URBAN IDENTITY IN CASTILE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

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Abstract

Identities in the urban world are mental constructs of varying degrees of complexity that are built on the structure of the social groups to which they refer. But urban identity was a complex system also constructed based upon responsibilities and efforts, which served to cultivate common work. In Castile the towns and cities had a high capacity for management and organisation from their creation. The common identity was represented by the oligarchic government and the cities only brought before the king rivalries among themselves. This lack of sovereign urban identity leads to the supposition that the ambitions were absorbed in the feelings of identity with the community of the kingdom and monarchy would reserve an unquestionable leading role for the cities.[1]

Keywords

Cities, Identity, Late Middle Ages, Castile, Politic.

Capitalia Verba

Civitates, Identitas, Tardum Medium Aevum, Castella, Politica.

1. Introduction

Castilian cities in the Middle Ages were artificial, deliberate and conscious constructions implanted in the territories recovered from the Moors in the process that is known as the *Reconquista,* or Reconquest. From the moment cities were institutionalised as *concilium/i* or *concejos,* their continuity would be maintained by institutional power, tradition, authority and agreement, which, together with the other contractual arguments, gave force to a newly created political community. In these cities, forms of urban identity started to appear, together with representations, tales, values and beliefs that intermingled with rituals and imaginary forms (metaphors, symbols, myths).[2] But the basic question of this paper is: What need was there for a sense of identity in the urban society of Medieval Castile? When did it appear? What was its function? How did it evolve and transform?

If we start from the premise that identities in the urban world are mental constructs of varying degrees of complexity that are built on the structure of the social groups to which they refer, we would have to agree that if the city was not a homogenous social structure in the Middle Ages, neither was it easy at the outset for the city in its first centuries of life to have a singular urban identity.[3] It is possible that the identities were conferred by groups of settlers and dwellers that formed part of the city in its beginnings.[4] Soon, new identities would be added from the participation of families, workshops, trades, customers, religious brotherhoods, neighbourhoods and other various forms of coexistence and participation which gave the neighbours and inhabitants of an area a sense of belonging.

Common tasks were to lay the foundations of the identity models of the community.[5] Thus, the undertaking of shared defence tasks would have enabled

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2. Gilli, Patrick; Salvatori, Enrica. "Introduction. L'autonomie et l'identité de la ville une question sociale?", *Les identités urbaines au Moyen Âge. Regards urbaines au Moyen Âge. Regards sur les villes du Midi français. Actes du colloque de Montpellier (Montpellier, 8-9 décembre 2011)*, Patrick Gilli, Enrica Salvatori, eds. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014: 1-7; Jara, José Antonio. "Introducción. Identidad e identidades urbanas", *Ante su identidad. La ciudad hispánica en la Baja Edad Media*, José Antonio Jara, coord. Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2013: 11-25; Wunenburger, Jean-Jacques. *Imaginaires du politique*. Paris: Ellipses, 2001: 13-14; Val, María Isabel del. "La identidad urbana al final de la edad media". *Anales de Historia Medieval de la Europa Atlántica*, 1 (2006): 1-28.

3. Asenjo, María. "Arguments politiques et culture urbaine. Dans la controverse entre Tolède et Grenade après 1492". *Histoire Urbaine*, 35 (2012): 107-130.

4. Attreed, Lorraine Christine. "Urban Identity in Medieval English Towns". *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 32/4 (2002): 571-592; Boucheron, Patrick; Menjot, Denis; Monet, Pierre. "Formes d'émergence, d'affirmation et de déclin des capitales. Rapport introductif", *Les villes capitales au Moyen Âge. Actes du XXXVIe Congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public (Istanbul, 1-6 juin 2005)*. Paris: Publications de La Sorbonne, 2006: 13-56.

5. Brand, Hano; Monet, Pierre; Staub, Matial. "Préface", *Memoire, Communitas, Civitas. Memoire et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2003: 7-9; Gauvard, Claude.

the construction of the city walls, the control of the territory and the preservation of *fueros* (special laws pertaining to each city) and privileges. These first steps were to be followed by others that would provide solidity to urban identity and would have been of great help in overcoming divisions, conflicts and internal disagreements, facilitating the internal cohesion of the group against external threats.[6] Thus it can be said that urban identity was also constructed based upon responsibilities and efforts, which served to cultivate support, skills and common work. The cities worked together on these challenges, maintaining their costly walls in good condition and preserving their territory from threats and unwarranted appropriations. This common need even stretched to encompassing and politically justifying the need for taxes and *pechos consejiles* (local tributes). The dispersed nature of politics in Medieval urban society would explain the need for different identity paradigms for each situation.[7]

However, identity also had a negative side which strongly ratified the exclusion of those who were different in some way and were shut out from the political construction of the city. Within the cities there were communities of Mudéjars, Jews and foreigners which did not form a part of them. This excluding and differentiating factor also applied to rivalries among similar groups, more specifically, between *concejos* and royal cities of the Crown, or with the lords who were the enemies of the city.[8]

Nevertheless, the cohesion given by identity gave great strength to neighbours, while also slowing down, in some cases, the capacity to disagree when discussing the interests of the group and the 'common good'.[9] It is possible that this urban coexistence and collectivity favoured cooperation and guaranteed social peace as it consolidated and gave meaning to the rules of respect and status, which ensured the social disciplining controlled by each group. It also gave each individual participatory

"Marqueurs sociaux et symboliques des capitales. Rapport introductif", *Les villes capitales au Moyen Âge. Actes du XXXVIe Congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public (Istanbul, 1-6 juin 2005)*. Paris: Publications de La Sorbonne, 2006: 287-302.

6. Jara, José Antonio. "Identidad política urbana: Una reflexión sobre las políticas comunitarias y las identidades comunitarias en la Castilla urbana del siglo XV", *Ante su identidad. La ciudad hispánica en la Baja Edad Media*, José Antonio Jara, coord. Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2013: 93-116; González González, Raul. "La otra identidad urbana: miedo, fragilidad y derrota en los discursos populares sobre la ciudad". *Medievalia*, 18 (2015): 27-57.

7. Asenjo, María. "Ambición política y responsabilidad de gobierno. El 'común' en Segovia y Valladolid a fines de la Edad Media", *La comunidad medieval como esfera pública*, Hipólito Rafael Oliva, Vincent Challet, Jan Dumolyn, María Antonia Carmona, eds. Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2014: 73-106.

8. Asenjo, María. "Integración y exclusión. Vicios y pecados en la convivencia urbana", *Pecar en la Edad Media*, Ana Isabel Carrasco, María del Pilar Rábade, eds. Madrid: Sílex, 2008: 185-208.

9. Some ideas in: Blickle, Peter. "El principio del 'bien común' como norma para la actividad política (La aportación de campesinos y burgueses al desarrollo del Estado Moderno temprano en Europa Central)". *Edad Media. Revista de Historia*, 1 (1998): 29-46; Kempshall, Matthew. *The Common Good in late medieval political thought: moral goodness and material benefit*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999; Lecuppre-Desjardin, Élodie; Bruaene, Anne-Laure Van, eds. *De Bono Comuni. The Discourse and Practice of the Common Good in the European City (13th-16th c.)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

rights and a sense of integration, going so far as to define in a multifaceted way their different aspects.

