

# THE SEIGNEURIAL *PEDIDO*: EXACTION, NEGOTIATION AND SEIGNEURIAL POWER IN LATE MEDIEVAL CASTILE (THE EXAMPLE OF THE TOWNS IN THE ARAGONENSE TRASTÁMARA ESTATES)

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Date of receipt: 30<sup>th</sup> of May, 2021

Date of acceptance: 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 2022

## ABSTRACT

This article analyses the origin and evolution of the seigneurial *pedido*, one of the main forms of exaction that were linked to the practice of jurisdictional lordship in late medieval Castile. For this purpose, we have chosen a case study consisting of the Castilian towns under the dominion of Ferdinand of Antequera and Eleonor of Albuquerque, *Infantes* of Castile and kings of Aragon, and their heirs between the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the negotiation dynamics that articulated taxation and, in general, the power relations between lords and dominated communities in Castilian feudal society at the end of the Middle Ages are revealed.

## KEYWORDS

Lordship, Exaction, Seigneurial *pedido*, Power, Negotiation.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Dominium directum, Exactio, *Pedido* domini directi, Potestas, Negotiatio.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The strengthening of the seigneurial powers of the dominant aristocratic sectors of society was one of the main features in the process of reaffirmation of their social hegemony from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in Castile and in the Iberian Peninsula more generally. The expansive resizing of the Castilian seigneuries has been explained with remarkable clarity by authors such as María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, Isabel Beceiro Pita, José María Monsalvo Antón, and Paulino Iradiel Murugarren. According to such authors, this notion of seigneurial expansion is applicable to two different spheres: the nature of seigneurial authority, expressed through the display of the lord's jurisdiction over the communities under his control, and the increase in rights, goods, extractive resources, and human, material, conceptual, and discursive means that were available to the lords for the ruling of these communities. At the same time, the institutional and territorial articulation of this form of domination is recognisable through the crystallization of the "seigneurial state", mostly ruled by the lay aristocracy, and the proliferation of these states during the time period at hand. This process of crystallization and proliferation happened at the same time and in the same social class as the extension and consolidation of the structures of kinship and the transmission of inheritances and seigneurial patrimonies that privileged primogeniture and agnatic links (lineage and *mayorazgo*, "majorat")<sup>2</sup>.

1. This article is part of the research project entitled "El ejercicio del poder: espacios, agentes y escrituras (siglos XI-XV)" (HAR2017-84718-P), funded by the Ministerio de Economía, Industria y Competitividad (Spain), the Agencia Estatal de Investigación (Spain) and the European Regional Development Fund. It also is part of the research project entitled "Ciudad y nobleza en el tránsito a la Modernidad: autoritarismo regio, pactismo y conflictividad política. Castilla, de Isabel I a las Comunidades/ Towns and conflict. Castile from Elizabeth I to the 'Comuneros'" (HAR2017-83542-P, MINECO 2018-2021/AEI/FEDER, UE), funded by the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (Spain), and "Más allá de la palabra. Comunicación y discurso políticos en las Castilla Trastámara (1367-1504) / Beyond the word. Political Communication and Discourse in Trastámara Castile (1367-1504) (PID2021-125571NB-I00, funded by MCIN/AEI /10.13039/501100011033 / FEDER, UE "A way of making Europe"). Used Abbreviations: ACDAlba, Archivo de la Casa Ducal de Alba; AGS, Archivo General de Simancas; AHNob, Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza; AMAdT, Archivo Municipal de Alba de Tormes; AMHaro, Archivo Municipal de Haro; AMPdN, Archivo Municipal de Paredes de Nava; AMVillalón, Archivo Municipal de Villalón; ARChVall, Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid; CP, Cuentas de Propios; LAC, Libros de Actas del Concejo; LdA, Libros de Acuerdos; mrs., *maravedís*.

