

The Count of Haro, author of the anonymous *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades*

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1. Introduction

In 2003 an anonymous and until then, unknown history of the Comuneros' Revolt, titled *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades*, was published by Ana Díaz Medina.¹ It reports the prehistory of the occurrences of the Comuneros' Revolt, beginning with the death of Isabella the Catholic. It recounts, then, the tensions in the kingdom during the regency of Philip of Habsburg, the arrival of Charles of Gant in Spain, and tells about the events of the revolt itself until the return of the Emperor in 1524. As an appendix, the *Relación* includes some documents, for example the claims of the city of Valladolid, the claims of the *Junta de la Rambla*, and a choice of letters, written by some of the protagonists.

In a review of Ana Díaz Medina's edition of the *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades* Mariana Valeria Parma considers the documental appendix to be of little value because the main part of the documents are already known. The reviewer also believes that the narration of the events by the anonymous author contains little information which is new or unknown to the historians of the *Comuneros*; furthermore, the anonymous author repeats the same moral judgments, occurrences and opinions of other chroniclers of the time. Nevertheless, Mariana Valeria Parma estimates the *Relación* as an interesting testimony for some events of the Comuneros' Revolt, mainly, because of its detailed narration of the military aspects of the occurrences and because of its insight-view on the actions and considerations of the Castilian nobles (Valeria Parma, 263-266).

The *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades* was probably written between 1529 and 1531. As the existing manuscript carries no author's name, Ana Díaz Medina compared the *Relación* with other sources of the Comuneros' Revolt in order to identify the author. There are many similarities between the *Relación* and the chronicles of Pedro Mexía, Alonso de Santa Cruz, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Fray Prudencio de Sanoval and Juan Maldonado. This is due to the working technique of the different chroniclers, who often referred to the same documents and narrations, copying large parts of them. But no one of the mentioned chroniclers can be identified as the author of the *Relación* (Díaz Medina, 9).

The aim of the following essay is to present the Duke of Frías, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, as author of this *Relación*. So far, the Duke is known to be author of two chronicles, one about the history of the Castilian kings and another about the history of his own family. However, Pedro Fernández de Velasco not only was chronicler of long past deeds, he also testified the history of his present time in which he was engaged as a principle actor. But why did a Spanish aristocrat take up the pen to fix his deeds on paper? What did he expect to gain from his chronicle? In order to answer this question, the *Relación* is placed in the context of other testimonies of Spanish noblemen contemporary to the Duke of Frías who devoted themselves to historiography, too. A detailed study of the *Relación* is not offered here, thus this is already given in Ana Díaz Medina's edition of the text.

¹ The edition is based on a manuscript which belongs to the library of the Junta de Castilla y León.

2. A Brief Biography of Pedro Fernández de Velasco

2.1. Count of Haro, Duke of Frías and Constable of Castile

The family of Don Pedro Fernández de Velasco concentrated its domains mainly in the mountains of Burgos and the region between Biscay and La Rioja. It was during the Trastámara revolution when the family gained importance as vassals of the new kings. In 1430 Pedro Fernández de Velasco was appointed Count of Haro by King John II. His son Pedro, the Second Count, achieved the honorable status of a *Condestable de Castilla* from King Henry IV, a title which was from then on attached to the family. The title Duke of Frías was granted by the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, to the third Count, Bernardino Fernández de Velasco. From then on the head of the Fernández de Velasco family bore the title Dukes of Frías, while the title Count of Haro was held by the firstborn son of the governing Duke (Peña Marazuela, XII–XIV).

Pedro Fernández de Velasco was not foreseen to become neither Duke nor Count nor *Condestable*, but when in 1512 his uncle Bernardino de Velasco died without legitimate succession, the estates and titles of the family descended to Don Pedro's father Iñigo, the future Second Duke. This was chosen by King Charles along with Fadrique Enríquez and Adrian of Utrecht as governor of the kingdom when he left Spain in order to obtain the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire. At the outbreak of the Comuneros' Revolt Iñigo Fernández de Velasco became Commander in Chief of the imperial army, but actually the troops were led by his son Pedro, who – as his eldest son and heir – held the title of Count of Haro. Pedro Fernández de Velasco's warfare was quiet successful. In 1520 he took the fortress of Tordesillas so that the Queen, Joanna the Mad (Juana la Loca), fell into the hands of the Emperor. He also defeated the Comuneros' army at Villalar and captured their leaders, Bravo, Padilla and Maldonado, who later were executed.

In 1528, the Count of Haro succeeded his father as Duke of Frías and *Condestable* of Castile. From his wife, Juliana Angela de Velasco y Aragón, he had no legitimate successor. When he died in 1559, his nephew Iñigo inherited his estates and titles.

2.2. A Man of Arts and Letters

The anonymous author [Pedro Fernández de Velasco] tells in his *Relación* that he was *criado* of Queen Isabella of Castile. Probably he was part of the Royal Chapel, where between 1496 and 1505 a 'Pedro de Velasco' served as *Mozo de Capilla* (Torre y del Cerro, 44). The Royal Chapel was a starting point for young noble boys who had to become clerics in the future. Actually, Pedro Fernández de Velasco wasn't a cleric, but when he went to the court, it was anything else than clear that his father Iñigo – and later he self – would succeed as Dukes of Frías. As the son of a secondary branch of the family he had not inherited the status of a powerful Castilian aristocrat, so that his father could have decided to dedicate him to the Church or to the career of a lawyer and, therefore, provide him with the required academic education. When his uncle Bernardino died in 1512 without legitimate succession and Don Pedro suddenly became future heir of a noble estate, he probably had already pursued an education in Arts and Letters at the Royal Chapel and, afterwards, at the University of Salamanca where he also could have studied law or theology.