Citizens used the social, economic, emotional and religious connections they had to create a sign of identity, which served to give them recognition and place them in society. This identity stayed with them for life, sometimes going beyond the space of the city and the territory where the memory of the characteristics related to that specific group reached. However, of these details —which had to be recognised by other people in neighbouring cities or other parts of the kingdom— it was generally the identity of the city together with their legal and social status that enabled individuals to be categorised.[10] Thus, the status of foreigner was associated to parameters of recognition that were fuelled by the concepts of urban identity in the city of origin.[11]

To some extent, this form of identity which accompanied individuals, and which was useful in urban environments in the Middle Ages, could be perceived in the villages of Spain until the 1960s and 1970s. Often, when outsiders arrived who were relatives of residents in the village, they were asked: 'who are you from?'. This stems from a curious manner of recognition that gave a specific identity, which in a village or city was more important than the individual and which gave a family or a group their status, position and history. It was a way of recognising personal identity that almost survived into modern times but which has apparently disappeared in today's more individualised and fragmented society. Nevertheless, even in our society, with few references of social origin, identity is still of use for associating people to archetypes and psychological characterisations and schemes that seem necessary for the recognition of the 'other'.[12]

Identity was therefore necessary for social groups in the city and individuals participated in it up to a point of forming an archetypal image in which they became very wrapped up in an existence in which competitiveness was not particularly

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10. Jara, José Antonio. "Percepción de 'sí', percepción del 'otro': la construcción de identidades políticas urbanas en Castilla (el concejo de Cuenca en el siglo XV)". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 40/1 (2010): 75-92.

11. Asenjo, María; Igual, David. "Mercaderes extranjeros en Valladolid. Una ciudad entre dos mares. 1475-1520", *La Península Ibérica entre el Mediterráneo y el Atlántico. Siglos XIII-XV*, Manuel González, Isabel Montes, eds. Seville-Cadiz: Diputación de Cádiz- Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales, 2006: 55-72; Bello, José Manuel. *Extranjeros en Castilla (1474-1501). Notas y documentos para el estudio de su presencia en el reino a fines del siglo XV*. La Laguna: Centro de Estudios Medievales y Renacentistas de la Laguna, 1994; Diago, Máximo. "Integración social de los hombres de negocios italianos en Valladolid a comienzos del siglo XVI", *Valladolid. Historia de una ciudad. Actas del Congreso Internacional. Vol. I. La ciudad moderna (Valladolid, 7-11 Octubre 1996)*. Valladolid: Ayuntamiento de Valladolid, 1999: 669-678; Ladero, Miguel Ángel. "Los genoveses en Sevilla y su región (siglos XIII-XVI): elementos de permanencia y arraigo", *Los mudéjares de Castilla y otros estudios de Historia Medieval andaluza,* Miguel Ángel Ladero, ed. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1989: 283-312; Solórzano, Jesús; Arizaga, Beatriz. "Protéger et contrôler la présence et les activités des étrangers dans les villes portuaires du Nord de la Couronne de Castille au Moyen Age". *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, 117/1 (2010): 209-222.

12. Jara, José Antonio. "Consciencia, alteridad y percepción: la construcción de la identidad en la Castilla urbana del siglo XV", *Construir la identidad en la Edad Media. Poder y memoria en la Castilla de los siglos VII a XV*, José Antonio Jara, Georges Martin, Isabel Alfonso, eds. Cuenca: Universidad Castilla-La Mancha, 2010: 221-250.

high since personal security was associated to status and accompanied by a range of different identity references for the person. It is important to make these clarifications so as to avoid confusing the behaviour of today's urban society and that of Medieval cities with respect to identity related phenomena. In our times, it seems were are still sensitive and receptive to forms of identity, on all scales, from urban origin and nationality to identification with political parties, humanitarian actions, the colours of football teams and other cultural and musical movements.[13] However, these points apart, it is important to recognise that the difficulty in studying the perception of urban identity in the past is hindered by a lack of documentary and iconographic sources which allow the reconstruction of the scope of this political manifestation.[14]

Indeed, the city that was built on this variety of identity markers had also elaborated a particular political identity that protected and defined its citizens, with objectives of collective interest and sustained by proposals and values that appealed to the common good. It was probably this option that led citizens to rivalries, confrontation and conflict, while also helping to preserve the jurisdiction of the Crown against the growing manorialisation in the realms of the Crown or to expand its territories by incorporating new villages. Once towns or cities were manorialised, identity also acted and prevented abuse since resistance to the increasing demands of jurisdictional lords was based on the strength of their force as a political entity, the assets they accumulated and the privileges and ordinances that helped them resist as governmental units.[15]

The coexistence of sub-identities within the city was compatible with a town or city's strength, action and capacity to resist a range of very different threats. It is reasonable to suppose that the cohesion of the community, which had allowed the urban area to function since its origins, would have changed as the relationships of social forces and political conflicts gave rise to new balances of power. Thus, from the mid-14th century onwards, the city transformed into a collective manorial entity governed by an oligarchic power. This was better suited to a more disperse society and facilitated the integration of the city and its territory. Nevertheless, the question arises as to how far cities needed to exhibit their particular identity

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13. Rosser, Gervase. "Myth, image and social process in the English medieval town". *Urban History*, 23/1 (1996): 5-25.

14. The analysis of the personal involvement of experience in the construction of identity has aroused interest in historiography, although a higher valuation is given to the theme in contemporary history, from the perspective of psychology. It directs its attention to dominant and non-dominant groups for the identification of the factors determining the memory of their identities. See: Montero, Alicia Inés. "Identidad e identidades: la identidad política en la historia urbana medieval. Balance historiográfico y perspectivas de análisis". *Estudios Medievales Hispánicos*, 1 (2012): 121-142; LaCapra, Dominick. *History in Transit. Experience, Identity, Critical Theory*. Ithaca-New York: Cornell University Press, 2004: 1-34.

15. Solórzano, Jesús. "De 'todos los más del pueblo' a la 'república e comunidad': el desarrollo y la consolidación de la identidad de común de Laredo en los siglos XIV y XV". *Anales de Historia Medieval de la Europa Atlántica*, 1/1 (2006): 61-106; Franco, Alfonso. "Fuensaldaña y los Vivero. Un conflicto antiseñorial". *Hispania*, 59/3 (1999): 823-855. About the political reach of baronial concejos see: Monsalvo, José María. *El sistema político concejil: el ejemplo del señorío medieval de Alba de Tormes y su concejo de villa y tierra*. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1988.

and what means they used to perfect their mechanisms of internal cohesion and singular appearance. The occasions in which this was necessary were diverse. However, the most important ones included situations of armed conflict, debates or disputes between competing powers, whether this was between rival towns or nobles. Secondly, identity was important for cities in their struggles to gain the status given to each of the royal cities and their hierarchical position before the king, whether this was in the meetings of the *Cortes*, in taking a seat or when having the first word in debates, and also in relation to royal titles displayed in documents and diplomas.[16]

Other questions revolve around the relation between urban identity and the origins of Spanish national identity: a modern-day political concept rooted in the past, going back further than the Peninsular War against Napoleon's troops in 1808, dating back to the early modern period[17] and the end of the Middle Ages. Seemingly, the rise of the Spanish national political identity, strongly connected to that of the Crown of Castile and its monarchy, was closely related with the cities and towns in the kingdom that played a central role in strengthening the identity of the kingdom. Thus, it can be assumed that at the end of the Middle Ages, to develop their identities, the cities employed argument, discourses, symbols and myths that would be useful for the purpose of gaining favour with the monarch.

2. The uniqueness of urban identity

The aspects of identity necessarily had to derive from a uniqueness which made each city different from others. Indeed, the urban development in each city —its walls, gates and symbolic buildings— gave rise to a clearly identifiable image. These marks of identity were supplemented by the law, *fueros* and privileges granted by the monarchs, and historical privileges that were renewed each time a new monarch ascended to the throne. Another marker of identity was the name of the city itself, whether this was inherited from Roman times or a new creation in the Medieval period. The explanation of the origins of the name tradition or legends played a central role. In addition, in a society marked by values of honour in which the city was viewed as being a living social entity, a city's inhabitants and a glorious past bestowed 'honour'. The city's religious traditions were deeply rooted and associated with the veneration of ancestors buried in its churches and the patron saints that were worshipped in the processions and celebrations held by the inhabitants. Religious foundations of convents and monastery were set up for the glorification and memory of the city or town, helping to reinforce its urban singularity.[18] This

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16. Asenjo, María. "Arguments politiques et culture urbaine...": 107-130.

