

Edad Media. Revista de Historia (EM)
ISSN: 1138-9621
AÑO 2013 VOLUMEN 14
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ANALYTIC SUMMARY

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Feasts and Celebrations in Castilian Cities by the End of the Middle Ages (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 35-61

ABSTRACT: Festive celebrations were essential for medieval urban society, not only because of the celebratory and playful aspects involved, but also because they entailed significant social and religious experiences. The latter aspects were instrumental in improving the community's peaceful coexistence and cohesion. By the end of the Middle Ages festivals were taking place on special dates in the year that brought together relatives, neighbours, brotherhood members and town-dwellers in general depending on the specific features of each celebration. Whether they were small-scale or bigger events involving a large participation, these festivals often preserved such ties with the magical and sacred as had characterized ancient festive rites. In fact, it was on the basis of those religious meanings that the civic and political festivities –a different kind of event requiring the participation of the whole community– were superimposed. In this context, the Corpus Christi festivals certainly constituted the most universal celebration during the medieval period. However, by the late fifteenth century new moral and political values, including the concept of “nation” itself, had made an appearance in communal festivities like those held by Castilian merchants who were established outside the kingdom. It was at that time that the then current models for urban festivals were challenged, while artisans in some towns and cities stood up against their duty to pay for the expenses incurred as a result of Corpus Christi celebrations.

KEYWORDS: Festivals. Plays. Towns. Castile. Spain. Society. Late Medieval. Culture and Politics.

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Access to Power and Political Discourse in the Cantabrian Towns during the Late Middle Ages (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 63-80

ABSTRACT: Our proposal revolves around the themes of political discourse and culture in the coastal towns of Cantabria from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries. Drawing on both municipal and legal documentation, we will examine the means of access to municipal office in the period before the carve-up of power among factions, the political culture of the factions themselves and the alternatives to such culture. Indeed the factions' political discourse centred on their role as protectors of the community, their control of certain posts since time immemorial and their belonging to ancient lineages, which in turn guaranteed the prestige, honour and renown regarded as fundamental to such positions of power. The opposition to such power-sharing came chiefly from the influential brotherhoods of fishermen and from the artisans' guilds in the several Cantabrian towns, but it generally failed to obtain significant municipal posts. The faction system only came to an end when, from 1476 onwards, the political model proposed in 1435 by the merchants of Bilbao came to be widely adopted.

KEYWORDS: Political Discourse. Factions. Fishermen's Brotherhoods. Artisans' Guilds. Merchants. Towns on the Cantabrian Coast. Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

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Power Displayed: The Perception of Urban Power. An Approach to the Case of Burgos (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 81-104

ABSTRACT: In the field of Anthropology, both social and political, there has been a lot of emphasis in recent times on power's inherent need to be theatrically staged and publicly demonstrated in an appropriate setting by using the right symbols and images. Indeed, the aim of all power is to perpetuate itself by means of an adequate system of representation which, going beyond the immediate reality of its implementation, appears, however, embedded in it, designed to reaffirm and complete it. And this is even more evident in a period outstandingly "gestural" like the Middle Ages. Although studies on urban political identity – or identities – have become increasingly important in recent years, they have insisted rather on the processes that explain the origin, evolution and development of urban political identity (or on such features as define a given shared group identity), than on the staging (and the

‘stages’) of power itself. My intention, therefore, in this paper is to address a combined analysis of the staging and display of urban power through the example of Burgos. To do this, I will focus primarily on two different scenarios: first I will try to reconstruct how the residents perceived or “made visible” the above-mentioned power by equating it with the so-called “patrician power”, as well as the forms and records power used in displaying itself before the citizenship. Secondly, I will attempt to stage the enactment of municipal power as “lord” of vassals: in other words, the projection of urban power over the territory it controls and dominates.

KEYWORDS: Urban Politic Identity.

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‘Surrounded by many foes’. The Didactics of Political Relationships between Town and Nobility in the City of Cuenca during the Fifteenth Century (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 105-127

ABSTRACT: It is a well-known fact that political relationships between the nobility and towns in fifteenth-century Castile possessed a basically conflictive nature. John II's minority and the continuous episodes of civil war that followed one another during the reigns of John II and Henry IV, until the triumph of the Elizabethan party in 1480, facilitated the use of violence by the nobility, especially as an instrument for the appropriation of royal justice and revenues, and the illegal seizure of districts under municipal jurisdiction. While not denying this reality, the aim of this work is to analyze the way in which the towns tried to solve these conflicts not only by exerting their own violence but also by implementing other resources of an ideological-discursive nature. The use of those referents (and of their frame of reference) not only led to a decrease in noble violence but even to the generation of mechanisms and practices of cooperation between the towns and the nobility. This cooperation tended to satisfy the interests (even if purely opportunistic) of both sides.

KEYWORDS: Fifteenth Century. Crown of Castile. City of Cuenca. Towns. Nobility. Conflict. Cooperation. Political Reference Framework.

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Governing Frontiers: Local Powers, Territorial Domain and Centralised Control in Southern Castile (13th-16th centuries) (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 129-148

ABSTRACT: Controlling such territories as were most remote from the centres of power has always been one of the objectives of those who sought to set up a political organization based on a centralized system of power. The example of Castile and the lands bordering the Nasrid sultanate of Granada during the Late Middle Age affords a model for analyzing this phenomenon. The process of monarchical rule over outlying territories near an asymmetric boundary as was the Castilian-Nasrid frontier line additionally involved two intermediate factors: the landed gentry and the local power groups. These helped define the slow but inexorable path to the political praxis of a powerful Crown and gave rise to procedures that would later be used, already in the Modern Era, to incorporate the vast American dominions.