His teacher at the Royal Chapel was most likely another Italian, Lucio Marineo Sículo. The humanist praised the literary education and culture of Pedro Fernández de Velasco (and therefore his own qualities as teacher) by including him in a list of Spaniards famous in arts and letters which he presented in the 1520's to Charles V. Marineo Sículo himself observed the literary skills of Pedro Fernández de Velasco at the University of Salamanca, where the

nobleman interpreted letters of Ovid and Pliny's *Historia natural* (Marineo Sículo, 1998: 685). The statement of Marineo Sículo about Pedro Fernández de Velasco's interpretation of Pliny and Ovid caused some confusion in historiography. Some historians relate it to the Second Count of Haro, who was also called Pedro Fernández de Velasco. Others conclude that Don Pedro was a teacher at the University of Salamanca and lectured about Pliny and Ovid.² This idea has its origin in William Prescott's *The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic*, where the American historian interprets the quotation of Marineo Sículo in that way.³ However, Marineo Sículo by no means accounts that Pedro Fernández de Velasco actually taught Latin or Greek at the university:

So we name others, who live nowadays, men noble because of their birth and also illustrious for their letters. From these men we think of Pedro de Velasco, Constable of Castile, whom we heard at the University of Salamanca as a young man explaining the Letters of Ovid and interpreting the very complex senses of Pliny's Natural History.⁴

Marineo Sículo calls him a young man when he saw him at Salamanca; it is therefore more likely that he still was a student when he was interpreting the classics.

Pedro Fernández de Velasco's interest in letters is also proven by his patronage of scholars. He was in contact with the humanist Diego Guillén de Ávila who dedicated to the Duke his *Egloga interlocutoria* and also a translation of Sextus Frontinus. Another humanist called Ortiz was contracted by Don Pedro for the education of his nephew and heir Juan Fernández de Velasco. This Ortiz may be identical with a teacher of Greek from the University of Alcalá called *bachiller* Ortiz.⁵ Finally, the Duke also was in relationship with Charles' V chronicler Juan Gines de Sepúlveda.⁶

Pedro Fernández de Velasco certainly possessed a large library as other noble contemporaries did like the Duke of Infantado, the Marquis of Astorga or the Marquis of Mondéjar (González Pascual, 1998; Cátedra, 2002; Biersack, 2015). Unfortunately, no inventory of the private library of the Velasco is known. The only available ones – one of 1455 and another of 1553 – refer to books given by the Counts and Dukes to the Hospital de Vera Cruz, founded by the first Count of Haro. These books, however, do not reflect what kind of books the Velascos really owned or read.⁷

According to his noble estate Pedro Fernández de Velasco acted as patron of architecture and sculpture. During the first half of 16th Century some Castilian noblemen like the Marquis de Mondéjar, Luis Hurtado de Mendoza, the Marquis of Vélez, Pedro Fajardo, or the Marquis del Cenete, Rodrigo de Mendoza, moved towards a classicist Renaissance style. Don Pedro, too, was open to artistic innovation from Italy and contracted Felipe Bigarny to sculpture a Renaissance tomb for his parents in the monastery of Medina de Pomar (Cadiñanos Bardeci 1983, 344). However, his artistic taste was not classicist but eclectic. He also appreciated traditional Castilian architecture, impregnated by Moorish and Gothic influences, where – since the 16th Century – more and more Renaissance elements were integrated. An example of this architecture is the family's palace at the monastery of Medina de Pomar, constructed between

² Schlesinger, 1970: 153; Peña Marazuela, 1955: XVII; Silva y de Velasco, 2004: 157.

³ Prescott, 1845, II: 330.

⁴ “Así pues, nombramos a otros, que viven hoy, unos hombres ya nobles por su linaje ya insignes por las letras. Y de éstos se nos ocurre Pedro de Velasco, condestable de Castilla, a quien hemos oído de muchacho en la Universidad de Salamanca explicando las *Cartas* de Ovidio Nasón e interpretando los sentidos muy complejos de la *Historia Natural* de Plinio” (Marineo Sículo, 1998: 685).

⁵ Signes Codoner, 2001: 321.

⁶ See below.

⁷ Lawrance, 1984: 1075.

1520 and 1530 (Cadiñanos Bardeci 2004, 197). Some months before his death, he employed Alonso Berruguete to design his and his uncle's tomb. Actually, these two projects were never finished, but in his testament the Duke left a very detailed plan for the tombs. If Berruguete had realized the projects, according to the words of María José Redondo Canteras, it would have been an absolutely unique monument within the tradition of Castilian Renaissance tombs (Redondo Cantera, 266).

