

THE MONARCHY AND RURAL COMMUNITIES IN CASTILE: POLITICAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ROYAL POWERS AND NON-PRIVILEGED GROUPS IN AVILA'S COUNCIL (1475-1500)

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ABSTRACT

We analyze in this article the relations of the monarchy of Isabella I with the villages and with *la Tierra* of Ávila in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, observing what kind of political flows, and on what issues, were established between the royal power and no-privileged groups. These groups show that they were capable of doing politics despite not being part of the urban government institutions¹.

KEYWORDS

Castile, Monarchy, Medieval Urban Policies, No-privileged Groups, Rural Political Communities.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Castella, Monarchia, Leges civiles mediaevales, Universitates hominum sine privilegiis, Communitates politicae rurales.

In medieval Castile, political communication took many different forms. In this paper, we focus specifically on channels of political communication between the king and the kingdom in the context of major *realengo* councils (under royal jurisdiction), and the decision-making processes that resulted from them. Ávila was one of these councils, and the written records for the period 1475-1500 provide ample evidence for addressing the issue at hand. We must begin by briefly referencing the sources. The archival documents that convey the nature of the relationship between Ávila's council and the Crown, including "municipal" documents from Ávila and its *Tierra* (rural areas included in Avila's municipality) have been edited recently. These records comprise documents held by the Municipal Archive and several local archives in what would have been, during the Middle Ages, hamlets within Ávila's municipality.² Also included are the records of the *Asocio*, an old medieval institution that compiled privileges and lawsuits concerning the *Comunidad de Ávila e su Tierra*³, and records held in the Registro General del Sello —section del Archivo General de Simancas— that refer to Ávila's council and its *Tierra*⁴ The records that refer to Ávila

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2. *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila, I (1256-1474)*, eds. Ángel Barrios, Blas Casado, Carmelo Luis López, Gregorio Del Ser. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1988; *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila, II (1436-1477)*, ed. Tomás Sobrino. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1999; *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila, III (1478-1487)*, ed. Carmelo Luis López. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1999; *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila, IV (1488-1494)*, ed. Blas Casado Quintanilla. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1999; *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila, V (1495-1497)*, ed. Gregorio Del Ser Quijano. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1999; *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila, VI (1498-1500)*, ed. José Miguel López Villalba. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1999; *Ordenanzas medievales de Ávila y su Tierra*, ed. José María Monsalvo Antón. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1990; *Documentación medieval en Archivos Municipales Abulenses (Aldeavieja, Avellaneda, Bonilla de la Sierra, Burgohondo, Hoyos del Espino, Madrigal de las Altas Torres, Navarredonda de Gredos, Riofrío, Santa Cruz de Pinares y El Tiemblo)*, ed. Gregorio Del Ser. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1998. Other local archives were also browsed, but no reference is made to these in the article.

3. *Documentación medieval del Asocio de la Extinguida Universidad y Tierra de Ávila*, eds. Carmelo Luis López, Gregorio Del Ser. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1990 (2 vols).

4. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello, vol. I (30-X-1467 a 18-IX-1479)*, ed. José Luis Martín Rodríguez. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1995; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello, vol. II (20-IX-1479 a 14-XII-1480)*, ed. Carmelo Luis López. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1993; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello, vol. III (15-XII-1480 a 15-VIII-1485)*, ed. Tomás Sobrino Chomón. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1993; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello, vol. IV (31-VIII-1485 a 3-V-1488)*, ed. Gregorio del Ser Quijano. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1995; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello, vol. V (28-V-1488 a 17-XII-1489)*, ed. Blas Casado Quintanilla. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1993; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello, vol. VI (31-I-1490 a 20-XII-1491)*, ed.



and its *Tierra* in the Real Chancillería de Valladolid's Registro de Ejecutorias, have also been examined⁵.

It is worth stressing that, like other monarchies, the late medieval Castilian Crown ruled through a complex and fluid system of communication between the king and urban political institutions, and this was a two-way system, with "inputs" running in both directions. Royal power, the maximum expression of sovereignty, was a complex mechanism, the practice of which, beyond theoretical musings about the nature of royal power, was not sustained by the monarchs' discretion but by a combination of royal authority and political and judicial decisions emanating from such institutions as the *alcaldes de corte* -or *alcaldes de casa y corte*- (royal court judges), the *Consejo Real* (Council of the king and also high court) and the *Audiencia Real* (high court). Although the numerous letters addressed to the local councils were signed by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, or both of them jointly, these letters were the result of a process in which these institutions had played a central role.⁶ These institutions examined lawsuits in which councils were involved, and their rulings

José Antonio Canales Sánchez. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. VII (4-I-1492 a 24-XII-1492), ed. José Luis Martín Rodríguez. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. VIII (5-I-1493 a 28-VII-1493), ed. Carmelo Luis López. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1995; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. IX (30-VII-1493 a 17-IV-1494), ed. Carmelo Luis López. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. X (18-IV-1494 a 20-XII-1494), ed. José María Herráez Hernández. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. XI (3-I-1495 a 13-XII-1495), ed. Juan Hernández Pierna. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1995; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. XII (8-I-1496 a 16-I-1497), ed. Tomás Sobrino Chomón. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. XIII (18-I-1497 a 22-XII-1497), ed. Dolores Cabañas González. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. XIV (2-I-1498 a 21-XII-1498), ed. José María Monsalvo Antón. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1995; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. XV (18-I-1499 a 24-XII-1499), ed. Juan Jacinto García Pérez. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1996; *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello*, vol. XVI (4-I-1500 a 23-XII-1500), ed. Juan Jacinto García Pérez. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 1998.

5. Four volumes had been published by 2013, including documents dated up to August 1491: *Documentación medieval abulense en la Real Chancillería de Valladolid: Registro de Ejecutorias. Vol. I (1477-1487)*, ed. Carmelo Luis López. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 2013; *Documentación medieval abulense en la Real Chancillería de Valladolid: Registro de Ejecutorias. Vol. II (1487-1488)*, ed. José Manuel Ruiz Asencio. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 2013; *Documentación medieval abulense en la Real Chancillería de Valladolid: Registro de Ejecutorias. Vol. III (1489-1490)*, ed. Manuel Fernando Ladero Quesada. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 2013; *Documentación medieval abulense en la Real Chancillería de Valladolid: Registro de Ejecutorias. Vol. IV (1490-1491)*, ed. Irene Ruiz Albi. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba- Diputación Provincial, 2013. I have also examined unpublished records from the Archivo de la Chancillería dated up to 1500, but these documents do not concern the issues discussed in this paper.

6. For these institutions and their operation, especially in the judicial sphere, see, among others: De Dios, Salustiano. *El Consejo Real de Castilla (1385-1522)*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1982; Garriga Acosta, Carlos. *La Audiencia y las Chancillerías castellanas (1371-1525)*. *Historia política, régimen jurídico y práctica institucional*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1994.



were formalised by the monarchs, whose role was generally to channel or sign the documents sent to the cities but rarely to make personal decisions. Communication “upwards” —that is, from the councils to the Crown— was organised according to municipal institutional structures in which each official —*corregidor* (maximum keeper and judicial authority), *alcaldes* (municipal judges), *regidores* (aldermen), representative officials and lesser or technical officials— had their own prerogatives and duties.

However, as I have pointed out elsewhere, decision-making processes, both in internal matters and with regard to communication with the Crown, did not strictly adhere to formal prerogatives and the municipal structure, since these processes were a good deal more complex. The council system left room for political leverage to be applied outside government institutions, and this is precisely the issue that I wish to address. Specifically, *pecheros* (non-privileged state), despite having no formal political power, could bypass the boundaries set by the institutional framework and, especially, the pressure posed, both from within and outside the institutions, by the oligarchy. We must bear in mind that the oligarchy controlled both urban society and urban government institutions, specifically the *Regimiento* (urban government council); and, if non-privileged groups were able to throw their weight into the political arena, it was because they had communication channels with power sub-systems that transcended the local institutional framework —in this case the Crown and its government apparatus.

I have tried to establish the nature, range and degrees of success of these forms of communication in Ávila. In this regard, I have examined interactions between three actors: the royal power and its central government institutions; the local oligarchy that controlled the *Regimiento*; and the *pechero* state, in this case the *pecheros* of the *Tierra*, which comprised most of the population of the *Tierra* and was its only political actor. I have also analysed contradictions in the operation of Ávila’s council —specifically the *Regimiento*— as an autonomous institution: on the one hand, the *Regimiento* defended the interests of the most important knights who controlled its decisions, but on the other hand the institution also stood for principles of legality and justice that could undermine the selfish wishes of its leading members. The cracks created by these contradictory principles within the council and the ease of communication with the royal power were taken advantage of by the *pueblos* of Ávila: that is, the *Comunidad de pecheros de Ávila y su Tierra*.