17. Ballester, Mateo. *La identidad española en la Edad Moderna (1556-1665)*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2010.

18. Rucquoi, Adeline. "Les villes d'Espagne: de l'histoire à la géenalogie", *Memoria, communitas, civitas. Mémoire et conscience urbaines en Occident à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Hanno Brand, Pierre Monnet, Martial Staub, eds. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2003: 145-166.

occurred in Andalusia where these foundations did not form a network of religious institutions, instead the monasteries and convents symbolize the splendour of the nobles and *concejos*.[19]

Finally, there were the titles of each town or city and the associated symbols which served to identify them outside of the city boundaries. The first were earned for merit and recognition within the hierarchy of the towns and cities when the monarch acknowledged courage shown or services rendered to the king and kingdom.[20] This distinction had legal and political consequences, since only towns and cities possessed and wielded jurisdiction over residents and inhabitants of the town and its villages.

Historical memory must be added to this equation, collected in part in the royal chronicles. These are associated to the monarch. However, these royal chronicles are not only reflected in these tales since they also sowed a seed for the creation of more stories which have survived the test of time thanks to the testimonies of citizens. From the 15th century onwards, cities set down their own chronicles to preserve and recreate the memory of their past glories and values.[21]

3. Oligarchic power and urban identity ambitions

The city authorities or the *regimiento* would have been responsible for the ideological construction and its political justification in favour of an urban identity with singular characteristics. Here, it is important to remember that the governors had gained power in the mid-14th century and, after more than a century of rivalries and struggles, there commenced a political experience of *regimiento* or *concejo cerrado* ("closed council") that placed the government of the city in the hands of a dozen or so knights, noblemen and arbiters. After the creation of the *regimiento*, ratified by monarchical power in 1345, a policy of government was established in which self control and balance among the members of the oligarchic *concejo* was reminiscent of that of some oligarchic republics. Thanks to this model, many individual ambitions, which threatened internal balance and caused conflicts, were thwarted. In cities with a marked presence of noblemen, this group polarised affinities and generally fuelled political intrigue into which the governors and knights of the cities saw themselves inevitably dragged. However, we cannot forget that violence and disorder favoured

19. Vilar, Hermínia. "Religión e identidad urbana: seculares y mendicantes en las ciudades del sur de Portugal en la Baja Edad Media", *Ante su identidad. La ciudad hispánica en la Baja Edad Media*, José Antonio Jara, coord. Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2013: 263-285.

20. Valladolid was granted distinction by the King of Castile Alfonso VII in a document signed in Burgos on 6th November 1152; this was ratified by Alfonso X: Miura, José María. "Conventos y organización social del espacio. Fundadores y fundaciones dominicas en la Andalucía medieval". *Historia Urbana*, 2 (1993): 85-111.

21. Quesada, Santiago. *Idea de la ciudad en la cultura hispana de edad moderna*. Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1992.

the commendation and support of the weak, always in exchange for compensation and income which were the common ambition of all.[22] For this reason, there were frequent complaints of abuse by the governors for acting against the good of the *republica,* a term which referred to the political constitution that encompassed the city and its land or territory.

It is well-known that the oligarchic group in Castilian cities was formed by knights and nobles with agricultural patrimonies and that they organised themselves into lineages, guilds or factions to fight among themselves for power and privileges.[23] The knightly trait of the oligarchy, with a military vocation, comprises one of the peculiarities of Castilian cities with respect to the rest of Europe. It also brought important consequences to the political arena of the kingdom. Nevertheless, from the 14th century and throughout the following one, there is evidence of the increasing presence of native merchants in Castilian cities who played an important political role in the framework of the community of citizens.[24] One might wonder why a minority of traders with their own identity did not claim greater political weight, as occurred in European cities where a practical policy was implemented and a corporative discourse was started that talked of 'members' in Flanders.[25] It seems that the predominance of knights and aristocrats was firmly established and not even in the case of cities such Burgos, where traders were the most powerful group, did they manifest their own identity, since they let themselves be organised in a manner similar to that of the knights and grouped into similar organisations called *cofradias de caballeros* ("confraternities of knights").[26]

Neither was the political context of development of the royal cities of the Crown of Castile similar to that of the European cities. We must not forget that from their creation the towns and cities had a high capacity for management and organisation, they applied their common law, enshrined in the *fueros* and privileges, but most were under the jurisdiction of the king. This impeded the full deployment of their political powers, and this had consequences for the construction of a singular identity for the

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22. Monsalvo, José María. "Parentesco y sistema concejil. Observaciones sobre la funcionalidad política de los linajes urbanos en Castilla y León (siglos XIII-XV)". *Hispania*, 53/185 (1993): 937-969.

23. Asenjo, María. "Structuring Urban System as Bonding Process in Castillian Oligarchic Society in fifteenth-century", *Oligarchy and Patronage in Spanish Late Medieval Urban Society*, María Asenjo, ed. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009: 29-50.

24. Guerrero, Yolanda. "'ser y pertenecer' a la élite: estrategias de reproducción del poder en el Burgos bajomedieval", *Ante su identidad. La ciudad hispánica en la Baja Edad Media*, José Antonio Jara, coord. Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2013:75-92; Caunedo, Betsabé. *Mercaderes castellanos en el golfo de Vizcaya (1475-1492)*. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1983; Caunedo, Betsabé. "Un importante papel de los mercaderes de Toledo a finales del siglo XV: abastecedores de la Casa Real". *Anales Toledanos*, 16 (1983): 139-149; Esteban, Asunción; Izquierdo, María Jesús. "Familias 'burguesas' representativas de la élite palentina a fines de la Edad Media". *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 10 (1992): 101-146.

25. Boone, Marc. *Á la recherche de la modernité civique. La société urbaine des anciens Pays-Bas au Moyen Âge*. Brussels: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2010: 39.

26. Casado, Hilario. "Una familia de la oligarquía burgalesa del siglo XV: los Alonso de Burgos Maluenda", *La ciudad de Burgos. MC aniversario de la fundación de la ciudad, 884-1984. Actas del Congreso de Historia de Burgos.* Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1985: 143-162.

urban community. In royal cities and towns, the power of the monarchy was not as oppressive to the political ambitions of cities as that of the lay lords and the ecclesiastical lords. However, in the 15th century, a process was started of increasingly involving cities in the politics of the kingdom, something that would bring about consequences for their political future. This was in part as a consequence of the identification of the knights and gentlemen that governed the cities of Castile with an aristocratic political model, their values, tastes and their presence in court circles. They did so with an attitude that was a consequence of the attraction for the mode of noble life, which fascinated the knights and gentlefolk of the cities.[27] They also felt proximity to the world of the nobility owing to their military profession, which had been their defining feature in the past and for which they maintained the chivalric code of values and their passion for hunting, military actions and jousting or tournaments.[28] The code of values and a common goal of overcoming challenges became the dream of all knights and gentlemen in a time when chivalric romance was spreading with great success throughout Castile.[29]

For its part, the monarchy dealt with city representatives in clear terms that denote the category and the contents of a dialogue between lord-king and vassals-cities. It is known that this relationship created a mutual obligation based on 'service', since the vassal/server received tasks from his lord, but the lord depended on his vassals. When a lord requested a 'service', it was understood that he demanded that which he could not directly achieve, and therefore needed the support of his men.

