in the year 190 b.C., as well as, a battle won by D. Alonso IX in this place against the muslims in 1229 approximately; Because of this it would be refounded as 'Villanueva del Victor'. This king sent military orders to reconquest and repopulate the region, and under the of Fernando III 'the Saint' is when the place was reconquered (1235 approximately). The castle might have been built for defence against the moors from 'Condado de Niebla' or our neighbouring Portuguese enemies; Some people consider it could have a previous almohade origin.

On the other hand, the interrogation of the Geographer Tomás López adds the name of 'Villanueva de Alvitez'. The legend of the present toponym, is attributed to a miracle in which the Virgin Mary, appeared before shepherd who was sewing his 'albarca' (a kind of shoe used by shepherds); It was the begining of 'Villanueva de Albarcarrota' or 'Albarcarrota'. 'Virgen del Soterraño', invocation with reminiscences of the templar tradition, which instilled great continuation and fervor of the faithful for centuries.

It is obvious that Barcarrota belonged to 'Concejo de Badajoz' and it was an objeive of the templar knights. Its existence is verified in 1297 with the donation by King Don Fernando of a meadow 'la Grulla' to the bishop of Badajoz. This land was sought after Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque to whom Alfonso IX sold it in 1344. Taking into account the protest of Badajoz the king retracted and decided that the 'concejo de Badajoz' had to pay 200.000 maravedies. Fernando Sánchez de Badajoz is the first lord of the village by the grace of Enrique II de Trastamara from 17th January 1369. In heriting the crown, his son García, who was confirmed by Enrique II and Juan el Cazador (the hunter). In 1379 Don García got married to an illustrious portuguese

lady, Doña Mencía Vazquez Goes and in those years began the first looting of the subjects of the king of Portugal although in 1335 there was an unfruitful siege.

Fernando II, his heir, pays homage to Gómez Suarez de Figueroa, 'lord of Feria', being 1473 the beginning of strains and complicated relations between the two linages. Two years later, Gómez takes possession of the village because of the supposed abandonment and negligence of the Sanchez's de Badajoz. Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, lord of Feria, reformed the castle and he acquired lands and houses and he was confirmed by the king in 1424 before the conflict with the Infantes of Aragón. In 1429 Gómez died and the Maestre of Alcántara asked for the king Juan II this village in order to fight against Enrique, Infant of Aragón and lord of Alburquerque. However, the next year the king returned to the fortress and the village to Lorenzo, the first Count of Feria, therefore the master abandons the Royal party. In 1432 approximately Fernando Sánchez de Badajoz who had been allied with the infant and the order of Alcántara kept the powership in Barcarrota and demanding his rights; (although rebels have already been submitted). One year later, Lorenzo Suarez, was appointed constable of the village.

Later, Doña Mencía inherited the rule of Villanueva de Barcarrota from Fernando Sánchez de Badajoz and she married Hernando de Sotomayor. Their daughter Blanca later joined her hands and properties with the count of Feria, when she was married Don Pedro Suarez de Figueroa, brother of the first count, in the times of Enrique IV. Doña Mencía re-married Don Alonso Aguilar named the 'disinherited', cousin of the count of Feria, with this marriage the claims of Suarez de Figueroa was given strength. However she was dispossessed by the rule of Juan II who wanted to please to the very influential Don Juan Pacheco, Marquis of Villena and Mayor of the Palace of Enrique de Aragón. We must remember, he was an old enemy of the count of Feria. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1445 Don Juan Pacheco was named lord of the villages of Barcarrota, Salvaleón, Salvatierra and later Medellín.

According to the chronicles, Doña Mencía received 45.000 maravedies. At that moment, the strains between the Sánchez's de Badajoz and Suárez de Figueroa disappeared, although the last

ones got bordering lands to the village in exchange for properties they had in Morón, Arahál and Écija which Pacheco had preferred.

Under the Reign of Enrique IV, according to a document dated 4th November 1461, Barcarrota was given to the Order of Alcántara, although the relations between the village and the order were never regular. The village was reserved for the 'mesa maestra'.