Let us look in detail at the claims of the non-privileged group, the *pecheros*. In Ávila, as well as in every city or group of cities with a similar institutional makeup, the *Común* of *pecheros*, specifically the *Tierra*, acted through particular institutions, the organisation of which was grounded in the nature of local representative institutions, areas and populations. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine these factors in detail, but they have received considerable scholarly attention. There was, therefore, a wide variety of institutional arrangements in place for the representation of the *Común* and the *pecheros* in urban and rural settings, or



in both of them jointly.⁷ One outstanding feature of councils in the south Douro region—as has been demonstrated for Salamanca, Ávila, Ciudad Rodrigo, Soria and Segovia—was the enormous size of the Tierra. Even in the Late Middle Ages, these local councils could easily control thousands of square kilometres of land, comprising from 200 up to 400 rural settlements—hamlet councils—each. These gave rural *pecheros*, which represented thousands or tens of thousands of peasant households—which were strongly aware of their role as taxpayers—considerable leverage.⁸ In contrast, the oligarchy of knights in each city could be counted in the tens or, at the most, in the low hundreds if we include all exempt persons: that is, individuals residing in the council's capital who enjoyed the exemption—and the prerogative to extend it to their servants—and membership of the social elite, which comprised a wide spectrum of social strata. During the 15th century, Ávila's council controlled

7. See: Monsalvo Antón, José María. "La participación política de los pecheros en los municipios castellanos de la Baja Edad Media. Aspectos organizativos". *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 7 (1989): 37-93; Del Val Valdivieso, María Isabel. "Oligarquía versus común (Consecuencias sociopolíticas del triunfo del regimiento en las ciudades castellanas)". *Medievalismo*, 4/4 (1994): 41-58; Oliva Herrero, Hipólito Rafael. "¿Qué es la comunidad? Reflexiones acerca de un concepto político y sus implicaciones en Castilla a fines de la Edad Media". *Medievalismo*, 24 (2014): 281-306. See also various works compiled by Solórzano, Jesús Ángel; Arízaga, Beatriz; Haemers, Jelle, eds. *Los grupos populares en la ciudad medieval europea*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2014; and Hipólito Rafael Oliva, Hipólito; Challet, Vicent; Dumolyn, Jan; Carmona, María Antonia, eds. *La comunidad medieval como esfera pública*. Seville: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2014. For the organisation of the *Común* in other regions, see: Jara Fuente, José Antonio. "Posiciones de clase y sistemas de poder: vinculaciones y contradicciones en la construcción del 'común de pecheros' en la Baja Edad Media", *Los espacios de poder en la España medieval. XII Semana de Estudios Medievales (Actas Congreso de Nájera, 2001)*, José Ignacio de la Iglesia, ed. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2002: 511-532; Jara Fuente, José Antonio. "'Que memoria de onbre non es en contrario'. Usurpación de tierras y manipulación del pasado en la Castilla urbana del siglo XV". *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 20-21 (2002-2003): 73-104; Jara Fuente, José Antonio. "Doble representación y cruce de intereses: las contradicciones inherentes al segmento 'élite pechera' (Castilla en el siglo XV)". *Annexes des Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales*, 16 (2004): 297-312; López Gómez, Óscar. "Representación política y rebelión urbana a fines del Medievo. Las asambleas del Común toledano (1478-1522)", *Anuarios de Estudios Medievales*, 2/42 (2012): 727-753; Sánchez León, Pablo. *Absolutismo y Comunidad. Los orígenes sociales de la guerra de los comuneros de Castilla*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1998; Solórzano, Jesús Ángel, "'Commo uno más del pueblo': acción colectiva y ambiciones políticas del Común en las villas portuarias de Cantabria en la Baja Edad Media". *Edad Media. Revista de Historia*, 14 (2013): 239-257; García Fernández, Ernesto. "Teoría y praxis política en el País Vasco a fines de la Edad Media. Los gobiernos urbanos y los vecinos de la Tierra", *Sociedades urbanas y culturas políticas en la Baja Edad Media castellana*, José María Monsalvo Antón, ed. Salamanca: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Salamanca, 2013: 71-122.

8. Asenjo González, María. *Segovia. La ciudad y su Tierra a fines del Medievo*. Segovia: Diputación Provincial de Segovia, 1986; Asenjo González, María. "El pueblo urbano: el 'común'". *Medievalismo*, 13-14 (2004): 181-194; Asenjo González, María. "Ambición política y discurso. El 'común' en Segovia y Valladolid (1480-1520)", *La comunidad medieval como esfera pública*, Hipólito Rafael Oliva, Vicent Challet, Jan Dumolyn, María Antonia Carmona, eds. Seville: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2014: 73-106; Diago Hernando, Máximo. "El 'común de pecheros' de Soria en el siglo XV y primera mitad del siglo XVI". *Hispania*, 50/1 (1990): 39-91; Diago Hernando, Máximo. "Una institución de representación política del campesinado en la Castilla bajomedieval. Las universidades de la Tierra". *Historica. Instituciones. Documentos*, 23 (1996): 85-129. For the communal component in Castile-León local powers in the Middle Ages, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María, "'Ayuntados a concejo'. Acerca del componente comunitario en los poderes locales castellano-leoneses durante la Edad Media", *El poder a l'Edat Mitjana*, Flocel Sabaté, ed. Lleida: Pagès Editors, 2004: 209-291.



a wide *Tierra* of 5,000 km² with more than 200 hamlet councils, many of which also included minor separate settlements called *adegañas*. This *Tierra* was populated by a minimum of 10,000 *pecheros* and their households. The urban *Común* was also organised, but since most of the population lived in the countryside —between 2/3 and 4/5 of the total in the *Comunidad de ciudad y Tierra*— the organisation of rural *pecheros* was much more relevant. The *Tierra* was an active political actor, embodied by *sexmeros* (representatives of the districts of the *Tierra*), commoners' *procuradores* (general representatives of the town and the *Tierra*) and assemblies. The power and prerogatives of the representatives of the *pecheros* were severely limited. They could attend meetings, voice their complaints and present proposals, and this was the result of a long struggle, but their voice could be dismissed in decision-making processes in the *Regimiento*. The day-to-day government was in the hand of *regidores*, life posts that fell to members of the oligarchy; in Ávila's case, there were 12 or 14 of these. In addition, there were technical offices, in charge of specific matters —*fieles* (supervisors in the public market), *mayordomos* (receivers)— whereas the administration of justice and public order was the responsibility of the *corregimiento*. In *realengo* cities, the *corregidor* was always appointed by the Crown and was, in principle, independent from local powers. As such, the holder of the role could be regarded as an official serving the royal authority. The figure below illustrates how power was distributed. In this figure, I have highlighted officials who represented, socially and politically, the states of both the city and the *Tierra*: knights and *pecheros*, the latter urban or rural, organically differentiated from each other. In Ávila, the weight of the *Tierra*, expressed through the powerful assemblies and the head *procurador* of *pecheros*, was much greater than that of urban *pecheros*, which, in contrast, had their own specific representative.

Regidores made executive decisions and had the power to veto any proposal coming from the representatives of *pecheros*, who strove hard to change this state of affairs. A good deal of the political life of the council revolved around the confrontations between *pecheros* and *regidores*. In addition, each village council had its own mayors and could chose *ad hoc* representatives. However, these rural deputies had little power to influence the urban government. The most significant agent of political action was the general organisation of the *pecheros* of the *Tierra*, embodied by the *juntas* of *pecheros* (assemblies) and the representative officials, who were chosen annually by these *juntas*. In Ávila, these representatives were the seven *procuradores de los sexmos*, one for each *sexmo* —Santo Tomé, San Juan, Covaleda, San Vicente, San Pedro, Serrezuela and Santiago, the latter an enormous *sexmo* that stretched from the Adaja River to the northern slopes of the central Gredos mountains— and especially the head *procuradores* of *pecheros* or head *procuradores de los pueblos de Ávila*, of whom there was at least one but this number could be higher. The work of the *procurador general* could thus have the support of other officials, called *procuradores*, who were chosen in the assemblies or general *juntas*. They must not be confused with the representatives of the seven *sexmos* or *procuradores de los sexmos*, also known in other councils as *sexmeros*. The *sexmero* defended the specific interests of its *sexmo* and participated in its day-to-day fiscal and administrative management. Although



This institutional structure was only a part of the political process. The main argument of the present work is that *procuradores* and *sexmeros*, who enjoyed the support and legitimacy of the assemblies which chose or ratified them —*juntas* or *ayuntamientos* of *pecheros*— could often bypass the total veto which they faced in the *Regimiento*: that is, in their bilateral dialogue with *regidores*. In order to do this, they played a three-sided game using the peculiarities of the council system.¹⁰ This allowed them to project their political inputs outside the boundaries of the institutional framework of the *Regimiento*. The key to understanding these political fluxes is seeing the council and its environment as a “political system” subject to external inputs, which were then transformed within it and projected outside in a feedback loop. I have proposed that systems-thinking is a valuable approach for overcoming traditional epistemologies, which see the council’s society and institutions as so many closed compartments: the king, the *regidores*, landowners, noble families and peasants. The errors derived from using the conventional approach to councils—which are still being committed today— include the erroneous suggestion that *pecheros* were devoid of all political power. This is grounded in the fact that they did not rule: that is, that they had no government authority, which fell entirely to *regidores*, whereas all judicial authority belonged to *corregidores* and *alcaldes*. In my opinion, this is a grave mistake. Not ruling does not mean not taking part in decision-making. Another common prejudice is to focus on external appearances: for instance, the fact that *regidores* were always appointed by the king, instead of looking at the social and organisational support of political agents. An oligarch was not in the same position as a royal official, who had no roots in the city and who was being rewarded with the appointment, even if their letters of appointment were identical. The examples in which appearances blur the realities of political authority abound.¹¹

Pecheros could reach out to central government institutions —the monarchs, court tribunals, Consejo Real, Audiencia Real— to find support for their petitions or to bring matters before the kingdom’s court of justice. The monarchs and their institutions would then send royal letters to the council justice system —the *corregidor*—, the *Regimiento* or the “council of Ávila” more generally. These letters could take two forms: they might contain either a court ruling concerning a *pechero* demand or a royal decision concerning a petition. Either way, the *regidores* were no longer confronted by a direct demand from the *pecheros* —which they could reject—

Edad Media (Siglos XIV y XV), Gregorio Del Ser Quijano, ed. Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alba, 2006: 70-172 (especially 140-166. Illustration in p. 157).

10. In a work published in 2003, and using the systems methodology, we were able to scientifically demonstrate for Ávila —for Alba de Tormes we had demonstrated this sixteen years before— that the non-privileged were influential in decision-making from positions outside the municipal government. See: Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Gobierno municipal, poderes urbanos y toma de decisiones en los concejos castellanos bajomedievales (consideraciones a partir de concejos salmantinos y abulenses)”, *Las sociedades urbanas en la España medieval. Actas de la XXIX Semana de Estudios Medievales. Estella (15 al 19 de julio de 2002)*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2003: 409-488.