2.3. The Œuvre

Pedro Fernández de Velasco's intellectual focus was centered on history. So far he was known to be the author of two different chronicles. The first one, the *Decendencia de la casa i linaje de Velasco* (Biblioteca Nacional de España [BNE], Mss 2018). is a survey of his family's history. There are two more versions of this chronicle in the Spanish National Library which differ in title and to some extent also in content: the *Orígen de la ilustrísima Casa de Velasco* (BNE, Mss 3238), whose first part is identical with the *Decendencia*. The second part (from fols. 94^r onwards) contains the *Memorial del linaxe de Haro*, attributed to Cardinal Pedro Gonzalo de Mendoza. The work ends with the *Chronico que hizo el Rey Don Juan II* (from fol. 203^r onwards). A third but incomplete version of the Duke's family history is the *Tratado del origen de la cassa y solar de los Belasco* [...] (BNE, Mss 3445).

The second historical work written by Pedro Fernández de Velasco is called *Epitome de los Reies de Castilla* (BNE, Mss 1233) a summary of Castilian history from Don Pelayo to Henry III. The same work, partly without introduction, can also be found in the Spanish National Library as *Historia de los Reyes de España* (BNE, Mss 896) or as *Historia general de los Reyes de Castilla* (BNE, Mss 18.057), and in the British Library where it bears the title *Abreviacion de los reies de Leon i de Castilla* (Cirot, 332) It is still unknown that Pedro Fernández de Velasco was also the author of a third chronicle, the anonymous *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades*. There are two copies of the work; one is located in the Library of the Junta de Castilla y León and the second – an incomplete 18th Century transcription – in the Spanish National Library in Madrid (BNE, Mss 6301).

3. The Anonymous 'Relación del discurso de las Comunidades'

3.1. Identification of Pedro Fernández de Velasco as its Author

Although Ana Díaz Medina couldn't identify the anonymous author of the *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades* her findings and conjectures are very illuminating. It is nearly surprising that she didn't resolve the enigma, even though she was very close to its solution: the author tells that he himself was involved in the occurrences. With his *Relación* he tried to give testimony of what he saw, knew and experienced himself, while he spent less attention to events he did not know directly.⁸ The narration very often refers to events which took place at Burgos, Valladolid, Las Merindades, Tordesillas and Medina del Campo, while less attention was paid to other regions and events. The author, therefore, concentrates his *Relación* just to the field of action of the Velasco. He was a strict enemy of the Comuneros and an adherent of the Emperor, but, nevertheless, he criticized some nobles for their actions before and during the revolt. Often he referred to the *Condestable* Iñigo Fernández de Velasco, but remained silent concerning the actions of his co-governor, the *Almirante* (Admiral) Fadrique Enríquez. What is most favorable is the representation of the Count of Haro, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, whose

⁸ "Mi principal intento es escribir de aquello que yo vi y supe, y de las otras cosas que oí dexarlas y solamente contra de ellas lo que no se pudiera escusar para inteligencia y sucesión de las que vi y en las que me hallé" (Díaz Medina, 10).

actions as well as thoughts the author seems to know. Whatever he does, is always justified. From the Comuneros only Pedro Girón is regarded favorably. His later change away from the Comuneros and onto the side of the Emperor is seen by the author to be the result of the pressure exercised over Pedro Girón from his uncles' family – the Velasco. The author knew much about warfare and also was able to judge the strategic importance of places like Tordesillas (Díaz Medina, 13-20).

In chapter two, the author tells his reader that he was at Court in 1506, when different noble fractions were in disorder about the future of the crown. He was still too young then to understand the meanings of politics, nevertheless he stresses the reliability of the information given by him about the pre-history of the Comuneros Revolt. It was reported to him directly from his father who, as a nobleman, visited regularly the court and, thus, was able to provide him with an insight view of the occurrences. His mentality was typically aristocratic, whereas he disdained the common people. He was skilled in letters, but did not feel any necessity to demonstrate his knowledge like other humanistically trained authors, who frequently referred to classic authors.

Ana Díaz Medina wonders if the author, perhaps, voluntarily omits his name. Regarding that the author was also one of the main protagonists of his history, it seems likely that he wanted to disguise his authorship to cover up the partiality of his point of view. It is, however, also possible that the *Relación* was not completed and the name of the author accidentally omitted; or possibly the copyist of the manuscript didn't write it on the cover pages because it was too obvious to him who the author was. As a possible author Ana Díaz Medina only refers to Fernando de Guevara, brother of the more famous Friar Antonio de Guevara. But she is not able to prove it and regrets that the *Relación* still has to be considered an anonymous work, though the definite identification of the author would have helped with the annotation and valuation of the text (Díaz Medina, 27-30).

Maybe Ana Díaz Medina couldn't imagine that the Count of Haro and later Duke of Frías himself would have written this historical testimony of the Comuneros' Revolt to give – in accordance with his historiographical conviction – evidence of what he had experienced, seen and known. His detailed knowledge of the events which took place in the territories of the Velasco and his broad military knowledge, especially demonstrated in the description of the conquest of Tordesillas, the attempt to praise or justify the Count of Haro, the Duke of Frías and Pedro Girón (who was a relative to the Velasco), and his knowledge and understanding of the world of ideas of the Count of Haro clearly point to Pedro Fernández de Velasco as the author. Also his status as a member of the Castilian nobility, his and his father's presence at court, and the chronology – he was probably still a child or adolescent in 1506 – make this assumption probable.