Hernán Gómez de Solís took possession of the place and he was recognised lord by Enrique IV but not by the knights of Alcántara in 1485. The master of the Order tells the Pope that he felt swindled out of a great amount of maravedies. The rule of Solís and the jurisdiction of Alcántara coexisted in a tense way (Chapter of the Order of 1500: Because of the precariousness of the village, an annual assigning of 8000 maravedies was granted). In 1507 the rule of the Alcántara was restituted. Referring to the relations with Portugal the village suffered several sieges in 1475 and 1478, when the fortress was devastated.

We have to mention the birth of the reknowned discoverer Hernando de Soto; Apart from the controversy about his place of his birth. It might have been between 1495 and 1500 in Barcarrota, according to the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, opposite to the opinion of Fidalgo de Elvas and other testimonies, which place his origin in Jerez de los Caballeros or even in Badajoz.

(1) This theory was removed by D. Virgilio Viniegra, in the 20's, doing a simple consultation to Espasa Encyclopedia



## THE XVth AND XVIIth CENTURIES



As a result of the lands deprivation by the Order of Alcántara, Don Juan Portocarrero, Marquis of Villanueva del Fresno purchased this village in 1539 in exchange for 622.000 maravedies. The population was 600 inhabitants, although in the 'Censo de Pecheros' in 1530 it was considered between 300 and 450 inhabitants. In those years, a new war against Portugal was started. The village was plundered and burnt around the castle on 5th may 1544 (we must not forget that Barcarrota had a common border with Portugal until the beginings of the XIXth century).

In 1561 we have proof of the poor conditions of the village, because of the lack of the cattle economy. In 1571 was carried out the dispersion of the rebel moors from Granada; In our village, there were fifty moors approximately. It is also known, of the existence of a small Aljama or jewish community in Barcarrota through inquisitorial sources the orders and the nobility, as well as, the stay in the village of twenty four nuns of the Order of Saint Francis in 1591.

Portugal was annexed in 1580 by Felipe II and it was under Spanish domination until 1640 when Juan IV de Braganza rose up Felipe IV. Passed three decades of a devastating war in the border of Extremadura; battles, lootings and sieges. According to some sources in 1644 Luteran Soldiers, allied with Portugal, attacked the village and destroyed churches and houses. This war is superposed to that of 'thirty years' in Europe. After its reconstruction, Barcarrota took its final name. From 1656 the war was increasing and in a new siege the village defended by the Royal army General Duke of Saint German. In 1688 the 'Peace of Lisbon' finished with a fateful war in the south west of Spain.



## THE XVIIIth CENTURY



This century is initiated with 'the war'. Between 1701 and 1713 developed 'the war of succession' to the throne of Spain which confronted European power and even the different parts of the kingdom. Barcarrota, according to the some chronicles, suffered imponderable calamities like other villages of the Raya (the border with Portugal). Referring to the evolution of the population, it is known, by the official land register of Ensenada and the visit to the jurisdiction of Badajoz in 1791, that in the middle of that century, there were 685 inhabitants in the village. In the same year, there was an increase of 14'5%, in short 784. Antonio Pons, a traveller, said that in 1784 many of his neighbours were black people or half-cast who went to Portugal.

Barcarrota belonged to the jurisdiction of Badajoz and the lord of the surrounding properties was the count of Montijo. He was a member of the Portocarrero Cárdenas, lineage that had bought the village in 1539.

In 1780, the 'real audiencia de Extremadura' was created as an instrument in order to direct the wishes of progress and modernity and it established the first territorial and jurisdiction división of the region. On the other land, in the 'Memorial' of 1783 five transhumant stock farmers are named; One of them was from Barcarrota: Don Diego González de Castilla who has 2537 heads of cattle.

In this century, we witness the opening of the 'Escuela de Primeras letras' or children (a kind of primary school) evidently, they did not have enough money and parents paid in cash according to the cultural level of their children. It is also known, there was an 'Estudio de Gramática'. Needless to say, most people were illiterate.