11. For the advantages of systems-thinking, that we proposed, over the conventional approach to the study of councils, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Gobierno municipal, poderes urbanos” ...: 451-454.



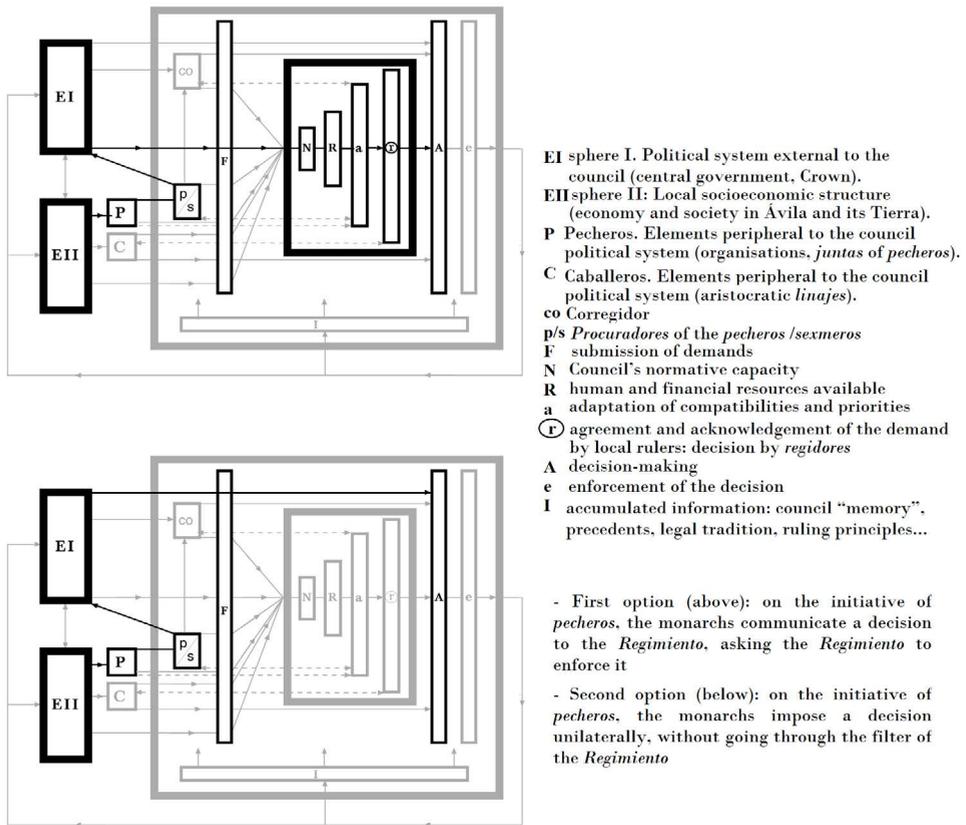


ILLUSTRATION 2. DECISION-MAKING FLOW. ILLUSTRATION PROVIDED BY THE AUTHOR.

but from the Crown. The second modality involved a royal decision, unilateral and unimpeachable, which did not even go through the council government apparatus: it was read and executed to the letter. It is difficult to do justice to the great complexity of this issue,¹² which is not included in the final table of subjects¹³, but is included in the figures of the diagrams, which try to reflect the distinction between different patterns of participation —unilateral decisions, negotiation— of *pecheros*

12. Illustration 2 shows these flows, but it is impossible to reflect all factors involved in decision-making processes. For more details, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. "Gobierno municipal, poderes urbanos"...; Monsalvo Antón, José María. "Percepciones de los *pecheros* medievales sobre usurpaciones de términos rurales y aprovechamientos comunitarios en los concejos salmantinos y abulenses". *Edad Media. Revista de Historia*, 7 (2005-2006): 37-74. The figure reflects both modalities: unilateral royal orders, and negotiation with the *Regimiento*. The role of the *corregidor*, halfway between the Crown and the *regidores*, is not expressed to avoid further complication (See note 15).

13. See Table 1 at the end of the article for the issues claimed by the *pecheros*.



of the *Tierra*. In essence, this allowed them, as we have said on some occasions, to «play politics without being in the government». This was a determined hypothesis that we proposed already in the eighties and that we have been corroborating in various works on councils in the region.

However, establishing the *Pecheros* of the *Tierra* → Central power → Council of Ávila, and thus integrating the local and general political frameworks in the analysis is not enough to determine the scope and efficacy of the system. Was this merely a cosmetic mechanism or was it a relevant political factor? The final table tries to evaluate the actual measure of these flows both quantitatively and qualitatively.

I have taken into consideration all relevant documents for the last quarter of the 15th century. The different issues raised have been analysed separately. To begin, it is apparent that the *pecheros* did not hold back when it came to reaching out to the court, the Consejo Real or the Audiencia Real, to demand a royal letter of support. No fewer than 121 of the 1,499 documents that make up the total corpus of documents from the period 1475-1500 that affected the council of Ávila and its Land, that is 8% of the total, concern issues in which the Crown supported the *pecheros* or in which their demands were backed by the central institutions. It needs to be taken into account that the records largely constitute royal letters -nearly 80% of the documentary corpus,¹⁴ which are, therefore, an ideal sample for assessing communication between the Crown and the council. Petitions include demands posed by specific village councils and general petitions by the *Tierra* as a whole. At any rate, the responses include the two above-noted modalities —royal orders and requests— with the *Regimiento* having some leeway for manoeuvre in the latter case. Concerning agents other than the *regidores*, the monarchs could request the intervention of the *corregidor* or simply act through the central courts of justice or address the council directly. The *corregidor* was usually entrusted with enforcing royal decisions, but its participation in the process was not essential, as has been argued elsewhere.¹⁵

14. Miscellaneous documents are considered part of a single file for analysis, following the criteria established by the editors of the sources, regardless of their extension, for example, long passages in council acts, municipal ordinances, judicial investigations. When identical documents are found in more than one archive —duplicates of records found in the municipal archive are also found in the Archivo del Asocio or the Registro General del Sello (RGS)— they have been counted only once. More details about the documentary corpus in the work are cited in notes 2-5.

15. On the channels through which letters and orders reached the council of Ávila and in which way they affected the *corregidor*, see our research: Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Poder regio y corregidores: justicia centralizada y toma de decisiones en el concejo de Ávila (1475-1500)”. *Hispania*, 268/81 (2021): 365-395. This work examines the same documentary corpus used here and clarifies some of the parameters used for the calculations. For instance, council act passages —three, dating to the final years of the century, have survived— are counted as a single document, again following the editors’ criteria. At any rate, these municipal acts generally concern everyday issues and do not include royal letters, which are generally found separately and have been counted as such. Therefore, the municipal acts bring little distortion to the quantitative analysis of the relationship between the council and the Crown. However, although they comprise various characteristic types of documents -allegations, recusal of witnesses, investigations, powers of attorney, rulings and final judgements, judicial records- are regarded as a single analytical unit, following the editors’ criteria (see notes 2 to 5), that is, extracting and singling out as documentary units congruent parts of the documents according to the dates of elaboration. And above all in relation to the



The number of *pechero* demands that enjoyed the support of the monarchs is not negligible and demonstrates that a channel of communication was kept open between the royal power and rural *pecheros*. Furthermore, it should be taken into consideration that these records present only some of the issues that concerned *pecheros*. The 8% noted above is thus a minimum estimate because royal letters and actions by the *corregidor* have been counted only when they involved direct demands by the *pecheros*, or when solid evidence exists that they were behind the decision.

On the other hand, not all the activity of the representatives of *pecheros* is included in the table. Far from it. It has been noted that only royal letters which are known to have been triggered by *pecheros'* demands have been counted. Moreover, documents other than royal letters that reflect the activity of commoners, particularly the head *procurador* of the *Tierra*, in his local interactions with *regidores*, have not been counted. Interactions dealing with administrative issues or with matters that did not specifically concern his position as representative of the state were frequent, as well as issues that were discussed by all social actors or by the council as a unitary institution. The representatives of *pecheros* often sat on mixed committees with members of the *Regimiento* and knights to adopt decisions that affected them all, regardless of their status.¹⁶ Not all decisions adopted by the council, therefore, were

royal letters, which are the crucial documents for the analysis. As such, extensive lawsuits comprising a variety of types of documents do not alter the calculations; if they led to royal letters—such as executive letters, requisition letters and compulsory letters—, they have been considered such a single unit, even when duplicates are found, for instance in the Registro General del Sello.

16. For instance, fiscal matters which affected not only the *pecheros* but also other social groups: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 127-135 (docs. no. 163 and 164. July 1475), the loan requested for the war against Portugal is rejected. In other instances, the *procurador pechero* is found alongside members of other states or the *Regimiento* in public events in which rulings concerning land boundaries were enforced—often the execution of these rulings was overseen by the *procurador* and two knights-*regidores*—to ensure that the law was upheld, to defend the commonwealth of council over private interests or to endorse or enforce decisions concerning the exploitation of public land: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 227-230 (doc. no. 199. 16 September 1476); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 230-235 (doc. no. 200. 17 September 1476 and 18 September 1476); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 253-256 (doc. no. 209. 20 December 1476); and *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 524-527 (doc. no. 141. 20 December 1476); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 266-267 (doc. no. 216. 2 February 1477); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: I, 123-126 (doc. no. 51. 20 February 1477); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 267-273 (doc. no. 217. February/March 1477); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 288-290 (doc. no. 223. 4 May 1477); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 72-81 (doc. no. 256. From 12 October to 11 November 1479); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 87-91 (doc. no. 259. 27 November 1479); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 541-542 (doc. no. 144); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 312-316 (doc. no. 320. 3 July 1486); and *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 301-304 (doc. no. 317. 3 July 1486); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: IV, 161-168 (doc. no. 376. 17 August 1490); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: IV, 193-226 (doc. no. 387. 17 December 1491); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 781-816 (doc. no. 192). A similar procedure was followed with decisions concerning the Mesta, which affected all members of Ávila's society: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XV, 125-127 (doc. no. 64. August 1499). All these instances are excluded from the table.