2. Regarding this expansion and redefinition of the seigneurial rule in Castile in the late Middle Ages, Monsalvo Antón, José María. "Poder político y aparatos de estado en la Castilla bajomedieval. Consideraciones sobre su problemática". *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval*, 4/2 (1986): 140-142, 155-159; Beceiro Pita, Isabel. "Los estados señoriales como estructuras de poder en la Castilla del siglo XV", *Realidades e imágenes del poder. España a fines de la Edad Media*, Adeline Rucquoi, ed. Valladolid: Ámbito Ediciones, 1988: 293-323; Iradiel Murugarren, Paulino. "Señoríos jurisdiccionales y poderes públicos a finales de la Edad Media", *Poderes públicos en la Europa Medieval: Principados, Reinos y Coronas. Actas de la XXIII Semana de Estudios Medievales de Estella (22 al 26 de julio de 1996)*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 1997: 84-98, 101-111; Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "La renovación nobiliaria en la Castilla bajomedieval. Entre el debate y la propuesta", *La nobleza peninsular en la Edad Media. VI Congreso de Estudios Medievales*. León: Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 1999: 255-295; Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "El estado señorial nobiliario como espacio de poder en la Castilla bajomedieval", *Los espacios de poder en la España Medieval. XII Semana de Estudios Medievales. Nájera 2001*, J. I. de la Iglesia Duarte, ed. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2002: 245-314.



In any case, the building of aristocratic and seigneurial power in Castile through the late Middle Ages has to be understood as a centuries-long, dynamic process that, therefore, requires a meticulous, multifaceted, and diachronic analysis. Since at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this process was linked to a rise in seigneurial patrimonies, the accumulation or segregation of all sorts of rights, and the establishment of certain forms of lordship over spaces and communities subjected to different aristocratic families. Only at the end of this process, between the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the whole of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is possible to identify the clear consolidation of a connection between “jurisdictional lordship” and the implementation of “estates” (lordship estates), which must be understood as territorial circumscriptions for the organisation, management, and transmission of seigneurial patrimonies among a series of family members connected through their common belonging to certain “lineages”<sup>3</sup>.

The analysis of this process of assertion of aristocratic seigneurial powers in late medieval Castile ought to be based on the understanding of a fundamental contextual framework that is applicable to the whole of the Western Middle Ages: we are talking, on the one hand, of the socioeconomic crisis linked to demographic contraction and the depression of the agrarian economy, and, on the other hand, the antagonisms and struggles associated with the development of the authoritarian monarchic state. Taking this consideration into account, this field of study has produced increasingly sophisticated and all-encompassing interpretations that have been especially attentive to the power relations and the processes of communication and negotiation between socio-political agents and organisations in the kingdom of Castile<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the historiographical consensus has switched from a model based on the fundamental struggle between the monarchy and the aristocracy for predominance over the political structure of the kingdom to more complex interpretations. According to these interpretations, aristocratic factionalism coexisted with tendencies towards the triumph of monarchic authoritarianism. Furthermore, the strengthening of the apparatus of these monarchic states happened with the participation of the aristocracy and the most prominent members of the urban patriciate. In a similar fashion, the aristocracy strengthened its identity and benefited politically, economically, and socially from its exercise of power over the entire community and territory of the kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Recent studies

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3. Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial de Fernando 'el de Antequera' y los de su casa: señorío, redes clientelares y sociedad feudal en Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2018: 343-348. See some classic studies with a similar perspective: Atienza Hernández, Ignacio. *Aristocracia, poder y riqueza en la España Moderna. La Casa de Osuna, siglos XVI-XIX*. Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1987; Beceiro Pita, Isabel. *El condado de Benavente en el siglo XV*. Benavente: Centro de Estudios Beneventanos Ledo del Pozo, 1998.

4. *Discurso, memoria y representación. La nobleza peninsular en la Baja Edad Media. Actas de la XLII Semana de Estudios Medievales de Estella (21 al 24 de julio de 2015)*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2016; Monsalvo Antón, José María. *La construcción del poder real en la Monarquía castellana (siglos XI-XV)*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2019.