## THE XIX<sup>th</sup> CENTURY



This century was opened with the 'orange war' against Portugal; Later between 1808 and 1812 the Independence war brought about new disaster in this bordering area. There was a marked increase in population. From 2610 inhabitants in 1811 to more than 5000 at the end of the century. This evolution was related to the economic situation and several diseases. These ones were the first cause of death rate, common illness and plagues (bubonic plague from the Magrieb in 1818). The village had to be closed, cholera in 1834, 204 infected people and 96 deaths; In 1855 another hundred of dead people). There were some purgative places, the Hermitage of Saint Lorenzo and later the monastery of Rocamador.

As for labour structure, there were 25% of working population; Men 15 years old made works related to agriculture, cattle and shepherds. It was a percentage of 85%, which reduced at the end of the century in ten points. The rest of inhabitants worked in trade and handicrafts, these sectors increased the following decades. Only 2% of women worked in home works and Religious community; This community disappeared in the thirties years because of the closing of the convent of Asunción. An important characteristic of this century was the mixed use of lands: the right of sowing of the lords, the grazing right of the whole community and finally the right of the acorns of their owners. There was a separation between the property of the ground and that of the fruits, the acorn and the pasture. While from pasturelands the community could make profit, the acorns were delivered in exchange of a paid, according to the number of pigs, that there were in the meadow. The Goods of the owners. like acorns became an original local property named 'Junta de Propios y arbitrios'.

The land belonged to landowners from 1811. In spite of the fact of being common lands, some of them were transferred. 6500 fanegas (unit of area approximately equal to 6600 square metres) for pasture and acorn; and almost 50000 holm oaks). Problems started when the

landowners decided to close the meadows, in order to avoid the access of cattle. In 1845 this method was abandoned and the council gave permission to regulate this situation. Barcarrota lost its posturage rights; Therefore the agricultural techniques were pack wards and hardly useful. The irrigated lands were too small and we have to add a lot of adversities, draughts, plagues, freenzes, strong rains and above all the fire.

Acorns and pasture are the most important products. (1865 we had a tax on the right of pasturage). Wheat was the main resource of the food, but the lack of it provoked famine in 1804, 1805, 1836, 1874. The production of the lands was holm oaks, cork oaks, as well as, poplars, ilex and the rest of the trees or 'Ramoneo'. Whithout forgetting the wood which was used ind the navy industries.

The cattle raising is no larger transhumant. Sheep was the biggest in terms of quantity and it belonged to 17 owners. (Juan Andrés de la Cámara had 2350 sheeps). In 1890 the number of animals became 14000. Pigs are delivered among the neighbours. Each slaughter-pig family killed from 1 to 3 pigs and the richest people killed more than 20 animals. Goats were important also and cattle (bovine) was not very popular, while other animals were useful in transport and agricultural labours. Agriculture disappeared at the end of the century and hunting was a privilege for rich people except wolves and foxes, which were encouraged by the Council.

Handicrafts, trade and industry were related to agriculture. Handicrafts were made by carpinters, sailors and shoe makers in their spare time. That industry was not similar to the present industry. We had 28 wheat mills, cork makers, factories to make bricks and tiles, leather, and soft soap. Trade was not completely developed because of its relation to the agricultural activities and the high changes that it had to bore. It was only traded with land and cattle products in profitable economic periods.

Tributes were the main obstacle in trade development. These tributes stopped the economic progress. The best moment for the exchange of products was the fair of September between 8th and 10th th. The sales tax was paid. (It was of fair or of wind). They were sheeps and pigs and in less quantity cork and wheat. Shops had sausage,

pork, olive oil, wine, products to slaughtering, paper, cod, and cloths; there were 5 or 6 bakeries, 3 guest houses, tavern and a tobacco grocer's shop, provided with stamped paper, salt and lottery.

Our society was divided into two big groups: those who were dominating and those who were dominated. This division described perfectly, the kind of economy in a rural world. The property of the lands and cattle determined the belonging or not to a privileged social group. Rich cattle raiser were José Álvarez, Juan Andrés de la Camara, José Villanueva. The owner of the lands belonged to nobility, the Count of Montijo y Portocarrero, with jurisdiction in this village, the countess of Tilli, the Marquess of Palafox and the count of Santa Coloma; and great families from Barcarrota, Ocano, Marroquín, Gutierrez, Villanueva, Liaño,...