biased towards the interests of a particular class.¹⁷ It must be stressed that the local actions of *pecheros* is not considered here, only those that crystallised through the support of the Crown and its agents, as expressed in royal letters and the intervention of royal officials. This is important because that local activity not reflected in the table comprises other processes and models of decision-making in which *pecheros* demonstrated their political agency in their dialogue with *regidores* and other social states, sometimes successfully.¹⁸ This activity was of great importance and in some issues, for instance lawsuits concerning land boundaries, it could well be regarded as strategic. Some of these lawsuits were eventually solved by central courts, but the preliminary work, reports, allegations, etc. were undertaken at the council level, with the *procuradores* of the *Tierra* playing a very significant role.¹⁹ Finally, the reckoning also excludes the successes achieved by urban *pecheros* or by very specific sections of the state.²⁰ The table, therefore, includes only the successes achieved

17. This is clearly illustrated by measures adopted by the *Regimiento* to reclaim usurped land or to draw land boundaries (see note 16), which apparently ran contrary to the interests of knights-*regidores* by curbing privately motivated land enclosures. As noted above, the council was torn by contradictory political principles -private oligarchic interests against such principles as the common good, the law and justice-, and this led to measures that can be seen to contradict class interest; sometimes, *pecheros* are found shoulder to shoulder with *regidores*, who were themselves land grabbers but, on the otherhand, united legal guarantors in the fight against land usurpations. See: Monsalvo Antón, José María. "Usurpaciones de comunales: conflicto social y disputa legal en Ávila y su Tierra durante la Baja Edad Media". *Historia Agraria*, 24 (2001): 89-122, especially 114-116.

18. For instance, the representatives of *pecheros* were effectively heard during the drafting of the municipal ordinances, a very significant political document. Ordinances existed from the 14th century onwards, but in 1485 the council decided to compile and unify the norms. The final document was passed in 1487: *Ordenanzas medievales de Ávila...*: 68-70 (doc. no. 16. 8 October 1495); *Ordenanzas medievales de Ávila...*: 70-74 (doc. no. 17. From 10 to 13 February 1487). We know that these ordinances were drafted with the participation of all political agents in Ávila and its *Tierra*. In fact, the record includes explicit references to a *negoçiaçión* in which all states were involved: *Fue acordado por el concejo, justicia, regidores, cavalleros e escuderos de la dicha çibdad de Ávylla e por los procuradores de la tierra e seismos della e por los venerables deán e cabillo de la iglesia mayor de sant salvador desta dicha çibdat, por todo el clero de la dicha çibdat e su tierra, en quien se representaron todos los estados e concurrieron en la presente negoçiaçión de fazer e que se fiziesen leyes e hordenanças en el dicho concejo de la dicha çibdad* ("The council, justices, regidores, knights and squires of Ávylla, and the procuradores of the tierra and seismos, and by the venerable deacons of the cathedral of sant salvador, representing all the clergy of the city and tierra, with the participation of all states, to negotiate laws and ordinances to rule the council's actions"). *Ordenanzas medievales de Ávila...*: 70-74 (docs. no. 18 and 19).

19. One of these *procuradores*, Alfonso Sánchez del Tiemblo, was particularly active. In a work published in 2005, we were interested in the activity of this representative in the important cycle of usurpation lawsuits in 1414-1415: Monsalvo Antón, José María. "Percepciones de los *pecheros*"...: 52. For the activity of *procuradores* of the *Tierra* —especially Juan González de Pajares— in this regard during the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. *Comunalismo concejil abulense. Paisajes agrarios, conflictos y percepciones del espacio rural en la Tierra de Ávila y otros concejos medievales*. Ávila: Diputación Provincial, 2010.

20. It is worth mentioning that only one of the demands posed by *pecheros* -it is excluded from the table, as it does not concern a village council or the state at large- is specific to one group within the state, poor *pecheros*, *de los omes buenos pobres e biudas e huérfanos* ("poor men, widows and orphans"). This group asked the monarchs to raise the *cáñama mayor*, or tax threshold below which tax was proportional to wealth, from 10,000 to 20,000 *maravedíes*: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 322-323 (doc. no. 323. 28 January 1487); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 324-325 (doc. no. 324. 10



by the councils of the *Tierra* and by the state as a whole. These were much more numerous than those achieved by the urban *pecheros*,²¹ which are not included in the table.

All these instances and situations that are not included in the table only highlight even more the importance of those that are: issues raised by the *pecheros* of the *Tierra*—as a group or by specific councils—to defend their specific interests that ended in success: that is, genuine political claims of the state and successes achieved through communication between rural *pecheros* and the Crown.

And what were these successes? A detailed account is beyond the scope of this paper, which aims to establish the means and scope of political communication between the Crown and rural *pecheros*. A comprehensive analysis of the matter requires presenting a detailed description of the context and the full historical-structural examination of Ávila's system as a whole, as well as providing an in-depth characterisation of local circumstances and personalities. Each specific instance exhibits a complex casuistry and can only be fully understood from a "micro" perspective. We can, however, analyse the issue in general terms, and determine what matters were raised, how decisions were made and how efficient the political communication channels used were.

Some of the royal letters confirmed the right of *pechero* representatives to attend the council meetings. Periodically reinforcing the participative prerogatives of non-privileged groups was an important political statement. *Pecheros* had earned the right to attend some council meetings, but the obstacles posed by the *regidores* in this regard led them to appeal to the monarchs, who decided in their favour. For instance, they compelled the *corregidor* to investigate whether the *procurador* of *pecheros* was being barred from attending council meetings.²² The monarchs also supported the institutionalisation of assemblies. In this context of hurdles being presented by the *Regimiento*, in 1477 the monarchs established that the *pueblos de la Tierra* were entitled

February 1487). For vertical divisions -poor/rich- within the *pechero* state, which was not exclusive to Ávila, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. "El realengo y sus estructuras de poder"....: 166.

21. It is, however, worth mentioning that urban *pecheros* also reached out to the monarchs to have their demands heard. The *pecheros* of the urban *Común*, for instance, met some success in their fight against the false *hidalguías* and exemptions that some urban dwellers claimed for themselves, to the detriment of urban *pecheros*: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 111-112 (doc. no. 61. Septemner 1494); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 124-125 (doc. no. 70. 3 October 1494); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 164-165 (doc. no. 95. 25 November 1494), when the monarchs heard the claim of the "urban community" against fraudulent claims. Similarly, the monarchs heard complaints against *pecheros* who tried to pass as knights, alleging that they had a horse and arms, in order to be exempted from contributing to the *Hermandad* (institution that enforced public order in Castile). The monarchs respected the rights of *cavalleros castellanos*: that is, knights who were not of noble stock -*de linaje*- but were exempt in the city by virtue of the traditional privileges granted by Alphonse X: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: V, 50-52 (doc. no. 436. 2 February 1495). For the difference between *caballeros castellanos* (knights with belated legal privileges) and the old knighthood of *serranos* (knights *de linaje*, of noble stock), see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. "El realengo y sus estructuras de poder"....: 111-114.

22. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XIII, 35-36 (doc. no. 14).



to three annual *juntas* to deal with *pechos* (taxes) and fiscal policy,²³ a measure that garnered widespread support among non-privileged groups. In 1494, they also allowed *pecheros* to have one or more *letrados* (attorneys) to advise them.²⁴

Pecheros, on the other hand, tried to control some clerkships and not depend on the city's or the council's clerks. They wanted to possess the documents—including favourable court rulings—that were in their favour and to avoid abusive copying and management fees. The monarchs not only granted some villages and the *Tierra* as a whole the right to employ their own clerks²⁵ but also, and perhaps more relevantly, recognised their right to access whatever records they requested²⁶ and to have their own institution in which to keep them. This led to the creation of a sort of Crown-endorsed "general archive of the *Tierra*"—so we would call it today—in 1497, in which privileges, court rulings and execution documents, which had theretofore been kept by *procuradores* and *sexmeros*, were brought together. The documents were stored in a room—known as *arca*—in the convent of Saint Francis, in *Ávila*.²⁷ Over time, this original archive turned into the Archivo del Asocio, an institution that still exists and in which most medieval records on land boundaries and jurisdictions are currently held.

Also, in order to promote bureaucratic transparency and to support taxpayers, the monarchs supported claims—and took measures to address them—against the charging of abusive fees by council officials. This was a form of corruption that both the Crown and *pecheros* were keen to curb.²⁸ They also reached out to the Crown for help in monitoring municipal expenses²⁹. Including extraordinary expenses. For instance, in 1497 the council held a funeral for Prince Juan, and the *Regimiento* tried to get the *pecheros* to pay for it; they complained, and their grievances were heard.³⁰

23. *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 274-276 (doc. no. 218); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: I, 127-129 (doc. no. 52).

24. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 13-14 (doc. no. 3).

25. On the abusive fees charged by clerks to the villages, see: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XV, 135-137 (doc. no. 70). The royal letter granting the village of Cebreros the clerkship that they had requested has survived, and there is indirect evidence of more such instances: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XV, 58-59 (doc. no. 23); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XV, 71-73 (doc. no. 31). The same right was granted to the *Tierra* in 1496, making them independent in this regard from the council of *Ávila*: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XII, 56-57 (doc. no. 28).

26. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XI, 55-56 (doc. no. 28). Records were to be handed over to *procuradores pecheros* on request.

27. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XIII, 41-44 (doc. no. 19); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XIII, 73-74 (doc. no. 38); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: V, 278-280 (doc. no. 465).

28. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 15-17 (doc. no. 5), abusive fees charged by a *corregidor* and his agents, and *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XI, 121-122 (doc. no. 68), abusive fees for the enforcement of court rulings, among others.

29. The kings order that the *corregidor* send the accounts of the repair works of the walls to the Royal Council, as it was suspected that there were irregularities: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XVI, 51-52 (doc. no. 26).

30. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XIII, 136-137 (doc. no. 69).



As well as supporting the increasing administrative organisation of rural *pecheros*, the monarchs also defended their privileges. Numerous royal letters to grant or confirm customs and privileges to specific villages have survived: fishing rights, the right to *majadear*—take their animals to graze in nearby villages—outside their common land, and even the right of some villages to have their own term, in addition to using the general communal areas with others. The table presents some examples. Not all of these privileges were new, but some had been under threat and needed to be updated.³¹ Especially relevant are the privileges granted to the *Tierra* as a whole. In fact, Isabella, immediately after becoming queen, confirmed in 1475 the privileges of the *Tierra* of Ávila: that is, not only those of the council but also, specifically, those of the *Tierra* as well.³² In the dialogue maintained between the monarchs and the kingdom's councils, rural communities were heard, which is of significance concerning the recognition that the Crown granted the “fourth state” which encompassed all non-privileged groups.

Many royal letters addressed tax-related demands. Some of these letters concern extensions in the payment of debts, taxes, *sisas* (consumption taxes) and other contributions. Sometimes, the *Tierra* requested permission to impose taxes or *sisas* to meet their own needs—to pursue lawsuits, for instance—and these were often heeded by the Crown.³³ The monarchs even supported a proposal put forward by the *pueblos de la Tierra* to carry out a *yguala* (agreement for councils to pay a fixed amount) for the payment of *alcabalas* (added value tax for sales), forcing the tax collectors to accept the measure.³⁴ One of the most delicate issues challenged by *pecheros* were spurious tax exemptions and *hidalguías* (hidalgos: petty aristocrat, tax exempt). They asked the Crown to curb abuses in this regard, and their requests were met.³⁵ They also asked for protectionist measures to prevent bread shortages, and the sale of certain products outside Ávila's jurisdiction was banned.³⁶

Without a doubt, one of the priorities of the representatives of rural *pecheros* was to protect their social basis from the powerful. The property system in place³⁷

31. For instance, in 1486 the monarch had to confirm the term—which was, incidentally, enormous and had many *adegaña*—of Burgohondo, which had been originally established as early as 1275: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...* III, 290-292 (doc. no. 315); *Documentación medieval en Archivos Municipales Abulenses...* 179-180 (doc. no. 31. Burgohondo). More such examples have been attested, for instance with the village of El Barraco: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* III, 21-32 (doc. no. 7) or the privileges held by the *monteros* of Cebreros: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...* II, 65-67 (doc. no. 130); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...* II, 72-74 (doc. no. 133).

32. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* I, 25-27 (doc. no. 6).

33. The Table 1 at the end of the article presents several examples.

34. *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...* IV, 313-316 (doc. no. 420).

35. *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...* II, 162-163 (doc. no. 170); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* IV, 59-62 (doc. no. 25); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* X, 164-166 (docs. no. 95 y 96); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* IV, 59-62 (doc. no. 25).

36. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* XIV, 78-81 (doc. no. 35); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...* XIV, 20-21 (doc. no. 5).

37. The tax regime favoured the knights, who could extend their exemptions to their household and, unlike the peasantry, had the right to close and privatize a village (*términos redondos*). For a comprehensive



allowed urban knights to easily form *heredades* (properties) and *dehesas* (properties closed) in many villages and “bully” —in modern parlance— the locals, who even *encomendaban* (a form of personal dependence) themselves to the knights, something totally out of place in a village under royal jurisdiction. In 1479 a letter stated that the knights (great owners) *fazen e tienen sojuzgados los pueblos e vezinos e moradores dellos, como sy fuesen sus vasallos*. In several letters, dated to July and December 1479, to 1493 and to 1500, the Crown heeded these complaints and forbade the practice.³⁸

The problem posed by urban landowners who tried to privatise and use communal grazing areas for their own benefit was even more severe. These usurpations³⁹ were often accompanied by coercion and even violence, dealt by the agents of powerful men, sometimes even *regidores*. The modest peasants were expelled from their common land, which was left to be used exclusively by the knights’ herds, and some village territories were declared *términos redondos*, or privatised villages. When not infiltrated by the knights, the village councils defended themselves, for which they had the support of the head *procuradores* of the *Tierra* or the *sexmeros*, especially against third parties —sometimes the particular interest of a village clashed with that of the *Tierra* as a whole. In this struggle, the *Tierra* also had the help of the Crown.⁴⁰ The most efficient way to carry out this fight was by filing lawsuits, demanding investigations, appealing court rulings through the central courts, etc., always

account of the economic advantages enjoyed by urban knights, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. *Comunalismo concejil abulense...*, summarized in the diagram on the forms of ownership and respective uses of knights and *pecheros* of the villages, Monsalvo Antón, José María. *Comunalismo concejil abulense...*: 387-388.

38. “the (knights/ great landowners) do as they please in the villages and with their residents, as though they were their vassals”. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: I, 232-234 (doc. no. 88); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: II, 37-40 (doc. no. 12); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VIII, 172-174 (doc. no. 53); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XVI, 138-140 (doc. no. 71); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 91-93 (doc. no. 260).

39. Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Usurpaciones de comunales”...

40. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: I, 118-119 (doc. no. 48); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: II, 170-171 (doc. no. 70); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: IV, 90-92 (doc. no. 39); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: V, 46-47 (doc. no. 21); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: V, 49-50 (doc. no. 23); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VI, 13-15 (docs. no. 3, 17,18), 21-22 (doc. no. 5), 26-28 (doc.no. 8); 29-30 (docs. no. 11, 12); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VI, 31-32 (doc. no. 14); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VI, 104-111 (doc. no. 48); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VII, 49-52 (doc. no. 17), 52-53 (doc. no. 18); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VII, 139-140 (doc. no. 53); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VIII, 38-40 (doc. no. 3); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VIII, 106-108 (doc. no. 31); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VIII, 152-157 (doc. no. 46), 157-159 (doc. no. 47); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 112-114 (doc. no. 62); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: X, 176-182 (doc. no. 103); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XI, 43-44 (doc. no. 20); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XI, 151-152 (doc. no. 82), 152-153 (doc. no. 83); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XII, 9-10 (doc. no. 1); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XIII, 87-88 (doc. no. 48); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 38-39 (doc. no. 337); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: V, 19-21 (doc. no. 424).



with the aim of keeping common land and uses open. Favourable court rulings and the frequent support of the Crown demonstrate that *pecheros* were remarkably successful in this strategic matter. This outcome was particularly profitable for the mountainous *sexmo* of Santiago, the economy of which was eminently based on stock keeping, and the *Tierra* as a whole, which was able to guarantee that communal grazing areas remained so.⁴¹ Owing to the curb on usurpations and the ensuing guarantees on *baldíos* and *alixares*, that is, communal of the city and of all the villages as a whole⁴², by the end of the 15th century *Ávila* and its *Tierra* still preserved most of their communal-use land which, as is well known, was a key factor for the economic viability of communities and households whose sustenance was based on agriculture and stock-keeping practices.

Therefore, it may be said that, in general, communication with the Crown and its central institutions earned *pecheros* significant political and judicial triumphs.

The table illustrates that the Crown's favourable disposition towards the *pecheros* affected multiple spheres and was by no means limited to curtailing fiscal abuse or undue exemptions which fell on the shoulders of *pecheros* since they were taxpayers. In their struggle, the *pecheros* demonstrated they embodied a political culture that was specific and distinct from that of the knights.⁴³ The defence of public institutions and the right to political participation from the bottom up were two of their basic principles; this is in contrast to the notion of council politics conceived as a purely private and oligarchic enterprise entertained by urban knights.

41. *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: I, 96-98 (doc. no.40); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 210-212 (doc. no. 188); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: I, 102-110 (doc. no.43); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 29-33 (doc. no. 235); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: IV, 120-134 (doc. no. 367); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 640-644 (doc. no. 171); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VI, 83-84 (doc. no.34); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 693-697 (doc. no. 175); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 736-745 (doc. no. 185); *Documentación medieval abulense en la Real Chancillería...*: IV, 119-154 (doc. no. 7); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 781-816 (doc. no. 192); and *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: IV, 193-226 (doc. no. 387); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 775-777 (doc. no. 189); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: VIII, 9-36 (doc. no. 1); *Documentación medieval del Asocio...*: II, 816-827 (doc. no. 193); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XIV, 163-168 (docs. no. 77 and 78); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XVI, 79-80 (doc. no. 42).

42. Some of the references in the previous footnote apply. See also: *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: II, 147-148 (doc. no. 60); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: III, 199-211 (doc. no. 291); *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: II, 144-162 (doc. no. 169); *Documentación medieval abulense en el Registro General del Sello...*: XII, 109-110 (doc. no. 59).

43. I have examined the issue of the political culture of *pecheros* in several works, especially Monsalvo Antón, José María. "Ideario sociopolítico y valores estamentales de los *pecheros* abulenses y salmantinos (ss. XIII-XV)". *Hispania*, 238 (2011): 325-36; Monsalvo Antón, José María. *Comunalismo concejil abulense. Paisajes agrarios, conflictos y percepciones del espacio rural en la Tierra de Ávila y otros concejos medievales*. *Ávila: Diputación Provincial, 2010*: 359-421 (Chapter: "Raíces sociales de los valores estamentales concejiles: la construcción de las mentalidades y culturas rurales de caballeros y *pecheros* (Ávila y su Tierra, siglos XIII-XV)").



Similarly, they stood up in defence of the common good concerning market policies and supply. As a rule, these disputes were solved at the local level, but sometimes the Crown also came in to support the position of *pecheros* and consumers.

