

# lingua weekly

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## A Backward Procession

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Next week is a week of processions. This unique one I am going to tell you about was not a Holy Week procession, though, but a summer one, and a dancing one!

Maderuelo is somewhere on the border between Segovia and Soria. Our friends' cottage was on the edge of a plateau. Down there below us was a tongue of arid Castilian land bordered by a strip of river. Close to the tip of the tongue was a Roman bridge, immersed in water except for its upper parts.

The widening and swelling of the river caused by the erosion of land had made a second bridge necessary, and there it was, connecting the left side of the tongue to the old town, a cluster of austere, ochre constructions lorded over by the tower of the parish church. One night we were in the church square, grown-ups and children alike, partaking of the town fiesta.

In the morning we were awakened by the racket of folks who had danced and drunk all night, and by the drums of a parade of big-headed monsters on stilts.

Bells were ringing. We rushed off to High Mass in the hermitage somewhere off to the right of the cottage, still on the plateau. Of course there was no more room for us in the temple, so we stood outside.

The town folk and their kin from surrounding municipalities were in their Sunday best. It was the Feast of Our Lady of Castroboda, who, after the service, was taken from her niche in the altar and placed on a flower-strewn float.

Her devotees gathered before the statue instead of behind, and, facing her, arms raised, began a jumpy backward procession. To the beat of a very loud and out-of-tune brass band, they kept up the backward dance all the way down to the previous night's church, where the Lady was to stay a week.

I was not around for the following Sunday's reverse jota.

*[Now it's your turn to describe a unique or unforgettable procession.]*

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