5. Suárez Fernández, Luis. *Nobleza y Monarquía. Puntos de vista sobre la Historia política castellana del s. XV*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1975; Monsalvo Antón, José M<sup>a</sup>. “El conflicto «nobleza frente a monarquía» en el contexto de las transformaciones del estado en la Castilla Trastámara. Reflexiones



have taken into account the integration of a relational dimension between multiple power structures and active social agents. Such power structures and social agents included not only the most thriving among the aristocracy, the monarchy, the lower strata of the aristocracy, known in Castile as *hidalgos*, and the urban elites, but also urban corporations and peasant communities. These considerations have allowed for a more profound understanding of the forms of competence, negotiation, confrontation, and cooperation that defined power relations in late medieval Castile, both in action and in discourse<sup>6</sup>.

My goal in the following pages is to delve into the role of negotiation in the conformation of power relations between the lords and the communities subjected to their domination. To this effect, I would like to focus on one of the aspects that became central in the reaffirmation of the seigniorial power of Castilian aristocracy: the increase in the volume and sources of income that were levied by the lords on communities placed under their rule. Accordingly, the progressive definition of the conditions under which the administration of these exactions took place, together with the weight of the written registration of the limits of these exactions, the schedule of their payment, and the quantities thereof, have been studied in important contributions on the whole of the medieval West between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, both with regard to the perspective of the ruled towards seigniorial exaction and the delimitation of their obligations, as well as with regard to the position of the lords on the practice of the exaction, the collection of rents, and the enunciation and legitimation of their rights over the communities, the problem of the negotiation of such terms between agents and instances of domination cannot be set aside<sup>7</sup>.

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críticas”, *Discurso político y relaciones de poder: ciudad, nobleza y monarquía en la Baja Edad Media*, José Antonio Jara Fuente, ed. Madrid: Dykinson, 2017: 89-287.

6. Iradiel Murugarren, Paulino. “Señoríos jurisdiccionales...”; Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Poder político y aparatos de estado...”; Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Historia de los poderes medievales, del Derecho a la Antropología (el ejemplo castellano: monarquía, concejos y señoríos en los siglos XII-XV)”, *Historia a Debate. Medieval*, Carlos Barros Guimeráns, ed. Santiago de Compostela: Historia a Debate, 1995: 81-149; Monsalvo Antón, José María. “Crisis del feudalismo y centralización monárquica castellana Observaciones acerca del origen del ‘Estado Moderno’ y su causalidad”, *Transiciones en la Antigüedad y Feudalismo*, Domingo Plácido Suárez, Carlos Estepa Díez, Juan J. Trías Vejarano, eds. Madrid: Fundación de Investigaciones Marxistas, 1998: 139-167; Jara Fuente, José Antonio, ed. *Discurso político y relaciones de poder: ciudad, nobleza y monarquía en la Baja Edad Media*. Madrid: Dykinson, 2017; Millán da Costa, Adelaide; Jara Fuente, José Antonio, eds. *Conflicto político: lucha y cooperación. Ciudad y nobleza en Portugal y Castilla en la Baja Edad Media*. Lisbon: Instituto de Estudos Medievais, 2017; Pereyra, Osvaldo Víctor; Sanmartín Barros, Israel, eds. “El discurso político en los cuerpos complejos de la monarquía castellana (s. XIII-XVIII)”. *Trabajos y Comunicaciones*, 52 (2020): 120-126. 10 March 2021 <<https://www.trabajosycomunicaciones.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/issue/view/533>>; Carzolio, María Ines; Muñoz Gómez, Víctor, eds. “El discurso político en los cuerpos complejos de la monarquía castellana (s. XIII-XVIII). Narrativas de poder, comunicación y negociación”. *Trabajos y Comunicaciones*, 53 (2021): 136-142. 10 March 2021 <<https://www.trabajosycomunicaciones.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/issue/view/548>>.