Their defense of communalism was another basic tenet in *pecheros'* claims and successes. Knights, who were generally landowners, valued above all else the principle of private property, embodied in inheritance documents and property deeds; this was the axis around which their judicial strategies and political discourses revolved. In contrast, the *pecheros* came to the courts armed with ordinances, court rulings, testimonies about ancient grazing customs, etc. that endorsed their communal ideas. The *pecheros* thus aimed to highlight the value of communal uses of rural assets and defended the woods and other grazing areas of Ávila and its *Tierra* tooth and nail. From their perspective, these areas were bulwarks against privatisation and speculation.⁴⁴

The struggle against the “bullying” of urban knights of rural communities is also worth highlighting. As noted, the political agency of *pechero* representatives outside the council, reaching out to the central power, was an effective way of curtailing the abuses committed by the urban oligarchy that also controlled local political offices.

The political action of *pecheros*, therefore, faithfully reflect the political principles that characterised them as a state. The communal organisation on which they were grounded earned the state remarkable successes. The royal power placed no obstacles in the path of the development of this popular political culture. In fact, one of the main reasons for the success of *pecheros* was the political work undertaken outside the council's framework, with the Crown and the kingdom's central institutions. *Pecheros* played politics without having to be part of the council. Needless to say, this was the result of hard toil, of filing complaints, requesting investigating committees, etc. Sometimes this involved the representatives of *pecheros* travelling back and forth, as the following example illustrates.

In late 1496, the *procuradores del Común* were, alongside *regidores* and the representatives of knights and urban dwellers, “auditing” the *alcabalas* and *tercias* (royal taxes on ecclesiastical tithes) of previous years. The absence of the *procuradores generales de los pueblos* was wondered at, since in practice these audits had to be

44. Communalism, however, was not universally understood in the same way, although it was always seen through the prism of the defence of public values and use. Two conceptions of communalism can be attested in late medieval Ávila: many councils advocated for public uses being limited by local boundaries whereas the *procuradores* of the *Tierra* stood for the inter-communal use of all assets, specifically the wide areas that were understood to belong to the *Tierra* as a whole, rather than to a village in particular. In Ávila, the latter position materialised in the rural institution of the *Asocio de la Comunidad de Ávila y sus pueblos*. For these two positions with regard to communalism and their social and spatial implications, see: Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Costumbres y comunales en la Tierra medieval de Ávila. Observaciones sobre los ámbitos de pastoreo y los argumentos rurales en los conflictos de términos”, *Historia de la Propiedad. Costumbre y Prescripción*, Salustiano De Dios, Javier Infante, Ricardo Robledo, Eugenia Torijano, eds. Madrid: Colegio de Registradores de Madrid, 2006: 13-70; Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Comunales de aldea, comunales de ciudad-y-tierra: algunos aspectos de los aprovechamientos comunitarios en los concejos medievales de Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca y Ávila”, *El lugar del campesino. En torno a la obra de Reyna Pastor*, Ana Rodríguez, ed. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas- Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2007: 149-177.



undertaken in the presence of the representatives of all states. They were absent *porque Francisco de Pajares e los otros procuradores generales de los pueblos son ydos a corte*.⁴⁵ It was at court that disputes and court cases were won. This testimony demonstrates that, in addition to managing abundant documentation —court rulings, execution documents, etc.— and participating in council debates with *regidores*, the work of representing *pecheros* also involved travelling to the court, which offers a good example of the scope of the political culture of the non-privileged state.

Table 1. Claims presented to the central authorities and successes achieved by the pueblos de la tierra de ávila (1475-1500)⁴⁶

Issue behind the claims or complaints	1	2
· 20-2-1475 <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 6. Isabella, after becoming queen, confirms the privileges of the <i>Tierra</i> , following an explicit request.		✓
· 28-1-1475 and 9-2-1475 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 130; <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 133. King Ferdinand confirms the privilege that 17 <i>monteros</i> of Cebreros had enjoyed since the reign of Henry IV.	✓	
· 28-10-1475/3-3-1476 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 169. The <i>corregidor</i> , after examining previous court rulings (from 1436, 1453 and more recent ones), rules in favour of Ávila and its <i>Tierra</i> , and declares Hoyo de Pinares, Casa del Porrejón and Robledo Halcones, which had been occupied, to be public property.		✓
· 6-11-1475 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 170. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate the exemptions of the relatives of powerful people.		✓
· 20-3-1476 <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 32. Isabella commands the council of Ávila to suspend the ordinances about <i>sisas</i> in the <i>pueblos</i> of the <i>Tierra</i> until the Consejo Real determines otherwise.		✓
· 8-6-1476 <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 40. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to take in the evidence that the <i>procuradores</i> of the <i>Tierra</i> possess about El Hoyo and to present it to the Consejo Real, which is dealing with the lawsuit between the council of Ávila and said village.		✓
· 15-6-1476 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 188; <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 43. The queen, at the request of the <i>pecheros</i> , orders the <i>corregidor</i> to enforce several old court rulings (from the reign of John II) concerning land usurpations.		✓

45. “because Francisco de Pajares and the other head procurators have gone to the court”: *Documentación del Archivo Municipal de Ávila...*: V, 108 (doc. no. 459).

46. Institution that either submits the claim or profits from the demand being positively addressed: 1. Village council (village procurators, rural alcaldes and councils), 2. The Tierra as a whole (procuradores of the sexmos – sexmeros – and head procurators of *pecheros* or of the Tierra).



· 3-12-1476 <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 48. At the request of the <i>Tierra</i> , the monarchs address the council of Ávila and the council of Hoyo about the lawsuit which is being heard by the Consejo Real.		✓
· 9-3-1477 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 218; <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 52. The monarchs, against the <i>Regimiento's</i> opinion, establish that the <i>pueblos de la Tierra</i> can hold three <i>juntas</i> per year to discuss about <i>pechos</i> and <i>repartimientos</i> [tax distribution]		✓
· 13-4-1478 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 235. Because of the <i>corregidor's</i> lack of action, the king agrees to the demand of the <i>pecheros</i> and appoints a judge to enforce court rulings to do with land boundaries. The appointee was Fernando Díaz del Castillo, oidor [royal judge] of the Audiencia and the Consejo Real.		✓
· 23-7-1479 <i>RGSÁvila-I</i> , doc. 88. The monarchs forbid the residents of Grajos –San Juan del Olmo–, but with general enforcement for other villages, to submit the defence of their interests before the council of Ávila through the city's knights.		✓
· 12-10-1479 (inserted in <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 82). The monarchs demand that the courts in Ávila put an end to the factions forming in the village of Fontiveros, establishing that the <i>regidores</i> in the village (it was uncommon for rural villages to have <i>regidores</i> , but this was the case in this large village) should be appointed by the village's residents.	✓	
· 22-12-1479 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 260; <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 12. Royal letter against the <i>encomendación</i> of some village councils of the Tierra to urban knights “que fazen e tienen sojuzgados los pueblos e vezinos e moradores dellos, como sy fuesen sus vasallos” (“that have submitted the villages and their inhabitants, as if they were their vassals”).		✓
· 19-1-1480 <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 15. Following a complaint from El Tiemblo, the monarchs summon the <i>procurador general de los pecheros</i> Juan González de Pajares to the Consejo Real to justify the <i>derramas</i> [allocation of taxes] imposed in previous years.	✓	
· 9-2-1480 <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 22. The monarchs grant an extension to El Tiemblo to pay the debts incurred by the village to pay for ransoms during the recent civil war.	✓	
· 28-6- 1480 <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 60. The monarchs respond to a request from El Tiemblo and summon the head <i>procurador</i> Juan González de Pajares to the Consejo Real to respond to the lawsuit concerning the Sierra de Iruelas and other common land.	✓	
· 7-10-1480 <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 70. The monarchs grant a <i>carta de seguro</i> [letter granting royal protection] to the inhabitants of El Tiemblo, who fear for their safety during their lawsuit against Ávila for the use of common land.	✓	
· 4-11-1480 <i>RGSÁvila-II</i> , doc. 82. The monarchs order that the orders conveyed by letter dated 12-10-1479 about public disorder in Fontiveros be followed.	✓	



· 18 -12-1480 <i>RGSÁvila-III</i> , doc. 2. The monarchs address the Jews in Ávila's aljama concerning the claim filed by the <i>pecheros</i> of the <i>sexmo</i> of Santiago, in the <i>Tierra</i> of Ávila.		✓
· 30-11-1481 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 291; <i>DocPueblos-Ávila</i> . El Tiemblo, doc. 15. The monarchs order the court ruling passed by the Consejo Real, upholding the demand of the <i>Tierra</i> against El Tiemblo for the inter-communal use of the Sierra de Iruelas, to be enforced.		✓
· 20-6-1482 <i>RGSÁvila-III</i> , doc. 7. The monarchs confirm El Barraco's ancient privileges.	✓	
· 12-9-1482 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 295. The monarchs give a deadline for the council of Ávila to submit the allegations presented by the <i>Tierra</i> against the contribution of 300 men for the War of Granada.		✓
· 17-2-1485 <i>RGSÁvila-III</i> , doc. 60. The monarchs order the rural <i>alcaldes</i> of Fontiveros to address the conflict that is leading to public disorder.	✓	
· 20-2-1486 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 315; <i>DocPueblos-Ávila</i> , Burgohondo, doc. 31. The monarchs confirm the privileges of Burgohondo, which date back to 1275.	✓	
· 6-3-1486 <i>RGSÁvila-IV</i> , doc. 25. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to strictly enforce the norms about exemptions, which some are trying to make extensive, without having the law on their side, to all royal and council <i>pechos</i> .		✓
· 11-4-1486 <i>RGSÁvila-IV</i> , doc. 39. The monarchs give protection to the villages of Hurtunpascual, Gamonal and Viñegra against the owner of the <i>término redondo</i> of Sobrinos – Diego de Carbajal, regidor in Talavera – who took its animals to graze in those villages in Ávila.	✓	
· 18-3-1488 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 337. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> Portocarrero not to meddle in the lawsuit, concerning the usurpation of land, between Pedro Dávila, <i>regidor</i> and lord of Las Navas, and the village councils of San Bartolomé and El Herradón.	✓	
· 3-9-1488 <i>RGSÁvila-V</i> , doc. 21. The monarchs, responding to a request from the village of Hernansancho, order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate their complaints – land was being occupied – against the deacon and cathedral council in Ávila and their tenants.	✓	
· 9-9-1488 <i>RGSÁvila-V</i> , doc. 23. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate the complaints filed by Atizadero – Santa Cruz de Pinares – against the family of Pedro Sánchez-Bermejo, who were “powerful people”.	✓	
· 22-9-1488 <i>RGSÁvila-V</i> , doc. 25. The monarchs grant an extension to Monsalupe to pay their debts.	✓	
· 15-10-1488 <i>RGSÁvila-V</i> , doc. 31. The monarchs grant a one-year extension to El Tiemblo to pay their debts.	✓	