In the hierarchical political model under which the city was governed, the knights and their values were imposed, creating relationships akin to chivalric codes in which loyalty and obedience were paramount. For this reason the king did not hesitate to take advantage of specific events to classify cities as 'good and loyal'. Alfonso XI gave this title to Valladolid for the first time in 1329, when he absolved it of all responsibility for the fire in the Monastery of Santa Mária de las Huelgas in the city while also reminding them of the shelter and protection that they gave him during his minority, following the death of his grandmother María de Molina. For these reasons, he called all the residents and inhabitants 'good and loyal' vassals.[30] Thus the town gained an identity of values with the world of the nobles and an acknowledgement of status

27. Gerbet, Marie Claude. *Las noblezas españolas en la Edad Media. Siglos XI-XV*. Madrid: Alianza, 1997: 347-349. A more theoretical analyse of the role of the noble statement in the 15th century in: Rucquoi, Adeline. "Être noble en Espagne aux XIVe-XVIe siècles", *Nobilitas. Funktion und Repraësentation des Adels in Alteuropa, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht*, Otto Göttingen, Werner Paravicini, eds. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997: 273-299.

28. Gautier, Jean. "Les sociétés urbaines Léon-castillanes et la guerre: naissance des milices urbaines", *Les sociétés urbaines en France Méridionale et en Peninsule Ibérique au Moyen Age. Actes du Colloque de Pau (Pau, 21-23 octobre 1988)*. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1991: 161-174; Asenjo, María. "Parentesco y sociedad en el origen de la nobleza urbana en Castilla. Siglos XII y XIII", *Villes et sociétés urbaines au Moyen Age. Hommage a M. le professeur Jacques Heers*. Paris: Presses Universitaire de Paris-Sorbonne, 1994: 141-148.

29. Riquer, Martí de. *Vida caballeresca en la España del siglo XV*. Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1965.

30. Arribas, Filemón. "Títulos y armas de la ciudad de Valladolid". *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología*, 28-30 (1941-1942): 1-23, 3-4.

that differentiated it from others, adding new characteristics to its identity.[31] In 1422, in the Cortes of Ocaña, the *procuradores* ("deputies") of Valladolid obtained the title of 'most noble' for their town for the services rendered by its residents and inhabitants.[32]

The signs of urban identity were becoming visible since they were also words and concepts that were used, a precise vocabulary selected for each political or legal circumstance. And, although the process by which identities were constructed during the Middle Ages is always difficult to reconstruct, we know that they existed and helped to determine urban singularity during this period. Modernists asserted that in the 16th century a dramatic change took place in the myth and symbolical representation of the city to signal that the identity process was to develop under more rationalist lines from 1500 onwards. However, although in the 16th and 17th centuries it seems irrefutable that changes were introduced in the way urban political behaviour was ritualised and adapted to the society of the moment, it is important to determine whether the adjustment was just a question of emphasis and interpretation or whether it was a radical alteration in perception and experience.[33]

The conditions for the exhibition of identity at the close of the Middle Ages required staging and ritual because the illiterate society were more receptive to these than to written material. These stimuli produced the identification and the explicit acceptance of the message, the institution and its champions. However, in this field it was the monarchy that had ritualised its messages and had given them sacred value, thanks to the collaboration of the church. For this reason the members of the urban oligarchy paid attention to this representation of the monarchy's identity, participating and collaborating in coronations, burials, meetings of the *Cortes* and other events.

For their part, the *concejos* of this period continued to preserve the symbol *par excellence* that identified and safeguarded them: the *fueros* and privileges of the city.[34] Although the *fueros* continued in use in some areas until the early 16th century, they were gradually relegated after the Ordinance of Alcalá in 1348, which implemented the king's law and drew up local codes. This all occurred at the same time that Roman law, studied in the universities and disseminated by regulations and the king's tribunals, was applied.[35]

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31. Rucquoi, Adeline. "Des villes nobles pour le Roi", *Realidad e imágenes del poder. España a fines de la Edad Media,* Adeline Rucquoi, coord. Valladolid: Ámbito, 1988: 195-214.

32. Arribas, Filemón. "Títulos y armas de la ciudad...": 6.

33. Identity and the use of reasoned arguments has been studied by Jara. Jara, José Antonio. "Percepción de 'sí'...": 75-92.

34. Garcia de Valdeavellano, Luis. "Sobre simbología jurídica de la España Medieval", *Homenaje a don José Esteban Urangoa*. Pamplona: Aranzadi, 1971: 89-134; Gibert, Rafael. "El derecho municipal de León y Castilla". *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 31 (1961): 635-753; Torres, David. "Teoría y práctica de la acción de gobierno en el mundo medieval castellano-leonés". *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos*, 12 (1985): 9-87; Barrero, Ana María; Alonso, María Luisa. *Textos de derecho local español en la edad media. Catálogo de fueros y costums municipales*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1989.

35. The city of Soria maintained its *fuero extenso*, which the residents and *concejo* used to settle various matters. See: Asenjo, María. "La sociedad soriana. De las collaciones a las cuadrillas", *Fuero de Soria : 1256-2006: edición crítica*, María Asenjo, ed. Soria: Heraldo de Soria, 2006: 275-278.

Given that images had a great force of evocation, it seems that the *concejos* also used these to help build their identification.[36] The sign or banner, which could be the flag, was the symbol of the *concejo* that represented the town or the city. Another of the images was the seal used in their legal documents and provisions and was also placed on products elaborated in the city, thus carrying its image and prestige to faraway places. It is probable that the seal was the most widespread image and symbol of the *concejo* because it was included on all documentation issued by the city and on its consumer products.

In their seals, the cities and towns of Castile represented aspects of their urbanism or ensigns linked to them that, in some way, identified them in the minds of others.[37] The figure of the King Ferdinand III, who was the conqueror of the city, was chosen by Seville. However, the figures of San Isidoro and San Leandro also appeared on its seals. Segovia featured the aqueduct, which was the city's most emblematic monument, and each of the cities chose their own symbol in a similar way. These were symbols that caught the eye thanks to the simplicity of their direct message and which recognised the community of the *concejo*.

It is interesting to note here that in the late 15th century, many of the large cities in Castile did not possess a building for meetings. Instead they met in other spaces: at the doors of the cathedral, in the case of Seville, or at the church of San Miguel, in Segovia, or, in the case of Valladolid, in a rented building in the San Francisco district. Thus the public nature of their meetings was preserved, just as in earlier times.

4. Urban identity and royal power

Although Castilian cities reached a point where they wielded competences and powers over citizens and territories, they did not have the sovereign political ambition of Italian cities, to which they were similar in many respects. Instead, they always yielded to royal power. Throughout the course of the medieval centuries, the requirements and needs of the king had reinforced the role of the city in matters of the government of the kingdom and its competences of dominion over the people were

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36. Anthropological studies have been very revealing and clarifying on the scope of symbolic representation. Pastoreau, Michel. *Couleurs, images, symboles. Études d'histoire et d'anthropologie*. Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1992.

