

Small Categories Series

Bullfighting

Editorial comment: I actually attended a bullfight in Barcelona, Spain, in 1973. It was very exciting...until the end, when the bull was killed. There was no 'sport' in that, and it certainly wasn't 'fair' in any way. The bull had already been weakened with a number stabs in the beginning.

During the eight centuries of the Spanish War of the Reconquest (711-1492 A.D.), the knights, Moors and Christians, weary of killing one another, would occasionally compete in hunting wild-life existing in the Iberian lands. The Iberian bull transformed the hunt into an avid exchange. Perhaps a nobleman with an entrepreneurial spirit thought about capturing several of these horned beasts, taking them to the village, and recreating the thrill of the hunt so that the knights could demonstrate their skill and win the admiration of their subjects. Thus, in a remote corner of Medieval Spain, the beginning of what today is the national Spanish spectacle of bullfighting was created.

The first historic bullfight, 'corrida', took place in Vera, Logro, in 1133, in honor of the coronation of king Alfonso VIII. From that point on, history is full of instances in which kings organized corridas to commemorate important events and to entertain their guests. After the Spanish War of the Reconquest, the celebration of corridas expanded throughout Spain and became the outlet where the noblemen demonstrated the zeal that allowed them to defeat the Moors. Even kings took part in the lancing of bulls in the bullfighting arenas. Chester Crill reported having 70 such covers back in 1993.