KEYWORDS: Castile. Late Middle Age. Frontier of Granada. Crown. Periphery.

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Artisans and Council Power in Medieval Portuguese Towns (14th and 15th Centuries) (POR)
EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 149-170

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to characterize the several ways of interaction between artisans and the municipal authorities in medieval Portuguese towns of the 14th and 15th centuries. The analysis focuses on the forms adopted by the artisans' relations with the municipal power, their modes of representation and the several ways in which craftsmen became associated, while at the same time addressing specific issues of contestation and resistance. The overarching goal of this paper is to shed some light on the construction of political power by artisan groups in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and more generally to trace an overall picture of medieval Portuguese towns, so that it primarily draws on a number of sources concerning several Portuguese cities, particularly Porto, Lisbon and Évora.

KEYWORDS: Crafts and Artisans. Municipal Power. Political Power of Craftsmen. Forms of Representation. Guilds. Craftsmen Associations.

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Political Culture and Urban Community: Valencia, 14th - 15th Centuries (ES)
EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 171-211

ABSTRACT: The detailed analysis of the political and economic governance of medieval towns in the Late Middle Ages provides some insight into the way in which the exercise of power by the ruling oligarchy was supported by a broad social base or elite. Their ample representation in the council's large governing assembly, which both acted as an electoral college and supplied the eligible members of legal courts, went hand in hand with the involvement of the same individuals and households in the economic management of municipalities. Thus they became major beneficiaries of wages derived from office holding and revenues obtained through purchasing census-based debt, tax leases and subsidies granted in order to support grain imports to fill the town granaries. Personal data drawn from the accounting records in the city of Valencia during the financial year 1411-1412 (and more particularly from exchange rate tables in the municipal banking system) provide evidence regarding the full involvement of the numerous local town councillors in the municipality's political and financial management. So much so indeed, that it becomes possible to posit an equation between the town's political class and the urban community as collectively enshrined by local law and fully characterized by this dual aspect of their activity.

KEYWORDS: Urban society. Medieval town. Municipal government. Public Management. Community finance. Public banking. Community Governance. Exercise of power.

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The Local Oligarchy of Granada at the Dawn of the Castilian Rule (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 213-237

ABSTRACT: Granada's Town Council did not become fully established until almost nine years after the Castilian conquest of the city and shortly after the conversion forced by the monarchs immediately after their crushing of the Moorish revolt in 1499. Since the fall of 1500, the municipal institution became the crucible for the encounter between the "cristianoviejos" (old Christians) and the Moorish elites. The merger of these two sectors took place, nevertheless, in the context of interoligarchic rivalries which became particularly tense from 1508 onwards. This context was marked by a división into factions and the strong political patronage led by the second count of Tendilla and the Gran Capitán until 1515. The study of these clashes is addressed in the last three sections of this paper. The first two are devoted to the analysis of the social profiles of the early municipal leaders of Granada together with the material bases that enabled their access to power at the time.

KEYWORDS: Social History. Municipal Oligarchy. Interoligarchic Rivalries.

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Commo uno más del pueblo: The Commoners' Collective Action and Political Aspirations in Cantabrian Port Towns During the Late Middle Ages (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 239-257

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the emergence of the Commons' political consciousness and actions with the aim of changing the political system in the late-medieval port towns of Cantabria. The Commons' political achievements have been the focus of intense controversy almost from the beginnings of contemporary historiography between those who defended that the role of the Commons was very limited and those others who asserted the vitality of the Commons' political legacy. The political activity of the Commons in northern towns of Spain involved the victory of the upper middle class –the urban business elite– resulting from the demands of craft guilds and the Commons' protests in the 15th century, as well as from municipal reforms supported by the Crown. In this way, the monarchy, aligned with the upper middle classes, strengthened its power and turned into the institution responsible for the Commonweal in Cantabrian port towns.

KEYWORDS: Urban History. Cantabria. Port Towns. Commons. Oligarchy. Political history. Popular protests. Sortition.

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Clothing, Self-Recognition and the Recognition by Others: the Case of Medieval Travellers (POR)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 261-276

ABSTRACT: The present study, while taking into consideration that appearance is essentially a social agreement among groups, seeks to question the travel accounts of Western Christians to the East in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, in order to show that clothing played such a decisive role as did customs in identifying others as well as themselves.

KEYWORDS: Travels to the East. Middle Ages. Clothes.

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The Colours of the Suburbs of Bilbao (1300-1550) (ES)

EDAD MEDIA. Rev. Hist., 14 (2013), pp. 277-311

ABSTRACT: The expansion and the activity of the suburbs of Bilbao mirror the awakening of a town –one overflowed by its own sprawl– to modern capitalism, in which the life and estate of neighbours and residents would be largely dictated by the market. At

the same time, the council was lavish with protective ordinances for a market characterized by strong oscillations between supply and demand. Out of this alchemy a space arose, constructed almost blindly, where the humble people tried to survive by their own work, a bit of trickery and an imperious need of currency. The suburbs were, undoubtedly, the expression of a new order in which poor and rich people were condemned to get along inside a complicated and troubled world as much ruled by law as by knavery and deception.

KEYWORDS: Basque Country. Bilbao. Ordinances. Suburb. Supply. Fraud. Game. Prostitution.