Only one fact is confusing: the author of the *Relación* always uses the third person when he speaks about the historical protagonist 'Count of Haro', whereas he uses the first person when he speaks about himself as the author, but he does not reveal the identity of the author as Count of Haro. Thus he is present at two levels of the text, however, without creating a relationship between these two persons: at one time as the anonymous author, who speaks to the reader as an 'I', and at another time as 'h', as the historical person, the Count of Haro, who is independent from the author.

These observations about the supposed authorship of Pedro Fernández de Velasco may be considered quite convincing. Nevertheless, they cannot definitely prove it. This may be accomplished by a comparison of the *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades* with the *Decendencia de la casa i linaje de Velasco*. In this chronicle Pedro de Velasco offers a survey of his family's history, from its mythic beginnings until his own time, and he ends with a description of what he witnessed during the Revolt of the Comuneros. The comparison of the

occurrences of the Comuneros Revolt told by the Count of Haro in the *Decendencia* with the text of the anonymous *Relación* can provide evidence that he indeed was the author of both. In Chapter XII, for example, the *Relación* describes how the Duke of Frías, Don Pedro's father, was afflicted by the Comuneros in Burgos and finally had to escape from the city:

The Constable was riding on a mule, and with him, on foot, was Juan de Tovar, his second son, together with a few of his servants, and he was besieged by the major part of the town's people, all the way from the main church to his house.⁹

The same passage is also mentioned in the *Decendencia*:

The Constable started to go to his house on a mule, with the Marquis of Berlanga, his son, and his servants around him on foot, and all people of the community behind him with big uproar.¹⁰

In both texts the history is told with different words, but with identical content. After this anecdote both texts describe an unsuccessful attempt upon the life of the Duke, his retreat into his house, the siege of the house by the Comuneros, the escape of the Duke with his family and their way via Vernica and Haro to the castle of Briones, in a certain way the *Relación* is more detailed in explaining this history than the *Decendencia* (Díaz Medina, 125-127; Fernández de Velasco, Mss 2018, 71-73).

Another example for the existing parallels between the *Relación* and the *Decendencia* is the anecdote of Captain Bozmediano, an officer of the imperial army, who stole from a church in Peñaflores and was the first to die in the battle of Tordesillas. The *Relación* tells us:

Bozmediano was from Carrión. He lodged in the church of the village, and when the count had finished dinner, the sacristan came to him because they had stolen from his church. [...] The count asked for the captain and ordered him to restore to the sacristan all of what they had taken from him. He was given back everything except a silver calice, which was stolen by the captain himself. And as God often punishes later those who do similar things, it happened thus to the mentioned captain, who was the first man to be killed in the battle of Tordesillas, and the silver calice was found in the sleeve of his coat.¹¹

The *Decendencia* again is less detailed:

The Count of Haro went to Peñaflores where the soldiers of captain Vozmediano, who was from Carrión, had stolen from a church. When the count found out about it, he went with ten or twelve cavaliers to arrest and to punish them. [...] The Count of Haro,

⁹ "El Condestable cavalgó en una mula, y viendo con él a pie don Juan de Tovar, su hijo segundo, y poca compañía de criados suyos, vino cercado de la mayor parte de gente del pueblo desde la iglesia mayor hasta su casa" (*ibid.*: 125).

¹⁰ "El condestable comenzó a yrse a su casa en una mula y el marques de berlanga su hijo y sus criados alrededor del a pie y toda la jente de la comunidad tras el con gran alboroto" (Fernández de Velasco, mss 2018, 71).

¹¹ "Bozmediano natural de Carrion. Aposentóse en la iglesia del lugar, y acabando de cenar el conde de Haro vino a quejársele el sacristán de la iglesia de que la avían robado. [...] Llamó el conde al capitán y mandóle que tornase al sacristán todo lo que le avían tomado, y tornáronselo todo, si no fue un cáliz de plata que avía hurtado el mesmo capitán. Y como muchas vezes castiga Dios luego los que hazen semejantes cosas, acaesció así a este capitán, que el primer hombre que otro día mataron en el combate de Tordesillas fue él, y hallaron el cáliz de plata en la manga del sayo" (Díaz Medina, 147).

because the Battle of Tordesillas was to take place the next day, ordered them to restore to the church all that they had stolen, except one silver calice, which was hidden by Captain Vozmediano in the sleeve of his coat, who was the first man to be killed in Tordesillas.¹²

There are many more examples, but I think these two comparisons, in addition to the biographical coincidences between the anonymous author and Pedro Fernández de Velasco, and the hints given by the narrator himself are enough to prove that the well known author of the *Descendencia*, the III. Duque de Frías, Pedro Fernández de Velasco, is also the author of the *Relación*. Furthermore, it can be excluded that there was any unknown source which both authors employed for their chronicles independently from each other. Both texts refer mainly to events whose observer or even protagonist was Don Pedro. He did not have to resort to any different source to write down his own experiences in the *Descendencia*, and in the *Relación* he points out that he only refers to what he has really seen and experienced.

The identification of Pedro Fernández de Velasco as the author of the *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades* extends the bibliography of the Duke by one more work. In addition, the historiography of the Comuneros' Revolt now disposes of a description of the occurrences written by one of the principal protagonists. It is unknown when Pedro Fernández de Velasco wrote the *Descendencia* – maybe after the *Relación* which, then, could have served him as a source for the last part of his family history.