· 11-12-1488 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 354. The monarchs, at the request of the <i>pecheros</i> of Ávila and its <i>Tierra</i> , confirm who was obliged to contribute to supporting the <i>Hermandad</i> , forbidding any undue exemptions.		✓
· 8-5-1489 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 358. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to enforce standing criteria concerning taxes and exemptions concerning the <i>Hermandad</i> .		✓
· 10-11-1489 <i>RGSÁvila-V</i> , doc. 98. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to enforce a court ruling about <i>repartimientos</i> in order to monitor the 40,000 <i>maravedís</i> that were being spent in lawsuits by the <i>pecheros</i> .		✓
· 11-23- 11-1489 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 367. <i>Corregidor</i> Santiesteban, following previous court rulings and the standing norms, separates the terms of Burgohondo and the adjacent large inter-communal land (<i>alixares</i>).	✓	✓
· 13-2-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 3. The monarchs, at the request of the council of Navalmoral, order the <i>corregidor</i> to enforce the court rulings concerning the land usurpations committed by Pedro Dávila.	✓	
· 14-2-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 5. The monarchs, at the request of the village council of Hoyocasero, <i>adegaña</i> of Burgohondo, order the <i>corregidor</i> to reinstate the land occupied by Pedro Dávila.	✓	
· 3-3-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 8. The monarchs, at the request of the village council of Navalmoral, order the <i>corregidor</i> to set up boundary stones on the large common <i>dehesa</i> of Navalsauz, which had been occupied by Pedro Dávila.	✓	
· 3-3-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 11. The monarchs, at the request of the village council of Navalmoral and its <i>adegañas</i> , order the kingdom's courts not to allow Pedro Dávila or others to carry out a census of the inhabitants.	✓	
· 3-3-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 12. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to recognise Navalmoral's territory.	✓	
· 17-3-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 14. The monarchs address the village council of El Barraco and the <i>procurador general</i> of the <i>pecheros</i> , Juan González de Pajares, concerning the lawsuit being heard in the Consejo Real about the village's territory.	✓	
· 17 a 23-3-1490 <i>Asocio</i> , doc. 171. <i>Corregidor</i> Santiesteban, at the request of the <i>procurador general</i> of the <i>pecheros</i> Juan González de Pajares, rules against the <i>término redondo</i> of Zapardiel, usurped by Pedro de Barrientos.	✓	✓
· 8-5-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 29. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate land usurpations in Atizadero.	✓	
· 26-5-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 34. The monarchs, at the request of the village councils of the <i>sexmo</i> of Santiago, compel the council of Ávila to revise the general ordinances concerning the inter-communal use of grazing land in the area, regardless of each village's specific land boundaries.	✓	



· 2-8-1490 <i>Asocio</i> , doc. 175; also included in <i>RGSÁvila-VIII</i> , doc. 1, 5 January 1493. <i>Corregidor</i> Santiesteban rules against the usurpations committed by Pedro Dávila in several villages and <i>adegañas</i> in <i>Tierra</i> of Ávila: Quemada, Quintanar, Helipar, Casa del Porrejon, Navas de Galinsancho, Robledo Halcones and Valdegarcía.		✓
· 17-8-1490 <i>RGSÁvila-VI</i> , doc. 48. The monarchs forbid Pedro Dávila to impose his dominion over Burgohondo.	✓	✓
· 15-10 to 8-11-1490 <i>Asocio</i> , doc. 185. Ruling of <i>corregidor</i> Santiesteban against Pedro Dávila in Burgohondo.	✓	✓
· 27-12-1490 <i>Chancillería.Ej.Ávila-IV</i> , doc. 7; <i>Asocio</i> , doc. 192; and <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 387. Execution of the ruling against Pedro Dávila in Quintanar, limiting his property rights and confirming the communal use of the land.		✓
· 21-1-1491 <i>Asocio</i> , doc. 189. <i>Corregidor</i> Santiesteban rules against Juan Dávila's land usurpation in Armenteros.		✓
· April, 1492 <i>RGSÁvila-VII</i> , docs. 17 and 18. The monarchs, at the request of Zapardiel, order the <i>corregidor</i> to forbid the land usurper Pedro de Barrientos to buy land to make <i>términos redondos</i> .	✓	
· 2-11-1492 <i>RGSÁvila-VII</i> , doc. 53. The monarchs confirm the communal grazing rights of Tornadizos in the nearby <i>término redondo</i> of Espeluca, whose owner is preventing them from entering the land.	✓	
· 5-1-1493 <i>RGSÁvila-VIII</i> , doc. 1; <i>Asocio</i> , doc. 193. Ruling against Pedro Dávila concerning several lawsuits in Quemada, Quintanar, Helipar, Robledo Halcones, Valdegarcía, Casa del Porrejon and others.		✓
· 9-1-1493 <i>RGSÁvila-VIII</i> , doc. 3. The monarchs grant a <i>carta de seguro e defendimiento</i> [letter granting royal protection] to the residents of Bóveda, a village in Ávila, against the pretensions and threats posed by the knight Gil González Dávila, his relatives and his men.	✓	
· 20-3-1493 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 404. The monarchs summon Pedro Dávila to the Audiencia Real concerning the lawsuit against Burgohondo.	✓	
· 30-3-1493 <i>RGSÁvila-VIII</i> , doc. 31. At the request of Balbarda, the monarchs compel the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate the grievances filed against the owner of Martíndomínguez village, Luis de Valderrábano, by Balbarda and Muñes. The aggrieved villages claimed that, after depopulating his <i>término redondo</i> of Martíndomínguez, Luis de Valderrábano wished to do the same in Balbarda and Muñes.	✓	
· 25-4-1493 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 405. The monarchs clarify who is to pay taxes concerning the <i>Hermandad</i> and forbid undue exemptions.		✓
· 21-5-1493 <i>RGSÁvila-VIII</i> , docs. 46 and 47. The monarchs order the <i>juez de residencia</i> [special judge appointed to investigate <i>corregidores</i> when they left office] to meet the claim put forth by the residents of Bóveda against Gil González Dávila's usurpation.	✓	



· 5-6-1493 <i>RGSÁvila-VIII</i> , doc. 53. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> and <i>juéz de residencia</i> to investigate whether the knights Pedro Dávila, Fernán Gómez Dávila and Sancho Sánchez Dávila have appropriated land, “lo qual han fecho e fazen por tener la mano en el tal lugar o conçejo”, that is to say, “which they have done after infiltrating the councils”.	✓	
· 3-3-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-IX</i> , doc. 58. The monarchs order <i>corregidor</i> De la Rúa to investigate which residents of several villages in the <i>sexmo</i> of Santiago were occupying inter-communal land belonging to Ávila and the <i>Tierra</i> .		✓
· 16-4-1494 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 414. The monarchs consider the complaint filed by the <i>Tierra</i> concerning a recent <i>sisá</i> .		✓
· 19-4-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 2. At the request of the <i>Tierra</i> , the monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate how much tax could be allocated to <i>pecheros</i> beyond of the 3,000 annual <i>maravedíes</i> established by the <i>Cortes</i> held in 1480.		✓
· 19-4-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 3. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to allow (he had voiced some objections) the operation of the <i>letrado</i> employed by the <i>pecheros</i> of the <i>Tierra</i> of Ávila as their advisor.		✓
· 22-4-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 5. At the request of the <i>Tierra</i> , the monarchs order the court ruling concerning the undue <i>derechos</i> [professional expenses] passed by former <i>corregidor</i> , Álvaro de Santiesteban, and his officials be enforced.		✓
· 23-4-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 6. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to prevent the <i>pueblos</i> of Ávila from being unduly burdened with taxes to do with the <i>Hermanidad</i> because they were being asked to pay the same as before, even after the expulsion of the Jews, whose contribution should be discounted.		✓
· 5-6- 1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 37. The monarchs considered a complaint submitted by Herites, a village in Ávila, to the Consejo Real against Rodrigo de Vivero, lord of Castronuevo, who had usurped part of their territory.	✓	
· 7-6-1494 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 416. The monarchs order the council of Ávila not to collect the <i>sisá</i> imposed to compensate for a debt concerning the <i>Hermanidad</i> , in the <i>Tierra</i> , since they already paid their part.		✓
· 14-8-1494 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 420. The monarchs endorse the <i>yguala</i> proposed by several village councils to the collectors of <i>alcabalas</i>	✓	✓
· September, 1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 62. At the request of El Barraco, the monarchs address the council of Ávila concerning the appeal filed by the village against a ruling by the <i>corregidor</i> , which granted the city of Ávila certain properties in dispute.	✓	