37. We know that it was also featured on weights and measurements, and was used to mark cloth and other products made in the city. See: González, Julio. "Los sellos concejiles de España en la Edad Media". *Hispania*, 20 (1945): 339-385; Fernández, Marcos. *Los sellos de la ciudad de Sevilla*. Seville: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, 1996. About monarchic stamps: Ruiz, Teófilo. "L'image du pouvoir à travers les sceaux de la monarchie castillane", *Génesis del Estado Moderno: Castilla y Navarra (1250-1370)*, Adeline Rucquoi, ed. Valladolid: Ámbito, 1987: 217-227.

also extended and diversified.[38] In particular, powers relating to matters of defence, taxation and justice.[39]

However, in 15th century Castile, the situation was paradoxical since there was a reinforcement of royal power parallel to an awakening of political awareness in the cities and towns of the kingdom, fuelled by the resurgence of the community or the *común* of the citizens. This phenomenon also coincided to some degree with activity in scholarly circles, which theorised on the political role of cities, influenced by humanistic lines of thought.[40]

The authoritarian monarchy did not seek to maintain its position only by means of vassalage because this implicitly contained the concept of pact and agreement between the parties, something that reduced its capacity for action. Thus it gradually imposed a more general dialogue targeting the residents and inhabitants of the royal cities, which seemingly connected with the subjects and wider social sectors, which it wished to maintain compliant and expectant. It was a time in which the vocabulary of the values relating to the individual slowly penetrated political discourse.[41] Moreover, the 14th and 15th centuries were an era of dialogue between the king and kingdom. This attitude seemed to confirm that the Western royalty accepted the fact of being linked to their subjects and not exclusively to their vassals.[42] It was under the Catholic Monarchs that the Crown of Castile started to follow a similar direction to the rest of Europe.[43] A more generalised dialogue was imposed, directed mainly at the cities, in which residents and inhabitants were more accessible and receptive to the messages of propaganda, which slowly penetrated political discourse.[44]

For the authoritarian monarchy in the late 15th century, the acquiescence and acceptance of its subjects was a primary ambition, which was achieved through

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38. Asenjo, María. "La aportación del sistema urbano a la gobernabilidad de reino de Castilla durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos (1474-1504)". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 39/1 (2009): 307-328.

39. With respect to the recruitment of troops to ward off an attack, faced with the threat of invasion from the neighbouring kingdom of Portugal and in the context of Anglo-French rivalry during the Hundred Years War, it is illustrative how King Henry III in 1394 ordered Burgos and the areas and towns of its diocese to gather its inhabitants as labourers in groups of twenty, of which one was to be the captain, arming each man in accordance with his fortune and maintaining these men prepared: AMB. HI-2620. Toro (1394, October 24th).

40. Rucquoi, Adeline. "Democratie ou monarchie. Le discours politique dans l'Université castillane au XVe siècle", *El discurso político en la Edad Media. Le discours politique au Moyen Âge,* Nilda Guglielmi, Adeline Rucquoi, coord. Buenos Aires: Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1995: 254-255. See also: Castillo, José Luis. *Política y clases medias: El siglo XV y el maestro salmantino Fernando de Roa*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1987; Belloso, Nuria. *Política y humanismo en el siglo XV: el maestro Alfonso de Madrigal, el Tostado.* Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1989.

41. Black, Antony. "Individus, groupes et États. Une approche générale comparée", *L'individu dans la théorie et la pratique politique,* Janet Coleman, dir. Paris: Publications de l'Université de France, 1996: 381.

42. Guenée, Bernard. *Occidente durante los siglos XIV y XV: los Estados*. Barcelona: Labor, 1985: 179-180. This link was a real contract with precise clauses whose non-compliance could justify their deposition.

43. Asenjo, María. "La aportación del sistema urbano...": 307-328.

44. Black, Antony. "Individus, groupes et États...": 381.

propaganda and royal legitimation.[45] For this it had unity in faith, which permitted a common language of values, laws, language, historical memory of the shared past and many other factors that it sought to make common, because the view was that a wide and homogenous social base would reduce political opposition and make government easier. However, the new model would require from the monarchy a vigilance and discipline, which would become more oppressive following the expulsion of the Jews in 1492. In this context, the Inquisition was called to have a key role in the unity of the Catholic faith as it would deal with controlling and repressing religious, moral and political dissension.[46]

The search for new interlocutors in the increasing monologue of the authoritarian monarchy coincided with the political awakening of the *vecinos pecheros* ("resident taxpayers") in the cities of Castile in the late 15th century. Since the 14th century, documentary sources show that the citizens and *vecinos pecheros* of the city formed the *comunidad* ("community"), and that as 'the governed' they were subject to certain fiscal, military and defence obligations and had to respect and comply with the *fueros* and city laws.[47] They also benefited from all the privileges inherent in their condition of resident as well as to access to the *baldíos* of the city or town, a type of common land. In the community, the status of resident was inferred by birth into a Christian family with father and grandfather living in the city or town. It could also be acquired by marriage to a resident of the city, or after continued residence in the city with a dwelling, wife and children. In these cases, residency would be granted by the *concejo*.[48] After an official procedure and certain checks and payments, if all was in order and accepted, the applicant received a letter of residency and was inscribed into the municipal register.[49] Those who remained in the city yet were not residents were categorised as *forasteros* ("outsiders"). Residential status could also be lost if for most of the year the person in question did not keep a house with wife and children, or if a crime was committed that entailed a punishment of banishment or expulsion.[50]

However, what really interests us about the community are the factors that led it to become more politically active from the mid-15th century, participating at the end

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45. Bermejo, José Luis. "Orígenes medievales de la soberanía". *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, 200-201 (1975): 283-290; Nieto, José Manuel. "Sobre los orígenes de la idea de "comunidad política" en la Corona Castellano-leonesa". *Memoria y Civilización*, 6 (2003): 5-41.

46. Rabade, María Pilar. "Los 'tiempos' de la Inquisición durante el reinado de los Reyes Católicos", *La Península Ibérica en la era de los descubrimientos*, Manuel González, ed. Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 1997: 321-330.

47. Asenjo, María. "El pueblo urbano, el 'común'". *Medievalismo*, 15 (2004): 181-194.

48. Izquierdo, Ricardo. *Un espacio desordenado: Toledo a fines de la Edad Media*. Toledo: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1996: 143 (doc. No. 1) (1477, October 24th). The request was made as a plea and the time of residency was supplied.

49. In this way the city showed its capacity to grant a right that was initially only accessible by birth. Bartolo de Sassoferrato (death in 1357) argued that the city had the authority to grant citizenship based on the *Civitas sibe princeps* principle, the city is its own prince. According to Bartolo, this argument was supported by the fact that the genesis of the *civitis* itself was not in the nature, but in the collective desire of the people, expressed by the channels of law. Kirshner, Julius. "Civitas sibi faciat civem: Bartolus of Sassoferrato's Doctrine on the Making of a Citizen". *Speculum*, 48/4, 1973: 694-713, 697.

50. Izquierdo, Ricardo. *Un espacio desordenado*...: 144-146 (doc. No. 2) (1490, March 15th).

of the century in administrative tasks such as the collection of *alcabalas* ("sales taxes") levied by the Crown or facilitating the management and government of the city.[51] At the end of the 15th century, it comprised the most lively and active group in the city, and was also the most ambitious with respect to political pretensions, as can be seen through its participation in the Revolt of the *Comuneros* ("commoners").[52]

The set of common interests strengthened the cohesion of the urban population and coexistence, access to the common land, the possibility to use privately owned assets and the common responsibility to meet tax obligations and to defend against external attacks and threats. The good management of all these aspects of life in the city contributed to internal cohesion and a growing awareness that the survival of the *concejo* had depended on the strength and will to be a community. It is possible that this internal cohesion contributed to disseminating an image of identity of the city.

It was well-know that the model of organisation of the *común* ("labourers and workers") of the Andalusian cities and of Toledo had brought about results of stable representation in meetings of the *regimiento* ("urban elite") and for this reason the *cabildo de jurados* ("council") had become a critical element in the *regimento* protected from *concejo* jurisdiction, which subjected them to that of the *Adelantado Mayor* ("Chief Governor"), who had to appoint a special judge to deal with its disputes. This privilege granted by Henry III on 26 February 1394 to the *jurados* ("councilmen") of Seville, was implemented in Toledo in 1422, although it was later revoked. Its independence was strengthened by means of exemptions and privileges, linked to the aim of giving the *cabildo de jurados* a critical function with respect to the *regimiento* that governed the city, which could only be achieved if they were out of the scope of *concejo* jurisdiction. Indeed, this model was implemented in both Toledo and Seville, where the complaints and requests of the *jurados* are a testimony to the abuse and irregularities of the governors.[53] With respect to this predominance, there was an absence of representatives of the *común* in the government of the towns in the Centre and the North or the inefficiency of the *jurados*, where these existed.[54] Indeed the

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51. This can be seen in the case of Segovia from 1497 onwards, when the community requested a presence in the meetings of the *regimiento*. See: Asenjo, María. *Segovia. La ciudad y su tierra a fines del Medievo*. Segovia: Diputación de Segovia, 1986; Asenjo, María. "Los encabezamientos de alcabalas en la Castilla bajomedieval. Fuentes de renta y política fiscal", *Fiscalidad de Estado y fiscalidad municipal en los reinos hispánicos medievales*, Denis Menjot, Manuel Sánchez, eds. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2006: 135-170.