7. Bourin, Monique; Martínez Sopena, Pascual, eds. *Pour une anthropologie du prélèvement seigneurial dans les campagnes médiévales (XIe-XIVe siècles). Réalités et représentations paysannes*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004; Bourin, Monique; Martínez Sopena, Pascual, eds. *Pour une anthropologie du prélèvement seigneurial dans les campagnes médiévales (XIe-XIVe siècles). Les mots, les temps, les lieux*. Paris: Publications



Precisely, during the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and in the initial decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a specific tax became the most relevant and substantial form of income that the lords levied on their towns and villages, at least before the introduction of the royal *tercias* and *alcabalas*. We are talking about the seigneurial *pedido* (request). Although its existence is well known, other aspects are less so: its origin, the principles which theoretically sustained the exaction, which were closely linked to the development of the “jurisdictional lordship”, and its primordially negotiated nature, according to which the seigneurial authorities would negotiate the terms, amounts, and payment deadlines with the councils of the towns and villages under their jurisdiction. I would like to dedicate the following pages to these aspects, focusing on their transactional dimension and the negotiated nature of seigneurial power relations in late medieval Castile

Based on a general overview about seigneurial power, income and the evolution of the seigneurial *pedido* in Castile from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, I shall sharpen my analysis on this tax and the dynamic process of transaction which revolves around it in the study case of the towns in the estates of the Aragonese Trastámara lineage in Castile from the last decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to mid-15<sup>th</sup> century. Ferdinand of Antequera and his wife Eleanor of Albuquerque, infantes of Castile and kings of Aragon (1412-1416) and their main heirs in Castile (their sons John of Aragon, king of Navarre since 1425 and Aragon since 1458, and Henry of Aragon, Grand Master of the military Order of Santiago since 1409) were the most prominent members of the royal lineage of Castile during this age. They also became the most powerful and politically influential members of the Castilian aristocracy during the reign of king Henry III, king John II's minority and even later, until 1428 and the ultimate defeat of the so-called ‘infantes de Aragon’ by the faction led by the king John's favorite, the condestable Alvaro de Luna, in 1445. Their possessions were spread out all over the kingdom, from de the N-E border with Navarre to the S-W one with Portugal, comprising over 30 small and medium-size towns. It is worth noting that many of them were concentrated in the central region of the Duero valley and the *Extremaduras*, characterised by its high urban density, economic wealth and political and administrative centrality in the monarchy of Castile as a whole<sup>8</sup>. This widely

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de la Sorbonne, 2007; Feller, Laurent. *Campesinos y señores en la Edad Media. Siglos VIII-XV*. Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2015: 177-197, 229-259.

8. On the trajectory of Ferdinand of Antequera, Eleanor of Albuquerque and their heirs in Castile, see, more generally: Benito Ruano, Eloy. *Los infantes de Aragón*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1952; Vicens Vives, Jaume. *Juan II de Aragón*. Barcelona: Teide, 1953; Álvarez Palenzuela, Vicente Ángel. “Enrique, infante de Aragón, maestre de Santiago”. *Medievalismo. Boletín de la Sociedad Española de Estudios Medievales*, 12 (2002): 37-89; Álvarez Palenzuela, Vicente Ángel. “María, infanta de Aragón y reina de Castilla”. *Estudos em Homenagem ao Professor Doutor José Marques*. Oporto: Universidade de Porto, 2006: IV, 349-370; Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *Fernando «el de Antequera» y Leonor de Albuquerque (1374-1435). Una Historia de Poder en la Península Ibérica a finales de la Edad Media*. Sevilla: Editorial Universidad de Sevilla, 2016; Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial...: 133-134*; Monsalvo Antón, José María. “El conflicto ‘nobleza frente a monarquía’...: 101-119. More specifically, for some of their estates in Castile, see: Escobar Prieto, Eugenio. “Granadilla”. *Revista de Extremadura*, 7 (1905): 321-329 and 379-388; Escribano de la Torre, Fortunato. *Peñañiel, notas históricas*. Valladolid: Gráficas Color, 1977; Lorenzo Sánchez, Eufemio, ed. *Historia de Medina del Campo y su tierra. Nacimiento y expansión. Vol. I. Nacimiento y expansión*. Valladolid: Ayuntamiento de Medina



representative case study can help us to identify general trends about negotiation around taxation and seigneurial power in Castile, on the one hand, contributing to the global discussion on these topics in feudal societies in Western Europe during Late Medieval and Early Modern ages.