The church had, with its two parishes (2) and the convent of the Asunción, a huge number of urban and rustic properties. Each one had priests, coadjutors, sacristans, acolytes and even an organist (3). The chapter of Badajoz possessed the meadow of 'la Grulla' (500 fanegas of unirrigated land) and some parishes leased lands. We can also talk about a middle class, who had a higher position, they were, the doctor, the council secretary, the judge and his clerk. They possessed small lands and cattle, and they had their suffrage rights as for contributing. The dominated classes, were farmers and cattle raisers without land or animals, small urban proprietors, urban workers, craft men, beggars and wretched.

The most outstanding feature of social inequality was the fact that, the council let large families to build a Bullring inside the castle, in the middle of the century. In 1853, the countess of Montijo had given away her rights, above the construction, in exchange for an annual income. The town council decided to divide the ground and auctioning; Evidently, they were acquired by the richest people of the village. The 'Bullring Society' was constituted on 19th June 1854, in order to build a bullring into the fortress. Don Luis de Villanueva y Cañedo, one of the members of that society, was the author of a Biographical study of Hernando de Soto. He was senator in 1863, 1864 and 1876 and he was also the promoter of the statue dedicated to the conqueror of Florida in 1866 (4). It was a work of the Lisbon sculptor,

Fortunato José Da Silva.

- (2) At the beginning there was only one church; 'the church of Santiago the Apostle'; In the XVIIIth century appeared 'the church of the Virgin'. In this moment, there was a great rivalry between the two priests. It was not finished until the middle of this century.
- (3) The organ of the church of the 'virgin', whose structure is still conserved was very old. 'The church of Santiago the apostle' will have another one in the XIXth century. It was operating until 1940 approximately, date in which suffered an irreversible damage. In the sixties, it was finally dismantled.
- (4) the first statue set up in Spain to commemorate the discover of America. It was erected by popular subscription, being the instigator D. Luis Villanueva Cañedo.

Because of Poverty, living in Barcarrota became unsustainable and the Governor of the province suggested the mayor that the charity of upper classes should be encouraged in order to provide all kind of methods for helping poor people specially through the country. In September, there was 'La Gloriosa Revolution'. The 1st October is constituted the Provisional assembly of Government, which became the first democratic council in the elections by universal suffrage. Barcarrota voted for the republican candidate Roque Barcia in the elections of constituent assembly, on January 1869.

In the everyday life of the last years of that century, we must point out two facts: in the first place, the transferring of the graveyard from the Hermitage of Saint Antonio, where it was established at the beginning of the century, to that of Saint Juan, far from the village in 1881; in the second place, the creation of a new society 'Circulo de la Fraternidad' on 26th October 1890. This society was formed by the upper social class of Barcarrota and in 1899 its office was a sunny house placed in our main square, where it is, at the present time.

- (5) The transferring was carried out by order of States general of Cádiz which banned the graves into the churches. They alleged public healthy problems and they decided that graveyards should be placed outside the villages. In 1814 Fernando VII derogated the law of states General of Cádiz and the graves came back to the churches. In 1820 the government of Riego the states General of Cádiz were fulfilled again and the

graveyard of San Antonio began to work (Presently above its plot, is placed the municipal slaughter house). In spite of the reactions in 1823 and the establishment of the 'Ominous decade', People will not be buried into the churches.