Ana Díaz Medina asserts a close relationship of the *Relación* with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's *De rebus gestis Caroli V.* Sepúlveda stayed in Bologna during the Comuneros' Revolt, thus he couldn't witness directly what then happened in Spain and had to make use of available sources to write down that part of his chronicle. His Latin text in book two and three, where he deals with the Comuneros, is similar not only in structure, but also in expressions, to the *Relación*. That's why Ana Díaz Medina supposes that the *Relación* served Sepúlveda as one of his main sources when he wrote the chapters dedicated to the Comuneros' Revolt (Díaz Medina, 21-26). Sepúlveda was well known to the Duke of Frías, who applied for information to the learned churchman with regard to the discussion between scholars about where Numantia really was (Signes Codoñer, 386). As an exchange of ideas about historical questions interconnected the two historians, it is not surprising at all that, whilst Sepúlveda was writing his history of Charles V., Pedro Fernández de Velasco may have handed him his own manuscript about the Comuneros' Revolt.

3.2. The Author as Narrator and Protagonist

The *Relación del discurso de las Comunidades* was written very soon after the historical events and is based to a great extent upon eye-witness accounts of the author. Although he explicitly states that he was an eye-witness, only a couple of times a first-person narrator comes forth in the *Relación*, and even there he remains anonymous and does not reveal his identity as the Count of Haro. These places, where a first-person narrator appears, are found at the beginning of the *Relación*, where the chronicler provides some information about his education at the court of Isabella the Catholic.¹³ Later in the text, whilst he accounts the happenings which

¹² “El conde de Haro fue a Peñafior donde robaron una yglessia los soldados de la capitanía de Vozmediano que hera natural de Carrion y como el conde de Haro lo supo fue a quererlos castigar con diez o doçe caualleros. [...] el conde de Haro porque se hauia de dar el covate de Tordesillas otro dia mas hizo restituir a la yglesia todo lo que se la havia tomado sino un caliz de plata que tenia ascondido el capitan bozmediano en la manga del sayo el qual fue el primer hombre que mataron en Tordesillas” (Fernández de Velasco, mss 2018, 80).

¹³ “Dexo ahora de contar las particularidades y tratos y cosas que en este tiempo se trataron porque mi principal intento es escribir aquello que yo vi y supe, y las otras cosas que oí dexarlas; y solamente contar de ellas lo que no se pudiere escusar para la inteligencia y sucesión de las que vi y en que me hallé” (48).

immediately preceded the insurrection of the Comuneros in Burgos, he introduces himself in third-person as *Conde de Haro*.¹⁴ From then onwards, the events in which he was personally involved as Commander of the imperial troops take up much space in the chronicle. In these passages the first-person identity of the chronicler yields completely to a third-person narration, told from the point of view of the Count of Haro. The first-person narrator returns only towards the end of the *Relación*, when events are narrated in which the Count of Haro wasn't immediately involved, like the war against Navarra, the conquest of Rhodes and the fate of María Pacheco and the King of France.¹⁵ Concluding, it is obvious that the author only appears as first-person narrator – who makes comments and suppositions, who has doubts and who glances into the future – when he himself doesn't appear as protagonist of the history. When the author himself is involved as historical person, he invariably makes use of a neutral form of narration in the third-person.

The most famous and well known model of an author, who applies the third-person when he refers to himself as protagonist, is Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*. However, the direct model for the chronicle of the Duke of Frías was probably not so much Caesar, but rather the Duke's own ancestor and homonym Pedro Fernández de Velascos, the First Count of Haro. His chronicle, the *Seguro de Tordesillas*, reports the history of a meeting of Castilian noblemen with King Juan II in 1439, where, under the protection and intermediation of the Count, different fractions tried to establish peace. The First Count of Haro wrote the *Seguro* exclusively in the third person in order to confer objectivity to his point of view (Marino, 42). He, therefore, appeared in this work not as a narrator, but as a protagonist – just as his descendent the author of the *Relación*, did.

The first-person and third-person perspectives are not free of contradiction. Whereas the third-person perspective is stressing the objectivity of the reported history, the first-person is claiming for truth and authenticity, because according to the ideals of medieval historiography eye-witnesses was the best proof of truth (Hoegen, 112). In the 16th century, the inclination to accept proofs based on one's own experience even increased, so that the number of texts where a first-person narrator appeared grew – not only historiographic, but also scientific ones (Spadaccini; Talens, 12). However, historiography written in the first person, not only claims for truth and authenticity, it also “constitutes the subjective underside of ostensibly objective writing [...] and that served as a medium for the author to insert, at the times openly to favor, his or her own testimony” (Amelang 1998, 36). Writing history from the first-person perspective necessarily gives the impression of partisanship. This is especially the fact when the chronicler himself was an important protagonist of the events accounted by him. Thus, to gain authenticity on the basis of one's own experience (first-person perspective) is possible only on the expense of objectivity and neutrality (third-person perspective).