## 2. Incomes, jurisdiction and seigneurial power in Castile: a research assessment

The current scholarship on the late medieval Castilian seignury has stressed the large impact of the incorporation of forms of income that were directly levied on local communities by their lay lords. Nevertheless, these rents paled in comparison with the acquisition, either legitimate or usurped through the use of force, of sources of income and privileges which were taken from the royal treasury. From the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century, the access of the lords to the royal *tercias* and the *alcabala* became particularly remarkable, especially among the higher echelons of the aristocracy of Spain's Inner *Meseta*.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the latest research lines on taxation in late medieval Castile have been especially attentive to the processes of communication

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del Campo - Consejería de Cultura de la Junta de Castilla y León - Diputación Provincial de Valladolid - Caja de Ahorros Provincial de Valladolid, 1986; Martín Expósito, Alberto Monsalvo Antón, José María. *Documentación medieval del Archivo Municipal de Ledesma*. Salamanca: Diputación Provincial de Salamanca, 1986. Regarding a geography of power in the Crown of Castile: Martin, Georges; Laine, Françoise, eds. "Itinérance de cours". December 2009. *e-Spania*, 8. 10 March 2021 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/18545>>; Arias Guillén, Fernando. "El Estado sobre ruedas. El poder regio y el valor de la itinerancia en Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media", *Los espacios del rey. Poder y territorio en las monarquías hispánicas*, Fernando Arias Guillén, Pascual Martínez Sopena, eds. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco-Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 2018: 185-206; Monsalvo Antón, José María. *La construcción del poder real...*: 423-429.

9. With a more general character, see footnote 2; Moxó y Ortiz de Villajos, Salvador de. "Los señoríos: en torno a una problemática para el estudio del régimen señorial". *Hispania. Revista española de Historia*, 94 (1964): 205-218, 230-234; Moxó y Ortiz de Villajos, Salvador de. "Los señoríos: cuestiones metodológicas que plantea su estudio". *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 43 (1973): 279-300; Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "Haciendas señoriales nobiliarias en el reino de Castilla a fines de la Edad Media", *Historia de la Hacienda Española. Épocas antigua y medieval*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, 1982: 767-798; Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "Haciendas señoriales andaluzas a fines de la Edad Media", *Hacienda y comercio. Actas del II Coloquio de Historia Medieval andaluza. Sevilla, 8-10 de abril, 1981*. Sevilla: Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1982: 255-257; Beceiro Pita, Isabel. "Los estados señoriales"...: 300-302, 305-316; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. "La consolidación de la nobleza en la Baja Edad Media", *Nobleza y sociedad en la España Moderna*. Oviedo-Madrid: Ediciones Nobel-Fundación Central Hispano- Fundación Cultural de la Nobleza Española, 1996: 19-45; Iradiel Murugarren, Paulino. "Señoríos jurisdiccionales"...: 74-84; Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "El estado señorial"...: 251-261, 298-311; Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. "Patrimonio, rentas y poder de la nobleza bajomedieval peninsular", *Discurso, memoria y representación. La nobleza peninsular en la Baja Edad Media. Actas de la XLII Semana de Estudios Medievales de Estella (21 al 24 de julio de 2015)*. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2016: 83-140. Especially about the *tasa de señoríos*: Moxó y Ruiz de Villajos, Salvador de. "Los orígenes de la percepción de alcabalas por particulares". *Hispania. Revista española de Historia*, 72 (1958): 307-339; Moxó y Ruiz de Villajos, Salvador de. "Los cuadernos de alcabalas. Orígenes de la legislación tributaria castellana". *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 39 (1969): 317-450; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. "Rentas condales de Plasencia (1454-1488)", *Homenaje a don José María Lacarra de Miguel*. Zaragoza: Anubar, 1977: IV, 247-250; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *La Hacienda Real de*



and negotiation around taxation, together with the role that “fiscal agents” played in these processes. In this context, the relationship between the royal treasury and municipal treasuries has been studied carefully<sup>10</sup>. However, these issues have not been studied to the same degree regarding seigneurial aristocratic treasuries, despite the abundance of remarkable scholarly contributions on the specific topics of the development, during the late Middle Ages and until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, of punitive exactions over communities, the appropriation of royal incomes, and the integration of customs duties, such as the *diezmos de la mar* and the *almojarifazgos*<sup>11</sup>.