## THE XXth CENTURY



At the beginning of this century the economic situation went on decreasing. On 19th July there was a revolt. In 1904 the Society 'Círculo de la fraternidad' decided to help working people; being approved unanimously, 15 assistances for each member during the time in which it was necessary. The working classes were the most largest social class in Barcarrota, in terms of the number of people. From 1900 the Society 'El Renacimiento' which later in 1906 will be a cooperative dedicated to cultivation. In 1914 there was another society of strong socialist foundations called 'El progreso'. This society had witnessed great development since the strike of 1917 although it was closed by order of the military Government, two years more revolts were to be carried out in 1915 and 1918). The collective Society 'la Benéfica' was constituted in 'Salon Guerra', in order to cultivate the meadows of 'El Ciruelo', 'la Nava' and later 'El Cuarto Enmedio'. When this society was transformed into an agricultural trade union. The first young socialist was organized in 1918 which declined in status in 1921 and reappeared strongly two years later as the socialist association. 'La Casa del Pueblo' of Barcarrota was one of the most important local points of the province in 1920.

The renewed spirit of the 'happy twenties' is shown in some curious facts. The creation of the first football team 'Sporting club', which became the 'Sociedad Deportiva' of Barcarrota, under the patronage of Alberto de Sinsinat. That football team, played in 'El balón a meadow and its president was D. José Barriga. Sinsinat collaborated with Barriga on a weekly liberal magazine named 'Barcarrota' in 1922 approximately. It is known that the existence of 'Orfeón de Barcarrota (chorus society) directed by Sr. Albasa, as well as, a local band in 1927. On the occasion of the September fair in a newspaper from Badajoz 'La libertad (Freedom) we realise the difficult economic situation in the country.

(6) From the beginning of the XIXth century, there is evidence of the existence of bands and orchestras in Barcarrota, although with the characteristic of municipality was not appearing until the XXth century.

Concretely, Félix Forte in his chronicle says there is no working capital; two flour-factories (7) which have gone into bankruptcy and there is also constant and slow emigration. Enciso drawing attention to 'the stone Portuguese', or the statue of Herando de Soto and describes the Fiesta of the Flower (la fiesta de la flor) where women put flowers into men's lapels and pockets. In the age of Primo de Rivera, there was small progression in this period, in 1926, approximately one telephone and two petrol stations were installed. On 2nd July 1927 the municipal (8) slaughter house was inaugurated, in the same place of the hermitage of Saint Antonio in the presence of the governor of the province. On 28th March, the local patronage of the farmers's union was constituted.

In spite of the problems in the agricultural world, the census of 1930 shows the importance of Barcarrota in the south west of the región. Having 7890 inhabitants (real inhabitants) and 8215 (registered inhabitants). These figures rise or decrease throughout the century. Next year, according to Enciso in 'libertad', was started with the traditional parties of Christmas and carnival. These parties were celebrated in 'El Círculo de la Fraternidad', 'El Círculo de la Amistad' (a place for farmers and craftsmen founded in 1913) and 'El Salón Guerra'. However, the economic crisis still went on at its height. In the municipal elections on 12th April 1931 six monarchist town councillors, five republicans and five socialist got representation. The expanding popularity of the latter is very important. In a report of José Sosa Hormigo, to the council, there were 2036 members in the 'Casa del Pueblo' (place where people from this ideology were met).

He became to be a member of the 'Junta Provincial de la Reforma Agraria' in 1933 and a member of the Spanish Parliament in 1936. He talks about the serious crisis of work in Extremadura in a magazine article from the U.G.T. (General Union of workers). In this article, he

(7) The first electric-flower mill which worked with a steam turbine was opened in 1901 and it was the property of D. José Majó Llauro. He had the concession on street lighting. Its ruins can still be seen in the road to Jerez de los Caballeros, in the bend where the road of Higuera de Vargas starts. It was called 'turbine bend'. The reasons are obvious.

(8) The slaughter house until this moment was installed in rented houses by the town council. The last one was placed opposite a farm called 'la loba'.

claimed 2500 fanegas in order to cultivate in the municipality and engendering 35.000 day's work. With the land reform law, people were encourage to work. In 1933 a census of expropriate farms was created, among them that of the landowner of Barcarrota, Maria Angeles Moreno García is included. However the Reform stagnated in spite of the efforts by owners, workers and tenants who on 14 th May constituted the 'Junta de Información Agraria' to arbitrate in the division of summer agricultural works: on 7th October, the 'Junta local de Tenedores de trigo' was created, which was merged with the former and called 'Junta Local Agraria'.