To avoid the negative effects of this contradiction, the Duke of Frías found a creative solution: On the one hand, he claimed for truth and authenticity presenting himself as an eye-witness and participant of the events. On the other hand, he tried to avoid the suspicion of partisanship by placing himself in the third-person. Thus, he quasi regarded himself from the outside, suggesting to his readers objectivity and neutrality. The result of this arrangement is that exactly when authenticity of the report is absolutely guaranteed through the direct

¹⁴ “En Burgos pidieron a don Pedro de Velasco, conde de Haro, hijo mayor del condestable don Iñigo de Velasco, que fuese capitán de la gente de aquella ciudad [...]” (124); “[...] enbió al conde de Haro su hijo para ver si podría aseogar aquella tierra [...]” (125).

¹⁵ Navarra War: “[...] basta mi propósito lo que está dicho” (190); about María Pacheco: “[...] porque aunque fui informado de quien lo vido, yo estuve fuera de España en el tiempo que esto acaeció” (193); question when Rhodos was conquered: “como este autor dize, lo que yo e podido inquirir e e oído a cavalleros de la mesma Orden [...]” (203); about the future divine punishment of the King of France: “y así lo castigó Dios a él, como se dirá adelante” (203).

participation of the Duke in the historical actions, the third person is chosen in order to emphasize the objectivity of the narration. Conversely, when the Duke himself wasn't involved in the events and there was, therefore, no doubt about the objectivity of the narrator, the first-person is employed, whose presence had to compensate the lack of authenticity.

The *Relación* is bound to both, authenticity and objectivity. For the modern historian the reliable and objective account of the historical truths may well be a purpose in itself and the ultimate goal of his work, nevertheless this was not the case for a history-writing aristocrat. Other objectives may have motivated him to act as chronicler.

4. The purpose of Historiography for Pedro Fernández de Velasco

Historiography was one of the preferred fields of studies for the humanists, and it was also crucial for the expression of status claims for noble families, secular or ecclesiastical corporations, cities and even kingdoms. But what were the very special reasons for Pedro Fernández de Velasco to look upon the history of his own age, land, and family? Why did he even take up the pen himself to bring the history of his own life onto paper? What was the use which he ascribed to history and what purpose did it really have for him and his family?

4.1. Self-Exploration

The significant presence of the author's 'self' gives cause to relate the *Relación* to the function of modern autobiography: self-consciousness via introspection. Obviously and in spite of the presence of the author's 'self' as focus and structuring element of the text, the *Relación* is not an autobiography in the strict sense of the term. However, if one – speaking with James S. Amelang – “adopts the less restrictive and more flexible definition associated with the *ego-documents* approach, which searches for autobiographical expressions in a wide variety of literary forms, including diaries, letters, *libri di famiglia*, oral testimonies and the like, then the situation changes” (Amelang 1996, 60). The employment of a 'self' in the first or the third person transforms the *Relación* in an ego-document, i. e. a text in which a human being gives information about himself and about how he perceives himself against the background of family, community, country or society. In ego-documents, thus, frequently an individual human behavior is justified, and contemporary happenings of the time are reflected in relation to the author (Schulze, 28).

In 16th Century it was to some extent controversial to commit a work of literature to one self. Anyone who did so could bring upon himself the reproach of self-centeredness or self-overestimation. Charles V. therefore felt the need to justify himself when he authored his memoirs because this could be interpreted as vanity. Nevertheless, he wanted to do so in order to – as he argued – bring light into the darkness left behind by the chroniclers. Not fame or vanity, but the truth was his intention. For that reason, and in contrast to what one would expect of a modern autobiography, the text reveals no inner feelings and doesn't reflect on questions of personality, but presents the external events of the Emperors life (Kagan 2009, 58).

In the same way the self is present in the *Relación* only as a participant in external events, whereas no inner feelings or experiences are revealed. This is a general characteristic of late-medieval and early-modern autobiographical ego-documents. These differ largely from modern autobiographies focused on the subjective experience of the self, his feelings, wishes and perceptions (Wenzel, 9). The recognition of one's self by means of introspection was the objective of the spiritual autobiographies of the pietists or the mystics – but it was not the aim of an aristocratic historian like the Duke of Frías. His autobiographic writing must therefore have had another purpose.

4.2. *Historia Magistra Vitae*

In addition to the objective of writing the true history of his person, Charles V. declared that a further aim of his memoirs was to pass on to his son, Philip, advice and suggestions for a good government. The Emperor, thus, presented himself as an example to follow for the Prince (Kagan 2009, 85). Consequently, the memoirs of Charles V. are a kind of mirror for princes. As such they fulfill a function which was frequently assigned to historiography during the Renaissance and to which most of the chroniclers refer as the aim of their work: *Historia magistra vitae* – history as a teacher for the education of men (Landfester, 137).

With regard to the education of the nobility, the idea of history as a teacher was already established among 15th Century Spanish nobility. Already Alfonso X had recommended his knights to read passages from historical works or from heroic epics during the mealtimes, so that their militant spirit, even in times of peace, could be maintained (Beceiro Pita 1991, 586). Contemporary history as example was recommended by the first Count of Haro in his *Seguro de Tordesillas*. With his chronicle he wanted to show how those involved in a conflict could come to a peaceful solution in order to overcome disunity which only would lead to the destruction and depopulation of the kingdom (Marino, 47)

Also his descendant Pedro Fernández de Velasco refers to the concept of the *historia magistra vitae*. In the *Decendencia* he tells his readers why one should dedicate oneself to history: “to know from what lineage one descends and to follow and imitate the ancestors in their virtues and to separate one from their vices and blemishes.”¹⁶ Within certain passages of the *Relación* the pedagogical impetus of the author can be perceived, although he doesn't explicitly explain it. One example is the interpretation of the defeat of the Comuneros as a lesson to teach the reader that anyone who betrays God, the nobility or his country, will sooner or later have to pay for it.¹⁷

Although the *magistra vitae* as a function of historiography was generally accepted and most authors in their prologues made use of it to justify their writings or to give them a more significance, it was seldom that a historical work served exclusively pedagogical purposes. In addition to the asserted pedagogical goals there were some further functions –functions which frequently were concealed.