· 25-11-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 96. At the request of the “ <i>conçejo e omes buenos pecheros del lugar de Flores, aldea de la çibdad de Ávila</i> ” (“rural council of the good <i>pecheros</i> of Flores, village of Ávila”), the monarchs order an investigation to establish who were <i>hidalgos</i> and, therefore, exempt.	✓	
· 7-12-1494 <i>RGSÁvila-X</i> , doc. 103. The monarchs order an investigation into the abuses committed by Juan de Herrera against the inhabitants of Cantaracillo, where he has usurped land and a <i>dehesa</i> that belongs to the council and has pulled down <i>cotos</i> [boundaries between fields].	✓	
· 16-2-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 16. The monarchs allow the fishermen from Cardeñosa to fish in the Adaja River – “since the river is <i>realengo</i> ” – near the watermills, against the wishes of the mills’ owners.	✓	
· 19-2-1495 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 424; <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 20. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to act against the <i>regidor</i> Francisco Dávila and put him on trial as he usurped land and property from the inhabitants of Riofrío.	✓	
February 1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 24. The monarchs order the <i>juez de residencia</i> to return to the <i>Tierra</i> the undue expenses passed by the former <i>corregidor</i> Antón Rodríguez de Villalobos.		✓
· 6-3-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 28. The monarchs order the public clerks of Ávila – and the <i>corregidor</i> is made responsible for ensuring that this is done – to hand the <i>procuradores</i> of the <i>Tierra</i> all documents that they process.		✓
· 13-5-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 68. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to return to the <i>Tierra</i> the undue <i>derechos</i> requested for the execution of court rulings.		✓
· 20-5-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 73. The monarchs order the executor of Jewish assets to cancel a court ruling that forced the village of Riofrío to pay debts incurred while dealing with the Jews before their expulsion	✓	
· June 1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 75. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> Pérez de la Fuente to authorise the village council of Fontiveros to impose a <i>sisá</i> for 21,068 <i>maravedies</i> to pay some debts.	✓	
· 16 and 17-7-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , docs. 82 and 83. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to enforce the court ruling concerning the lawsuit between Bóveda and Gil González Dávila, in which the latter was found to have usurped land in the village’s territory.	✓	
· 28-7-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 86. The monarchs order the 4,500 <i>maravedies</i> unduly taken by former <i>corregidor</i> Francisco de Vargas to be returned to the <i>Tierra</i> . Despite the ruling, he had not given the money back yet.		✓
· 28-7-1495 <i>RGSÁvila-XI</i> , doc. 87. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate the accounts concerning the 80,000 <i>maravedies</i> loaned to fund lawsuits filed by the <i>pecheros</i> .		✓



· 26-8-1495 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 433; <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XI, doc. 93. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate events in Císla, whose residents have seen <i>alcabalas</i> rise from 6,000 or 8,000 to 24,000 <i>maravedíes</i> in a few years, while being tenants of Diego de Zúñiga, who “non es vezino de la dicha çibdad nin tienen quien procure por ellos”, that is to say, “does not live there, and the residents have no one to defend them”.	✓	
· 2-9-1495 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XI, doc. 95. The monarchs authorise the <i>Tierra</i> of Ávila to impose a <i>sisá</i> of 60,000 <i>maravedíes</i> to pay its debts.		✓
· 4-9-1495 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XI, doc. 96. The monarchs ask the executor of Jewish assets, Lope de Vera, to cancel a ruling that he issued against the village of El Atizadero.	✓	
· 6-10-1495 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XI, doc. 101. The monarchs order the executor of Jewish assets not to take further action after the village of El Tiemblo appeals two court rulings against them to the <i>alcaldes de corte</i> [royal court judges].	✓	
· 8-1-1496 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XII, doc. 1. The monarchs meet a petition from the village council of Bóveda to prevent foreign livestock from entering their territory, according to an ordinance that Gil González Dávila, a major <i>heredero</i> [absentee landowner], intends to break.	✓	
· 5-2-1496 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XII, doc. 8. The monarchs meet a petition from Francisco de Pajares, <i>procurador general</i> of the <i>pecheros</i> , and order the <i>corregidor</i> to return to the executor of Jewish assets all undue fees charged.		✓
· 20-6-1496 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XII, doc. 27. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate whether a petition by the <i>Tierra</i> to impose a <i>sisá</i> or repartimiento (up to 100,000 <i>maravedíes</i>) to pursue ongoing lawsuits is viable.		✓
· 21-6-1496 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XII, doc. 28. The monarchs meet a petition from the <i>Tierra</i> to have their own clerkship.		✓
· 8-11-1496 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 453. The monarchs meet a petition from the <i>pecheros</i> and order the <i>alcalde</i> to collect the arrears of taxes concerning the <i>Hermanidad</i> .		✓
· 21-11-1496 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XII, doc. 59. The monarchs meet a petition from the <i>Tierra</i> to keep open all <i>alixares</i> and communal land, against the wishes of some knights and village councils.		✓
· 14-2-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 9. The monarchs authorise Flores to impose a <i>sisá</i> of 6,000 <i>maravedíes</i> to pursue a lawsuit.	✓	
· 3-3-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 14. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate the right that assists the <i>procurador general</i> of the <i>pecheros</i> to attend council meetings.		✓
· 3-3-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 15. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> if the <i>Tierra</i> needs to impose extraordinary taxes to pursue a lawsuit with a convent in Tordesillas in the Audiencia.		✓



· 6-3-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 17. The monarchs order to comply with a judicial ruling given by the Audiencia, establishing that the Hernansancho could <i>majadear</i> in the village nearby of Blascosancho, against the village's wishes.	✓	
· 17-3-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 19. The monarchs grant the <i>Tierra</i> of Ávila their own clerkship, taking turns between the <i>sexmos</i> , and the right to keep their records at the <i>arca</i> in the convent of Saint Francis.		✓
· 17-3-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 20. The monarchs order the church of Santiago to keep a warehouse in which to store the wheat paid by Ávila's peasants as tax to Santiago, to prevent irregularities.		✓
· 21-6-1497 <i>DAMÁvila</i> , doc. 465; <i>RGSÁvila</i> - XIII, doc. 38. The monarchs inform the <i>corregidor</i> they have ordered that the records of the <i>Tierra</i> of Ávila thenceforth be kept in the convent of Saint Francis.		✓
· 9-8-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 48. The monarchs order that the court ruling of Bóveda against Gil González Dávila be enforced.	✓	
· 15-12- 1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 69. The monarchs instruct the officials of the council of Ávila to pay the expenses for the <i>lutos e xergas</i> [mourning clothes and funerals] incurred for the funeral of Prince John and to return to the <i>pecheros</i> what they had paid for it.		✓
· 21-12-1497 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIII, doc. 70. The monarchs order an investigation into the possibility of expanding the territory of Cebreros.	✓	
· 16-1-1498 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIV, doc. 4. The monarchs order a certain amount to be distributed in the <i>Tierra</i> .		✓
· 18-1-1498 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIV, doc. 5. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate the damages caused to distant villages by a municipal order that forbids firewood and charcoal to be sold outside Ávila's jurisdiction.		✓
· 20-1-1498 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIV, doc. 7. The monarchs order an investigation into the impact of a municipal ordinance about fishing on the <i>Tierra</i> .		✓
· 5-2-1498 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIV, doc. 11. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to fix the disagreements between <i>Tierra</i> and <i>Mesta</i> [Association of Cattle Owners of Castilla].		✓
· 3-5-1498 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIV, doc. 35. At the request of Bercimuelle, a border village of the <i>Tierra</i> , the monarchs order an old law about the sale of bread abroad to be upheld.	✓	
· 20-12-1498 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XIV, docs. 77 and 78. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to keep the boundaries of Navalmoral and its <i>adegañas</i> , preventing, among other things, Pedro Dávila from enlarging a dehesa.	✓	
· 26-4-1499 <i>RGSÁvila</i> -XV, doc. 23; 2-6-1499 <i>RGSÁvila</i> - XV, doc. 31. The monarchs grant the public clerkship requested by Cebreros.	✓	



· 6-6-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 34. The monarchs order that no authority “ <i>innove</i> ” [do not make changes] in the lawsuit between Navalmoral and Pedro Dávila after appeals were raised to the Audiencia and the Consejo Real.	✓	
· 6-7-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 45. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to use the <i>propios</i> [revenue from tax councils] of Ávila in the lawsuit of Navalmoral against Pedro Dávila.	✓	
· 12-7-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 46. The monarchs endorse the ruling by the Consejo Real in favour of Burgohondo, against the monastery of Santa María de los Huertos, concerning the use of a pine forest.	✓	
· 12-7-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 47. The monarchs support Burgohondo against the monastery and abbot of Santa María in a lawsuit about the use of nearby land.	✓	
· 16-8-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 61. At the request of El Herradón, the monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to “ <i>tome las cuentas</i> ” [take the accounts of the income] of <i>propios</i> and taxes of the two previous years to check possible irregularities.	✓	
· 10-9-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 69. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate actions by the <i>Mesta</i> .		✓
· 10-9-1499 <i>RGSÁvila-XV</i> , doc. 70. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate and inform the Consejo Real about undue fees being charged the <i>pecheros</i> of the <i>Tierra</i> by clerks.		✓
· 22-2-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 9. The monarchs order the representative of Bóveda to deliver to the village council the court ruling and <i>carta de seguro</i> granted for their protection against Gil González Dávila.	✓	
· 24-3-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 22. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to halt the lawsuit between several villages and the city over the collection of <i>alcabalas</i> .		✓
· 26-3-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 24. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to protect Cebreros’ rights over an area of land known as Navaluenga, near Villalba, and over the council’s <i>dehesa</i> .	✓	
· 10-4-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 26. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to inform the Consejo Real whether fraud has been committed in the expenses incurred during the repair of the city walls.		✓
· 22-5-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 36. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> not to intervene in the lawsuit between Bóveda and the knight Gil González Dávila, who, according to the locals, had tried to put pressure on the <i>corregidor</i> .	✓	
· 3-7-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 42. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to follow previous orders in favour of the <i>Tierra</i> and against councils and private persons.		✓



· 10-10-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 59. The monarchs order the <i>corregidor</i> to investigate an exchange of territory that the village of Flores wanted to make with Arévalo, arguing that it was closer to the village.	✓	
· 29-11-1500 <i>RGSÁvila-XVI</i> , doc. 71. The monarchs, at the request of the council of Flores, send a royal clerk to investigate whether some knights and <i>regidores</i> had extended surreptitiously <i>encomienda</i> [improper personal dependence] on de villagers of the <i>Tierra</i> , and whether these rural councils were serving their interests.	✓	