Making reference to culture, dates are scarce but also very interesting the expedient of a municipal library can be seen from 1932. It was carried out 20 years later. In the same year the municipal band of Barcarrota was constituted under the direction of D. José Hernández Carrera. Although this group dissapeared because of a lack of budget, musical instruments were purchased by D. Juan Jimenez Cordón (9), who directed the choral in 1932, for a private group, which later became the municipal band.

However the economic conditions did not improve. In the 'Negociado Social' of the Council in 1934, there were 1200 land workers and 650 of these were unemployed, between December and March. The council tried to solve the problem with paving, drains and water drainge, taking into account state subventionts the contract of electric street Lighting (10) dates from 1935 with the firm 'Bernardo Olivera e Hjos S.A.'.

The agricultural census of 1935 and the followings rise of the number of workers about 1500, with poor benefits while the cork industry was also in decline.

The general elections on February 1936 were won by the 'Frente popular', between March and April more than 100.000 hectares were occupied by owners from Badajoz, being the Jurisdiction of Jerez

(9) Don Juan Jimenez Cordón was known as the famous 'maestro Juanito' church organist, until he died. As well as, the director of the Band, he also directed student band, and he taught piano classes in some homes of the bourgeoisie of that age.

(10) As we have said before, there was a former contract with the electric flour-mill that we have mentioned.

de los Caballeros, one of the most affected. The military revolt had an important advance in our region. On 25th August, they reached Barcarrota without finding any resistance. In this new situation, more than 200 men joined the Falange and the member of the parliament José Sosa Hormigo took a huge number of people to the 'Sierra de Monsalud' because they were implicated in the land Reform law and therefore they were in the up most danger. Their fighting went on for barely two months organized into a guerrilla band.

In 1940 the provincial governor ordered a study of the population to the councils through question papers. That year, there were 7539 real inhabitants and 7963 registered inhabitants, this census was used to established the ration books until 1951. Each person had the right to take 100 grm. of bread, 50 of chick peas, 25 or 30 of rice and half a litre of oil for all of the family. We had three daily buses and cars for hire; the budget of the council was 239.760 pts. In that moment, there were big problems to carter for every one. There was a lack of rice, beans, wheat, potatos, sugar, chick peas, and oil. Temporality buildings 'seven schols' a place for primary school, th graveyard of Saint Juan, the house of the municipal court, one nectare in the common land of Saint Antonio and a house (11) for the poor and homeless which was donated in 1926. 50% of the inhabitants were poor temporality or they lived on very little. From May a canteen for aproximately 120 children and adults was opened.

In order to palliate the lasting crisis of tye country, it was proposed to cultivate a system of share cropping in the municipaly of Badajoz and Jerez de los Caballeros for labourers from Barcarrota. Large landed estate was no longer beneficial to the economy. The main wealth went on being cattle, sheep, cows, and pigs. Most of lands were dry lands with abundance of holm oaks and pastures and it was also remarkable for the production of fruit and vegetables (12) . In 1945, the 'Hermandad Sindical de Labradores y Ganaderos' was organized. A trade union coordinated by the 'Junta Local Agraria' the

(11) This famous 'Casa de todos' (house for everybody) was located in Badajoz street. Nowadays its building is occupied by the veterinary inspección (before it was a consulting room) this house was donated by the 'Cámara family'. They were also the propietors of the farm which bears its name.

cork industry had almost disappeared (13) but the flour-milk kept on with a production of 12500 kg of wheat, 24 hours a day. We also find other business like some bakeries, a factory and a tile factory.

Health problems, were taken care of three doctors and two nurses. Referring to teaching, there were four schools for boys and four for girls, as well as, a private primary school (14). The musical phenomenon was the 'Agrupación de Orquestas de Barcarrota' (it was to be the root of some groups such as 'Los Covisa in the sixties). Other recreation activities, were the cinema theatre 'Guerra', the bullfight, and the parties in the 'Salón del largo y deportivo'. In 1950 the census reached an historical number: 10151 inhabitants (real inhabitants) and 10.099 (registered inhabitants).