52. Thus it was shown at the end of the 15th century in Segovia. See my work: Asenjo, María. *Segovia. La ciudad y su Tierra...*: 422-427. Consultar también la obra de Aurelio Pretel: Pretel, Aurelio. *La "comunidad y república" de Chinchilla (1488-1520). Evolución de un modelo de organización de la oposición popular al poder patricio*. Albacete: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1989; Asenjo, María. "Ambición política y responsabilidad...": 73-106.

53. Aranda, Francisco J. *Poder municipal y cabildo de jurados en Toledo en la Edad Moderna (siglos XV-XVIII)*. Toledo: Ayuntamiento de Toledo, 1992; Montero, Rosa. "La organización del cabildo de jurados de Toledo, 1422-1510". *Espacio, tiempo y forma*, 3/3 (1990): 213-258.

54. Tena, María Soledad. *La sociedad urbana en la Guipúzcoa costera medieval: San Sebastián, Rentería y Fuenterrabía (1200-1500)*. San Sebastian: Fundación Social y Cultural Kutxa, 1997: 346.

comunidad in Segovia demanded presence in the urban government as it requested to establish the figure of the *jurados*, in charge of representing the districts of the city.[55]

This mobilisation would respond to a growing political participation and for this reason the urban communities would have passed from playing a passive and receptive role to demanding action and participation in the governance of the kingdom.[56] It is interesting to note that while the community was involved in tasks of governance, there was a recovery of its political role in the arguments and words of wise enlightened scholars and humanists such as Fernando de Roa, who in his observation on the 'Politics' of Aristotle focussed on the political role that corresponded to 'the middle classes'.[57]

In summary, it is worth noting that the political functioning of the *concejo* and its capacity for internal cohesion were its strong points, and to be able to learn of the strategic points of the political organisation of the cities it is worth learning about its resistance in situations of extreme threats and conflicts. The most frequent ones were those which brought a city up against a rival city or even a noble power[58] which wanted to punish or humiliate a particular *concejo* in a city or town. In that case, the way to proceed was to take away its *fueros*, privileges and flag.[59] The removal of these symbolic references of the *concejos* was of vital importance and represented an unmitigated humiliation.

However, when the punishment came from the king, who penalised an act of treason, these details were not the focal point of the punishment. One such example of this in the case of the Crown of Castile was a harsh punishment meted out by King Henry IV to the town of Sepúlveda when, in 1474, after a first attempted alienation in favour of Juan Pecheco, Marquis of Villena, on 16 January 1472, the town put up opposition and sought the protection of Princess Isabella and her husband, Don Ferdinand, King of Sicily. The prince and princess promised to maintain it in the crown and to not alienate it under any circumstance.[60] The transfer made by Henry IV contravened the pragmatic sanction in its favour given in 1442 by King John II, which promised not to alienate towns under royal jurisdiction for any motive or reason.[61] With the king

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55. Asenjo, María. *Segovia. La ciudad y su tierra*...: 299-308.

56. Fortea, Juan Ignacio. "Los abusos del poder: el común y el gobierno de las ciudades de Castilla tras la rebelión de las Comunidades", *Furor et rabies. Violencia, conflicto y marginación en la Edad Moderna*, Juan Ignacio Fortea, Juan Ignacio Gelabert, Tomás Mantecón, eds. Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2002: 183-218.

57. Castillo, José Luis. *Política y clases medias: El siglo XV y el maestro salmantino Fernando de Roa*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1987.

58. Bonachía, Juan Antonio. *El señorío de Burgos durante la Baja Edad Media*. Burgos: Universidad de Valladolid, 1988: 331; Guerrero, Yolanda. *Organización y gobierno en Burgos durante el reinado de Enrique IV de Castilla. 1453-1476.* Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1986: 66.

59. In 1284, the *concejo* of Alba wanted to humiliate and punish the *concejo* of Santiago de la Pueblo and took its *fueros*, privileges and flag or banner. Shortly afterwards, King Sancho IV ordered they be returned. AHN. Diversos (Colecciones), 284, 4 (1284, November 27th Valladolid).

60. Sáez, Carlos. "Sepúlveda en la segunda mitad del siglo XV". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales,* 9 (1980): 267-328.

61. Sáez, Carlos. "Sepúlveda en la segunda...": 661-667.

being in the proximity of Sepúlveda, he wished to go there personally to deal with the inhabitants and he sent Alfonso González de la Hoz as a messenger, who was detained by force in the outskirts and prevented from entering the town. Neither did they receive the king when he approached the town. Instead the governors informed him that they had gathered and debated the matter in the *regimiento*, agreeing that they would not receive him that day. As such, they requested him to return to Castilnovo, from whence he had departed, and told him they would notify him when he would be allowed to enter. The king responded to him by sending a letter bearing his signature and seal and once more demanding that they receive him as their king and lord within three days. They did not even receive him after the three days had passed. As such, with his 'absolute royal power' he decided to punish Sepúlveda for treason, removing all its franchises, liberties and privileges.[62] In a second letter, he stated that the town would lose its name, its vassals and estates, lands, municipal areas and jurisdiction. He commanded all the lands dependent on the town that they should not obey its orders or letters, nor contribute taxes or give or pay them in coins or in bread. He told them they were no longer to watch or guard the walls and forts of the town because with this letter he removed them and exempted them from its jurisdiction. The situation was critical because the king even transferred this jurisdiction to another town, whose name was left in blank in the document, obliging all the residents of the land to swear obedience to the new unknown lord or town.[63]

The punishment sought out the weak spot of the urban political structure to ensure that an example was made. He did not hesitate to remove the name of the town, as this was one of its key markers of identity. However, depriving it of the obedience of the villages in its lands and the manorial and jurisdictional control of these people was the harshest punishment imaginable. Fortunately, the cohesion of the *concejo* of Sepúlveda reacted to this threat and the links bonding the inhabitants of the town on those of its territory were maintained. Thus, the royal punishment did not endure and there were no divisions or losses of territory as a result of incursions or wrongful appropriations. The force and internal cohesion of the *concejo*, as well as the unity and harmony that remained in the face of attempts to break it up are of great note. Faced with the punishment of this king, this royal town reacted valiantly, refusing to be absorbed into a manorial dominion.

5. Influence of humanistic values and the predominance of an identity of the kingdom

As mentioned, a paradox was present in Castile in the 15th century as there was a strengthening of royal power parallel to an awakening of political consciousness in the

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62. Sáez, Carlos. "Sepúlveda en la segunda...": 670.

63. Bonilla, Adolfo; Fita, Fidel, dirs. *Memorias de don Enrique IV de Castilla*. Madrid: Real Academia Historia, 1835-1913 : 670 (doc. No.192-193).

cities and towns of the kingdom, encouraged by the emergence of the *comunidad* as a new political institution in the daily life of cities and towns. This scenario coincided with the agitation shown by some intellectuals who theorised on the political role of cities and they did this by drawing upon humanistic influences.[64] The effects of these transformations were felt in the proposals submitted in the Cortes of Olmedo in 1445, where the king and the people were presented as forming a complementary, mystical body that was inseparably unified. There were other proposals to recover the feudal-vassalic pact between king and kingdom by which the king could be reminded of his obligations and political commitments with the kingdom, as occurred in the Cortes of Ocaña in 1469, in which the discourse of the *procuradores* ("deputies from the provinces") reminded the king that he acted as a servant of the kingdom.[65] This dialogue with the king that the *procuradores* engaged in, in the Cortes of Ocaña in 1469, was repeated in the Cortes of Valladolid in 1518, in the early stages of the Revolt of the Comuneros.