However, and as Carlos Estepa Díez and other authors have specified, the deployment of the “jurisdictional lordship” in Castile, from its first traceable roots in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, was not limited to the practical administration of justice. This “jurisdictional lordship” was linked first to the development and expansion of the “king’s lordship” over the whole of the Castilian-Leonese monarchy, which was later gradually integrated by other stately bodies such as those of the urban councils and the lay and ecclesiastical lords. In this context, the deployment of the “jurisdictional lordship” implied a substantial qualitative change in the degree of differentiated and superior power of the lords and, particularly, their ability to levy taxes over the territory and its inhabitants<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, during the late Castilian Middle Ages, and at least between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, is possible to identify the different phases of a process that was often competitive between the monarchy, different elements among the aristocracy, and the town and village councils. These agents would compete for the authority,

*Castilla (1369-1504)*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2009: 71-81; Yun Casalilla, Bartolomé. *La gestión del poder. Corona y economías aristocráticas en Castilla (siglos XVI-XVIII)*. Madrid: Akal, 2002: 74-94.

10. An updated survey of the existing literature in: Jara Fuente, José Antonio. “Contribuir (al rey y) a la ciudad: la fiscalidad urbana en Castilla en la Baja Edad Media, un estado de la cuestión”, *La ciudad medieval. Nuevas aproximaciones*, Ángela Muñoz Fernández, Francisco Ruiz Gómez, eds. Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 2020: 129-144.

11. Salas Almela, Luis. *La más callada revolución: Conflictos aduaneros, nobleza y Corona de Castilla (1450-1590)*. Madrid: Sílex Universidad, 2021; García Ayoso, Jesús. *Haciendas señoriales en Andalucía: Los Estados de la Casa Ducal de Medinaceli (siglos XV-XVI)*. Málaga: Universidad de Málaga (PhD Dissertation), 2021.

12. Estepa Díez, Carlos. “Formación y consolidación del feudalismo en Castilla y León”, *En torno al feudalismo hispánico. I Congreso de Estudios Medievales*. León: Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 1989: 157-256; Estepa Díez, Carlos. El realengo y el señorío jurisdiccional concejil en Castilla y León (siglos XII-XV), *Concejos y ciudades en la Edad Media Hispánica. II Congreso de Estudios Medievales*. Madrid: Fundación Sánchez-Albornoz, 1990: 494-505, especially 494-498; Estepa Díez, Carlos. “En torno a propiedad dominical, dominio señorial y señorío jurisdiccional”, *Espacios de poder y formas sociales en la Edad Media*, Ángel Barrios García, Gregorio del Ser Quijano, Iñaki Martín Viso, eds. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2007: 67-76; Estepa Díez, Carlos. “La construcción de la fiscalidad real”, *Poder real y sociedad. Estudios sobre el reinado de Alfonso VIII (1158-1214)*, Carlos Estepa Díez, Ignacio Álvarez Borge, José María Santamarta Luengos, eds. León: Universidad de León, 2011: 65-94; Estepa Díez, Carlos. *Los territorios del rey. Castilla y León, siglos XII-XIII*. Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2021. We must also mention Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. *Poder y relaciones sociales en Castilla en la Edad Media. Los territorios entre el Arlanzón y el Duero en los siglos X al XIV*. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1996; Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. “Señorío y feudalismo en Castilla. Una revisión historiográfica entre los años 1989-2004”, *Estudios sobre señorío y feudalismo*, Esteban Sarasa, Eliseo Serrano, eds. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2010: 107-196, more specifically 110-127; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla (1252-1369)*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1993; Monsalvo Antón, José María. *La construcción del poder real...: 27-157*.



appropriation of rights, and practices related to the administration of jurisdiction, its hierarchical distribution among agents and organisations, and the levying of taxes by the lords on the communities under their control<sup>13</sup>.