4.3. Praise

In Spain, the most important promoters of historiography were the kings. Ferdinand and Isabella, the Catholic Kings, soon became aware of the propagandistic value of history. They conceived a historiographical program to present themselves as an instrument chosen by divine providence, to reunite Spain, to end the Reconquista and to battle against the enemies of faith (Kagan, 2009: 49). In the last years of Ferdinand the Catholic's reign, more and more Roman imperial elements became part of the self-presentation of the Spanish King. Charles V. was able to fall in line with this new form of imperial self-presentation oriented toward the Roman Empire. In combination with other media such as painting and architecture, the official historiography of the Emperor thus created an “imperial reputation” (Burke, 393; Kagan 2009, 62).

¹⁶ “Para sauer de que linaje descien den y para seguir y imitar aquellos donde vienen en las virtudes que tuvieron y para apartar de los vicios y tachas que tambien tubiero” (Fernández de Velasco, mss 2018, 1).

¹⁷ “Pasemos adelante, que qual el negocio e empresa llevan así tuvo el fin e así mostró el tiempo, en breves discursos, la paga que suelen aver los que tan osadamente se atreven a desservir a Dios y a sus príncipes e a embelesar e engañar a su mesma patria” (Díaz Medina, 134).

Charles had little interest in the emerging national historiography. When the Cortes de Castilla pressured Charles V in 1523 to commission a complete chronicle for all Spanish dominions, he was not really interested in this kind of history. The Emperor was more disposed towards a historiography centered in his person. It was the tension between a *historia pro persona*, which Charles preferred, and a *historia pro patria*, which the Spanish Cortes required. It was not until 1539 that Charles gave way to the repeated demands of the Cortes (1523, 1525, 1528, 1538), when he appointed Florián de Ocampo as royal chronicler. Previously, the only history which had interested Charles was his own (Kagan 2009, 63-64).

Apart from the Crown, the Spanish cities, too, made an effort to establish their place in history. Chorography, the genre of town history, was the answer to a royal historiography, where the towns only played a secondary role. There, the town aristocracy and burgers found a historic place which was denied to them by the official historiography. By constructing the most glorious past possible for their town, they aimed to foster identification with their own town and to distinguish from others. The histories of towns were therefore a memory storehouse, containing material for the omnipresent discussion about prestige and importance between the rival towns or between social groups in Early modern Spain. This specific function of self-reassurance, which applied only to the inhabitants of the town where one lived, also explains why this kind of historiography was spread only over a very limited area. Often there was only one edition of such a town history, and only a limited number of printed copies were published. Sometimes town histories even didn't go to press and were kept as a manuscript in the city's archive (Kagan 1995, 94-98).

The common culture of remembrance played an even more important role for the nobility than it did for the cities. The nobleman defined his role not only in terms of his personal worth or his abilities, but moreover, he placed himself within the greater whole of his family tradition which reached far beyond the life span of an individual and comprised many generations. Through his forebears the nobleman shaped the image he had of himself. Their virtues and their accomplishments also determined his own worth in society and legitimized his claims. To his descendants, the nobleman was obliged to set an example to follow and to refer to. He, therefore, had to take care that his deeds and his worth were passed on to his offspring, so that they could profit from his conduct and legitimize their claims in society (Sikora, 128).

Autobiographies, as mentioned before, were not written by aristocratic authors for the purpose of attaining self-knowledge, but rather they focused on questions of status and lordship. This was to guarantee that the memory of the noble lineage and their ancestor's deeds were always preserved and passed onto the following generations (Schmid, 184-185). Also genealogical family histories, where information about the achievements of individual members of an aristocratic house was preserved, fulfilled this function exceptionally well. In Spain, however, these family histories had an additional function: they had to demonstrate the purity of the family's blood and to trace its descent far into the past –and thus raise the prestige of the noble house (Soria Mesa, 301-304).

The historiographic interest of the Duke of Frías went entirely along this line. He wanted his descendants to continue the genealogical history of his family which he had started, encouraging them to record what was noteworthy in their own lives (Fernández de Velasco, Mss 2018, 2). Also the *Relación* was intended to preserve for the posterity the memory of his services to the Crown and the Emperor in the struggle against the Comuneros. In this work, he emphasized quite clearly that he was always loyal to Charles V. and had nothing whatsoever to do with the Comuneros. In some cases – for example when he preferred to free Tordesillas from the Comuneros rather than to defend his own possessions at Villalpando – he demonstrated that he had placed the interests of the Crown above his own interests (Díaz Medina, 146). Any actions which could tarnish his image were either justified or smothered in silence. Thus, he

simply ignored the criticism arising from his appointment, despite his youth, to Supreme Commander of the Imperial Army (Díaz Medina, 124), and he blamed the Almirante de Castilla for the loss of Torrelobatón (Díaz Medina, 167).