In the following years, new events were added to the life of the village. The official documents of the constitution of the public library belong to 19th January 1953 although, it was not working until 1956. From the same year are the statutes of the Cooperative of country 'la Benéfica'. Our village had two cinemas supervised by the censors: the government delegate and the two priests (19). In 1958 the municipal market was inaugurated. In that period, there were a huge number of people who had to emigrate towards the industrial cities, Barcelona, Madrid, the Basque Country and Northern European countries: France, Germany and Switzerland. On 26th June 1962 was the first visit of the Bradenton Congregators to Barcarrota; it was thanks to the efforts of the governments. There days later the church of Santiago the Apostle was opened again after the partial destruction, that was caused by a bolt of lightning (16). At the end of 1962, the public primary school 'Virgen del Soterraño' was created.

(12) Because of the abundance of water this village has always had great quality fruit and vegetables. Even the surplus products were sent to bordering villages. We can with old people, who went to Higuera de Vargas above all, to sell these products when they were young.

(13) The last factories disappeared in the sixties. The first are that of D. Encarnación Bernáldez and later Don Jesús Haya.

(14) It is referred to as the famous 'school of Don Casimiro'. Later in 1949 nuns from the Congregation of 'Rebaño de María' came to Barcarrota. They were installed in a house donated by Mendoza family to the Bishopric. In the first place, it was called 'Saint José and Saint Antonio school' and later 'Santiago the Apostle'. The school was opened until the year 95-96. The nuns left and they returned the building to the Bishopric.

In the seventies, a provincial commission was to investigate the social and the economic situation of the village. The low profitability of the agricultural and livestock farmings was observed. Taking this situation into account, the investment of public money and subvention was necessary. Authorities and parents made a great effort to develop teaching in our village. The Hernando de Soto school, had classrooms in Francisco Rubio and Jerez Streets. The school of the parish was placed in Llano de la Cruz, and the 'Colegio libre adoptado' occupied the 'Casa del alemán' in 'Plaza del Altozano'. We have to mention the free time activities: the public library, the Rondalla Juvenil ( a group of minstrels) founded in 1961 by M. Torrado. This group was the origin of the musical-group 'Los Sonik's', musical ambassadors of Barcarrota from 1965: 'la Casa de la Juventud' with its spoken magazine 'Clarín' (17) which belonged to O.J.E., (group belonging to a political party), the Football Club 'Hernando de Soto'. They played on a place which had been donated by the parish and late, it was the playing field 'El Rodeo'; and finally the tennis club of 1972.

The official village census on 31th December 1973 was 5281 inhabitants. 2581 men and 2700 women. Two years later, both of them had less than 5000; concretely in 1975 there 4910 inhabitants registered in the municipal census.

(15) Religious censure did not exist totally films were already censored before. They advised people the age could see these films. It was controlled through a colour code, which was placed at the door of the nuns's school.

White, blue, pink and dark pink. Children only could see those of the colour white.

(16) The church of Santiago the Apostle, was repaired when the bolt of lightning fell on it, the two buttress which held the bellgable to avoid the frontage was completely destroyed, later this was re-constructed.

(17) Independent of its Ideology the 'Frente de Juventudes' (OJE) made many important works. In some places, whose leaders were people, filled a hollow in the leading and development of cultural activities. One of them was the theatre, especially the group 'las Siete Torres' (The Seven Towers). Many people from Barcarrota, saw the sea thanks to the summer camps organized by this association.

# THE RETURN OF DEMOCRACY



D. Aureliano Benegas was mayor of Barcarrota in the last stages of Franquismo (18) (it means F. Franco, he was a Spanish dictator for a long time). From 1976 D. Manuel Pérez Ríos and D. Julio Murillo, were the mayors of Barcarrota until the elections of 1979, in which a representant of the communist-socialist coalition named Francisca Sosa Montero became the first mayoress of the corporation.