Taking this into account, both the expansion of the right of *martinega*, exerted by the monarchy and the aristocratic lords over towns and villages, and the recognition of the lord's authority by the communities under his control, have been understood as signifiers of these initial phases of the projection of the "jurisdictional lordship" in Castile. After its conception in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the *martinega* was established throughout the rest of the century as a referential element in the deployment of royal taxation around the development of the "lordship of the king" over the royal towns and the *señorío de behetría*. In turn, the exhaustive analysis of the territories of the *merindad mayor de Castilla*, north of the Douro River, show that, between the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this tribute was incorporated by most lay lords, either through royal donations, usurpation, or by replicating the procedure of the monarchy through the association of exaction and jurisdiction<sup>14</sup>. In any case, the lords continued to accumulate exaction rights over their towns and villages during the following decades in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, giving special prominence namely to the seigneurial *pedido*. At the same time, they were also increasing their income thanks to development of monarchical taxation in Castile, receiving a wide range of forms of donations (*mantenimientos, tierras para lanza* —"fiefs de bourse" or money-fiefs—, royal grants, etc.) from the royal treasury<sup>15</sup>.

Precisely, during the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and in the initial decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a specific tax became the most relevant and substantial form of income that the lords levied on their towns and villages,

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13. Estepa Díez, Carlos. "Notas sobre el feudalismo castellano en el marco historiográfico general", *Estudios sobre señorío y feudalismo*, Esteban Sarasa, Eliseo Serrano, eds. Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2010: 77-105, especially 87-94; Monsalvo Antón, José María. "El conflicto 'nobleza frente a monarquía'...": 209-257; Muñoz Gómez, *El poder señorial*...:97-126; Monsalvo Antón, José María. *La construcción del poder real*...: 159-277, 327-428.

14. Estepa Díez, Carlos. *Las behetrías castellanas*. (2 vols.). Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2003: I, 238-257. See also: Estepa Díez, Carlos. "Le Libro Becerro de las Behetrías (1352). Structures seigneuriales, fiscalité et charges symboliques", *Pour une anthropologie du prélèvement seigneurial dans les campagnes médiévales (XIe-XIVe siècles)*. Les mots, les temps, les lieux. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2007: 457-496, specifically 470-473; Estepa Díez, Carlos. "La construcción de la fiscalidad"...: 78-79; Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial*...: 110-120.

15. See footnote 9. Similarly, regarding the different examples of the evolution of these forms of income that were distributed by the royal tax agencies between the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century see, among others and with a more general character: Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. "Patrimonio, rentas y poder...": 101-106, 112-117; Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. "Sobre nobleza, rentas regias y señoríos en Castilla la Vieja, c. 1290-c. 1350". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 50/1 (2020): 31-59; or in a more particular manner, in the cases of the admiral Diego Hurtado de Mendoza and his son Íñigo López de Mendoza, marquis of Santillana, Juan Alfonso de Pimentel and Rodrigo Alfonso Pimentel, first and second counts of Benavente, or the Infante Ferdinand of Antequera, his wife and his heirs: Beceiro Pita, Isabel. *El condado de Benavente*...:125-173; Sánchez Prieto, Ana Belén. *La Casa de Mendoza hasta el tercer duque del Infantado (1350-1531)*. *El ejercicio y alcance del poder señorial en la Castilla Bajomedieval*. Madrid: Palafox y Pezuela, 2001: 321-343; Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial*...: 348-358.



### 3. The origins and nature of the seigneurial *pedido*

Years ago, Professor Isabel Beceiro defined the *pedido* as the major asset of seigneurial income at a time of transition in the transformation of the estates of the Castilian aristocracy, precisely between the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This process would, as we have already pointed out, crystallize decades later with the appropriation by the lords of the central assets of royal taxation, the *tercias* and *alcabalas*, and with the maximization of the extraction of income derived from the exercise of their jurisdictional authority over the villages and their inhabitants.<sup>16</sup> What was the nature of this exaction, and where were its origins? Significantly, the registry of the seigneurial rights of the towns and villages of the *merindad mayor de Castilla* does not record that the lords, neither lay nor ecclesiastical, exercised, among their rights, the *pedido señorial*<sup>17</sup>. It is only sparsely mentioned: according to a representative sample of the entire territory consigned in the registry (also known as *Libro de Becerro*), consisting of 452 places (18.82% of the localities included in the book), it only appears in three cases, all under the lordship of Pedro de Haro, where it is shown as a seigneurial right together with the *yantar*<sup>18</sup>. Despite the almost extraordinary nature of this result, we are able to assess that the *pedido* was not developed *ex novo* from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. At the very least, it already existed in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, and the principles and practices that led to its generalization in later decades had an even earlier origin.