The function of the *Relación* also explains why this and the other writings of Don Pedro have remained manuscripts and were hardly found outside the archives of the Duke of Frías (a noteworthy exception is that, as it is most likely, Don Pedro provided the Emperor's chronicler Juan Gines de Sepúlveda with a copy of his manuscript). They were addressed to the very limited circle of readers within the family. On the basis of these chronicles, it should be ensured that they were able to recognize their family's value in history in order to demand respect for them and their lineage within society.

4.4. Distinction

Historiography as part of the canon of the *studia humanitatis* was also an exercise in letters. Here, the historiographer could claim the admiration of his contemporaries not just by accomplishing great deeds but by writing them down in a sophisticated style. This gave the chronicler the chance to gain the recognition of the Republic of Letters if he accomplished its formal conventions. Thus, for scholars, a function which could be fulfilled by historiography was to demonstrate culture and knowledge in order to establish distinction with regard to contemporaries who were not academic, or less academic, and wrote history in a more popular style without observing the humanistic practice.

The commitment of the Mendoza family to a humanistic education and their interest in antiquity, for example, are connected to the general esteem of erudition within this family. Their perception of letters as a family characteristic was a result of the competition for pre-eminence between the important noble families, in order to legitimize their position within the reign of the still young dynasty of the Trastámara kings (Nader 1979). The first Mendoza not only pointed to their ancestry, but also to their personal virtue during military service and their unequalled erudition. In this way the symbiosis of Arms and Letters became a distinctive feature of the family, which stood next to the feature of ancestry. The Mendoza's approach to literature can be explained within the context of their general appreciation of erudition: it fulfilled, in a special manner, the requirement of a powerful, aristocratic family who wished to combine the exercise of power, military service and erudition.

However, this wasn't the case of the Duke of Frías. For him, the demonstration of his erudition had only small significance. Pedro Fernández de Velasco abstained from classical references in his work, for example, he didn't interlace mythological fables. His concern was to preserve the history of his family. Here he referred to Cicero, when he encourages his successors to follow the truth as he did, who only wrote what he knew with certainty about his ancestry. Explicitly they should ban fiction – that is classical mythology – from their works (Fernández de Velasco, Mss 2018, 2). In doing so, Don Pedro continued the tradition of his forefather, the First Count of Haro. The family tradition of the Velascos did not demand classical or humanistic erudition, but rather an objective and authentic description of political actions and acts of war. In order to guarantee the authenticity of his memories, the Duke had to take the pen into his own hand and could not leave this to a chronicler. His endeavor was not an exercise in letters, but verity and preservation of remembrance.

5. Conclusion

Pedro Fernández de Velasco wrote his *Relación* at a time when the discussion about the interpretation of recent history caused particular attention. Whilst the Cortes demanded a

depiction of history from a national point of view, Charles V. preferred a representation of history focused on his person. The towns, however, wanted to make sure that their view of history would be preserved by writing their own town chronicles. Within this dispute, the Duke presented another interpretation of the recent history of the Revolt of the Comuneros. It was not the Emperor who was a decisive protagonist, because he was absent during the most important actions, and also not the royal officials (*letrados*), who in large numbers, and like renowned Castilian towns, had taken side with the Comuneros. It was only thanks to the aristocracy and especially to his family that the uprising could be turned into a positive direction for the crown and the Emperor. For this reason the *Relación* is not only a work which presents the merits and the achievements of Don Pedro and his father, it more generally points also to the faithfulness and the loyalty of the high nobility.

The *Guerra de Granada* by Diego Hurtado de Mendozas had a similar function. In this work, Diego Hurtado justified the actions of his family, the Marquis of Mondéjar, before and during the revolt of the Moors of Granada. In addition to this, the work contains a political lesson, whose message is similar to that of the *Relación*. Using the example of the *Guerra de Granada*, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza illustrates how the decline of the Marquis of Mondéjar and the rise of the lawyers of the *Audiencia* (Royal Court of Justice) provoked the catastrophe of the Granada War. With reference to Tacitus and Sallust, who described the decadence of the Roman aristocracy in the late Republic and made them responsible for the fall of Rome, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza deplored the decline of the aristocracy in the Spain of his time, which began with the rise of the *letrados* under the Catholic Kings and culminated in the bureaucratic ruling of Philip II (Hurtado de Mendoza, 64-69).

With the defense of the aristocracy's claim to power over the royal bureaucracy of the *letrados*, Diego Hurtado de Mendoza shares a fundamental element of aristocratic self-conception with Pedro Fernández de Velasco. But unlike the humanistically educated Mendoza, Don Pedro felt no necessity to prove his erudition. The historic lesson from the Comuneros War was sufficient in order to defend the worth of the aristocracy in relation to the lawyers. The service of the Duke was that of a general who conquered the Tordesillas for the Emperor and who achieved decisive victories in the Revolt of the Comuneros. How much more would this have meant in his eyes than all the book knowledge of the lawyers. Here lies an almost ironic contradiction in the statement of the *Relación* because, after all, to illustrate the merit of arms it requires a work of letters.

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