First Schools. became public primary school 'Hernando de Soto' and 1977 the secondary Municipal school was constituted. The census of 1978 showed 4929 inhabitants and at that time, the construction of a public swimming pool was started. In those years, there was a strong social expansion: the hunting society 'La Albarca' in 1980; the appearance of the musical group 'Menfis' in 1981. The opening of the 'Hogar del Pensionista' on 27th February 1982, a place for elderly people; the bullfighting association 'El Burladero' and a school for learning to fight in 1883. From 1981 to 1985 a local magazine was brought about 'Alcarrache' edited by Manuel Dominguez Bou, and in 1984 the cultural association 'Bacacis' (probably this the name of this village in the Roman age) was founded.

In that period, there was a person 'El coyote de Barcarrota' (the Jackal), who used to burn all the wood carts of the village. A lost tradition, banned in 1936 returned with Democracy, the Carnival (19).

About the middle of the eighties, the social life was formed by the political parties; P.S.O.E., A.P., P.C.E. and the trade unions U.G.T. and C.C.O.O., the agricultural association 'La Benéfica'. The old entertaining associations 'Circulo de la Fraternidad' and bullring (which had been managed by the bullfighting association, and depended on the municipal government. The religions brotherhoods 'Virgen de los Dolores', 'Corazón de Jesús', 'Hijos de María', 'San Vicente Paul' and 'Vera-Cruz'. From 1984 women could meet in the cultural centre 'San Francisco de Asis'; We have to mention the appearance of the 'Consejo Local de la Juventud' (an association to inform and help young people).

The población went on decreasing, although with a tendency towards moderación. 4533 inhabitants in 1984, ten years later, there were 4230. Finally in 1984 the secondary school 'Virgen del Soterrano' was created, it was installed in the big house of the Jerez Street, while the primary school inaugurated its new headquarters, placed

between the municipal slaughter house and the football playing field 'El rodeo'; thanks to the management of D. Hilario Álvarez as provincial delegate of teaching. There was a broadcasting station, which had several stages of closing and opening as well as in 1988 was brought out the magazine 'Dos Rombos' ( two rhombus) until 1997, although in the late eighties much of these cultural activities declined.

(18) We can not forget D. Roman Álvarez, D. Manuel Sánchez Redondo and D. José Cacho Mulero, all of them predecessors of D. Aureliano.

(19) The Carnival was the most injoyable party. The whole village in groups called 'murgas', according to the area, took part in the celebration. It was lucky for talking largely with Felipe Merchán (today deceased) about it, and having collected some lyrics of that epoch.

Nowadays, there is a great depopulation of rural areas and an abandon of the traditional cottage industries (20). Young people live thanks to P.E.R. (a kind fo subvention for farming and cattle breeding). Many of them go to work in the tourist industry, above all in Mallorca (Balears Islands). Other people, maintain the economy of the village with subventions from the European agricultural fond. It is focused on olive trees, sheep, cattle, and caprine. On 31st January, there were 71 men and 6 women, member of the agricultural social security, working for them selves, and 267 men and 7 women, who worked for other people.

In 1992, Julio Murillo replaced Francisca Sosa as Mayor of Barcarrota. The following year, the National heal th clinic, for all the region was opened. The construction of a reservoir 'El Ahijón' to cater for everyone, and the local office of 'La Cruz Roja' (the Red cross) on 19 th June 1994. Some firms have help to develop the economy and the cultural life comes out again. The cultural music association 'Guzmán Ricis' with statutes from 1990. The choral from 1991, directed by Juan Ramón Muñoz and the inauguration fo the ocasión of the congress 'Hernando de Soto y su tiempo' of the 'Casa de la Cultura' on 15 th May 1991 futhermore, we must not forget the opening of the sport centre on 14 th Febreary 1995. In the same year, the socialist party, whose candidate Santiago M. Cuadrado was elected as mayor.

The Junta de Extremadura presents the 'Barcarrota library'. It is the discovery of a book, collection of the XVth century, with an extraordinary bibliographical value. The most valuable book of this collection is the second edition of 'El Lazarillo de Tormes' dated from 1554 and unknown until this moment. Later saw the appearance of the Popular University of Barcarrota and its local magazine, 'El Jacho', both in the same year 1.997.



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Colección  
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