When assessing the resources of political identity put into play at the end of the 15th century and the start of the following one, it is important to acknowledge that urban political identity was manifested in all its splendour, in particular when it came to rivalries with other cities vying for a preferential position with respect to the king's power.[66] Just as if the cities were individuals, Burgos was ranked above all other cities, receiving the title of *Camara del Rey* ("Royal Chamber").[67] Other cities, such as Toledo, however, which had rivalled with Burgos since the 14th century, recommenced their struggle for supremacy over Granada at the end of the 15th century. The reason for this offence was that the recently conquered city was placed at the front in the royal title, and its symbol, a small pomegranate, was added to the royal coat of arms.[68] Thus, at the end of the 15th century the city of Toledo sent the Catholic Monarchs a letter and the cathedral chapter sent another, both drawn up by an eminent humanist, Canon Alonso Ortiz.[69] The aim of the missive sent by the *concejo* was not to seek open and direct conflict with Granada, but to make known its motives for the unhappiness felt

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64. Monsalvo, José María, coord. *Sociedades urbanas y culturas políticas en la Baja Edad Media castellana*. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2013; Rucquoi, Adeline. "Democratie ou monarchie. Le discours politique dans l'Université castillane...": 254-255.

65. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*. Madrid: Imprenta de la Real Casa, 1866: 139, 767-769; Morán, Remedios. "'Alteza...merçenario soys'. Intentos de ruptura institucional en las Cortes de León y Castilla", *Coups d'État à la fin du Moyen Âge?*, François Foronda, Jean-Philippe Genet, José Manuel Nieto, eds. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2005: 93-114; Nieto, José Manuel. "El 'poderío real absoluto' de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469): La monarquía como conflicto". *En la España Medieval*, 21 (1998): 159-228.

66. Asenjo, Maria. "Fiestas y celebraciones en las ciudades castellanas de la Baja Edad Media". *Edad Media. Revista de historia*, 14 (2013): 35-61; Benito, Eloy. *La prelación ciudadana. Las disputas por la precedencia entre las ciudades de la Corona de Castilla*. Toledo: Centro Universitario de Toledo, 1972.

67. Bonachía, Juan Antonio. "'Mas honrada que ciudad de mis reinos...': La nobleza y el honor en el imaginario urbano (Burgos en la Baja Edad Media)", *La ciudad medieval: aspectos de la vida urbana en la Castilla bajomedieval*, Bonachía Juan Antonio, coord. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1996: 169-212.

68. Asenjo, María. "Arguments politiques et culture urbaine...": 107-130.

69. Bertini, Giovanni Maria. "Alfonso Ortiz". *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, 24/94 (1947): 99-102; Bertini, Giovanni Maria. "Un diálogo humanístico sobre la educación del príncipe don Juan", *Fernando el Católico*

by the city for this affront and the reasons supporting them to make such a claim with the monarchs.[70] Toledo was not asking for favourable treatment from the monarchs; it was appealing for the evaluation of its merits and contributions to the Crown and the kingdom over the centuries. In this way, the royal judgement would have to determine the place of each of the cities.

In the purest scholarly and humanistic style, a rational evaluation of the facts was started, recurring to the historical memory of the glorious and obliging past of Toledo to request the monarchs to be consistent with the political practice applied by their predecessors, the Trastámaras, since the mid-14th century. It is well-known that these monarchs, in particular John II (1419-1454) had opted for an aristocratic model and a courtly profile for the government of the kingdom, for which they had given participation to the royal cities with representation in the Cortes.[71] It was in this circle of proximity to the king, in which *privanza* ("royal favour") was granted, that the nobles moved and where the cities had to find a position in rank and recognition.[72] In this political framework, the arguments suggest the conviction of a just award expected from the king, as lord, and the value of the privileges granted for actions of loyalty, following a feudal model that seemed to be in force for all effects. It represented the set of values and principles that the royal cities had taken on for the purpose of serving the Crown.

The letter made use of metaphorical language that emphasised images, for example it spoke of the city of Toledo as the 'royal seat' from which the kings and their ancestors ruled all the Spains, a large part of France and all of Tingitania in Africa.[73]

Reference was made to the memorable history of the Gothic past of Spain, which had supported the war against Islam and appealed to humanists as it connected with the late Roman imperial period.[74] This recollection of Spain highlighted the supremacy

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y la cultura de su tiempo. Actas del V Congreso de la Corona de Aragón. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1962: 37-62.

70. Copenhagen, Carol. "Las cartas mensajeras de Alfonso Ortiz: ejemplo epistolar de la Edad Media". *Anuario de Filología Española*, 1 (1984): 467-483.

71. Copenhagen, Carol. "Las cartas mensajeras de Alfonso Ortiz...": 479-483.

72. Foronda, François. "La 'privanza' ou le régime de la faveur. Autorité monarchique et puissance aristocratique en Castille, XIIIe-XVe siècle". Paris: Université de la Sorbonne (PhD Dissertation), 2003.

73. *Ni creemos que avrán por molesto vuestras altezas reducirles a la memoria la preminencia, honrra y nobleza desta tan antigua su cibdad, que cuanto más es gloriosa tanto mayor decor añade a los títulos de vuestras coronas. esta es la silla real donde dominaron los reyes vuestros mayores a todas las Españas y grand parte de la Francia con toda la Tyngitana en África* ("We don't believe that your highnesses mind to remember the preeminence, honour and nobility of this so old city, because how major glorious it has, major respect add to the titles of your Crown, which is ruled from the same royal seat where your ancestors the kings ruled the all Spains, and a big part of France and all Tingitania, in Africa"). Copenhagen, Carol. "Las cartas mensajeras de Alfonso Ortiz...": 481.

74. Up until that point, however, only the first steps had been taken towards a model of unity between the Crowns and the Kingdoms. The concept of Spain was also alive and constant in the urban political arguments of Castilian humanists at the end of the 14th century. González, Rafael. "El mito gótico en la historiografía del siglo XV", *Los Visigodos, historia y civilización. Actas de la Semana Internacional de Estudios Visigóticos (Madrid-Toledo-Alcalá de Henares, 21-25 octubre de 1985)*. Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1986:

of the Toledan seat of power, head of divine worship and the churches of Spain, the great holy councils presided over by the Visigoth kings, the royal tombs in the cathedral. It also alluded to another particular feature of the city of Toledo, the fact that it did not have its own arms or coats of arms, instead that it used the arms of the king. This lack of symbols of identity was related with the royalty of the Toledans which strictly protected and safeguarded the king.[75] In recognition of this merit, in the Cortes of Burgos in 1367, King Henry II granted the city the privilege of being able to bear the royal court of arms.[76] As the letter recalled, these flags and standards, symbols of the king and the city, were still in use, celebrating, as is said, the memory of 'your first victory'. This alluded to the end of the civil conflict in 1476, which was a tough pacification challenge for the country and the city of Toledo.[77]

With respect to urban identity and the political force of the arguments, it is worth noting that, over and above the symbols in the honours and privileges that it had accumulated, and which were associated to the exemplary fulfilment of its obligations with the monarchy, were the faith and also the love and loyalty that the city had professed. The city was always convinced that the role of the city of Toledo was the fundamental core of this hierarchical political structure and it maintained the ambition of promotion and the obtaining of merits.

But what is interesting in this letter is the ferocity of Toledo which, aware of the importance of renown and the preservation of historical memory in the construction of urban identity, aimed to reduce Granada to such a low level that its identity should disappear owing to its condition as a defeated and disloyal city. For this reason, it proposed to eliminate its name as a just consequence of the military defeat in the fierce war and to rename it. This was an aspect of interest to the monarchy, since the importance of the city made the victory greater. This was the argument used by the monarchs when Toledo requested the pomegranate be removed from the royal coats of arms.[78] In their reply, the monarchs explained they had placed Granada at the front in the title as a result of the decision taken to incorporate the coat of arms of the kingdom of Granada into the royal coat of arms. This was because it was compulsory that in written documents the titles that were shown in the coats of arms should come before all the other titles of their kingdoms. They explained that the intention had never been to dispute the pre-eminence of the city of Toledo and, as proof of this, they undertook that, from thereon in, Toledo should come before Granada both in meetings of the Cortes, as well as in Institutional meetings of the kingdom and other

289-300; Linehan, Peter. *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993; Maravall, José Antonio. *El concepto de España en la Edad Media*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticas, 1964.

75. *Crónica del Rey don Pedro*, *Crónica de los reyes de Castilla*, ed. Cayetano Rossell. Madrid: Atlas, 1953: LXVI, 419 (year 2, chapter XVI).

76. Benito, Eloy. *La prelación ciudadana…*: 20.

77. López Gómez, Óscar. *Los Reyes Católicos y la pacificación de Toledo*. Madrid: Castellum, 2008.

78. On 20th of March 1492, because this was the date in which the letter was issued in Santa Fe by the Catholic Monarchs in reply to Toledo's requests. AMT. Cajón 1º, no. 24; AMT. Cajón 1º, no. 24, doc. 7, f. 85-87; Izquierdo, Ricardo. *Privilegios reales otorgados a Toledo durante la Edad Media (1101-1494)*. Toledo: Diputación de Toledo, 1990: 291-292 (doc. No. 172).

councils, but not in the title. This is what was decided upon, and they sent a letter to all the authorities and places in the kingdom, from the heir and Prince Juan to the arbiters of the towns and villages, so that they should learn of and abide by it.[79]

Apparently the matter was clarified and Toledo did not obtain the reparation it had hope for to redress this effrontery. Indeed, in the solution the royal attitude and propaganda interests of the military victory of the *toma de Granada* took precedence to immortalise this in history and also in the pomegranates included in the royal coat of arms. There was little room for doubt that the communication policy of the monarchy was headed towards new modes of communication based on propaganda, and that the cities would continue to be necessary for communication with the subjects, although they would not play the same role.

The episode of the letter had served claim to refine all arguments in favour of the political cause of the urban identity of Toledo. Its reasons were entrenched in the defence of its prominence, honour, antiquity and nobility over all cities in Spain and its reasoning can be considered a paradigm of the city's ability to defend its urban political identity against a rival such as the city of Granada, in the same condition and of a lower category for being disloyal, but highly valued as an enemy city by the monarchs.

6. Urban memory and identity

If cities in the late 15th century were disregarded in the development of political identity, given the growing strength of monarchical power, the influence of political humanism opened new opportunities for the recreation of identity. The elaboration of the historical past of cities in local stories became a widespread procedure allowing the recreation of memorable events that distinguished the city and its inhabitants in the exercise of values consistent with the 'common good', virtue and model behaviours of 'civic humanism'.[80] Local history started to be set into print and disseminated; graphical representations of historical episodes of cities were less frequent. For this reason, an image preserved illustrating the founding of the city of Valladolid, during

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79. *mandamos que aunque en el nombramiento de título preceda e se anteponga Granada a la dicha çibdad de Toledo como lo avemos ordenado que agora nin de aquí adelante para siempre en las cortes et juntas et otros ayuntamientos et abtos que se ovieren de faser (...) en que se aya de dar preçedencia entre unos e otros, que aya de preçeder e preçeda la dicha çibdad e reyno d Toledo ante e primeramente que el reino de Granada, asy en los votos como en el lugar e asyento que oviere de tener, como en otra cualquier manera...*("we order that, although the name of Grenada is in our titles before than that of the city of Toledo according our instructions, forever in the Parliaments ['Cortes' and 'Juntas'] and in any meeting and acts and ceremonies that should do, where it must be defined the position of each one, the city and Kingdom of Toledo must take place before than the kingdom of Grenada, in the votes, seats or in any other item..."). Izquierdo, Ricardo. *Privilegios reales otorgados...*: 291-292.

80. Rucquoi, Adeline. "Les villes d'Espagne: de l'histoire...": 145-166.

the reign of Charles V, is a unique example.[81] The episode of the founding of the city shows a group of Christian captives, and a horseman called Olit who has taken them prisoner. In front of the town, across the River Pisuerga, a lion attacks the Moor and kills him, after which the Christians face the lion and kill it. The story goes that in this very spot the new town of Valladolid would be founded, commemorating the name of the Moorish captain (*Valle-olit*> Valladolid).

This representation aimed to transfer the founding of the town to the period of the Reconquest and to recall the fact that the Muslim imprisoned and enslaved Christians. This representation is accompanied by a small footnote telling how the situation came to an end thanks to the appearance of a lion, a mythical creature that lived in a cave and attacked the tyrant. The violent death of the lion at the hands of the Christian captives incorporated the blood ritual that is present in the myths of the founding of the classical cities. This is how the appearance of the city, represented in the picture with its walls and towers, is explained. If it should be noted that this visual story gave the merit of founding the city to the Christians, combining this with myth, history and the blood ritual.

Thus it can be seen that these recreations, somewhere between fable and myth, suggest another approach to identity that, while the history of the kingdom was shared, cities could elaborate their own genealogies to glorify the collective actions of the city and the history of the kingdom.[82] These histories would become an essential element of all urban communities possessing them.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to emphasise that many of the urban identities were built on common challenges and difficulties. The dispersion of political power, encompassing many facets of social relations, made the role of urban identities fundamental, given that politics was also outside the hands of the urban governments, with it being openly manifested to achieve specific objectives. However, identity would end up being established in common politics and in general perception, strengthening internal cohesion. This common identity was represented by the oligarchic government of the city. However, in the late 15th century, the appearance of the 'community' of inhabitants brought about a new element of integration, with political ambitions in urban spheres.

The representations and symbols serving these urban identities were more problematic. Monarchical power seemed to almost wholly occupy the sovereign identity and the cities only brought before the king rivalries among themselves.

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81. Asenjo, María. "Mémoire historique de l'origine de la ville et sa représentation. Le cas de Valladolid, une ville médiévale", *Ad urbe condita. Fonder et refonder la ville: récits et répresentations (seconde moitié du Moye Âge- premier XVIᵉ siècle). Actes du Colloque (Pau, 14-15 mai 2009)*, Véronique Lamazou, ed. Pau: Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, 2011: 90-103.

82. Rucquoi, Adeline. "Les villes d'Espagne : de l'histoire...": 165-166.

These identity models of the cities of Castile did therefore not reach full political singularity, if so they would have been included in the identity of the kingdom, through the figure of the king who continued to be their nexus. In view of the lack of full political development of urban sovereignty, in which political identity could play a role, the options of the urban society were linked to the figure of the 'subject', as a model of governed citizen, with responsibilities to the king and the kingdom. And there is no evidence of exclusive claims of urban identity. The contemporary vision of full identities, in line with the models of nationalism that emerged within the framework of the bourgeois revolutions, does not therefore correspond with the forms of identity seen in the cities in the late 15th century. This lack of sovereign urban identity leads to the supposition that the ambitions were absorbed in the feelings of identity with the community of the kingdom. This was a political terrain in which, in the centuries to come, the monarchy would reserve an unquestionable leading role for the cities.