Indeed, the references to the *petitum* are much older, although linked to royal exactions. Thus, Claudio Sánchez Albornoz already dealt with the origin of the *petitum*, which he defined as an “exceptional benefit, devised by Alfonso VI in 1091 as an emergency measure”<sup>19</sup>. After its consolidation and generalisation in the kingdoms of Leon and Castile in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the *pedido* became one of the traditional rights of the Castilian-Leonese monarchy and a direct precedent of “state taxation”. Despite this, it tended to disappear as the result of the generalisation

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16. The exemplification of this model, and more specifically regarding this transitional phase in which the *pedido* appears in a commanding position, through the evolution of the seigneurial rent of the Pimentel, in: Beceiro Pita, Isabel. *El condado de Benavente...*: 149-154.

17. On these records, *Libro Becerro de las Behetrías. Estudio y texto crítico*, ed. Gonzalo Martínez Díez (3 vols.). León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1981; Estepa Díez, Carlos. *Las behetrías castellanas...* Equally interesting, among others: Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. *Poder y relaciones sociales en Castilla...*; Estepa Díez, Carlos; Jular Pérez-Alfaro, Cristina, eds. *Los señoríos de behetría*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001.

18. It was the case of Bahabón de Esgueva, Oquillas and Santibáñez de Valdesgueva, all in the merindad of Santo Domingo de Silos. The *yantar* and the *pedido* were the only rights that appear as related to the lords in these places, together with the *infurción* in Santibáñez (*Libro Becerro de las Behetrías...*: II, 639). The sample was taken from the towns and villages that could be linked to the stately seigneurie of the *Infante* Ferdinand and his wife Eleanor, the rights over the *behetrías* associated with the lordship of Lara, under his command, and those that she inherited from her: Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial...*: 112-115).

19. Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. “Notas para el estudio del *petitum*”, *Estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*, Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio, ed. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1965: 504.



of tax exemptions and specially the development of extraordinary services, in the form of coinage, requests and services, that were voted by the different parliaments (*Cortes*) that took place during the reign of Alfonso X<sup>20</sup>. A more in-depth analysis of the evolution of the *petitum* has allowed us to identify it as an exceptional tax of a seigneurial character, which was levied by the king on his vassals as a display of his status as lord over them. Thus, the study of the references to the *petitum*, *petitiones* and *pedido* in the royal diplomas of the period that goes from 1136-1141 to 1170-1176 would allow us to verify an increase in their number and, therefore, its generalization as an extraordinary royal request. In this way, the tribute would have become one of the features of the first expression of a “royal public taxation” in Castile and Leon. From there, it reached the condition of a regular tax during the reign of Ferdinand III for, under the reign of his son Alfonso, disappear or, rather, dilute within the different models of contribution that made up the payments approved in parliament<sup>21</sup>.

What we are then trying to highlight is that the origin of the *pedido* was not linked to formulations of power or authority of a public nature, but to interpersonal and seigneurial ties. It is also interesting to identify the progressive incorporation of such rights by the monarchy within the framework of the definition of the “jurisdictional lordship of the king”. Thus, such rights constituted one of the main substrates for the formulation of extraordinary services, which were effectively based on a perception of the relationship between king, kingdom and subjects that was understood under the increasingly well-established terms of natural lordship, jurisdictional authority and, ultimately, sovereignty<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, we can indeed recognise the seigneurial *pedido* as a form of service with an early origin prior to the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This could well have occurred because already in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> centuries the lords relied on the *pedido* as an extraordinary exaction, just like the king in his capacity as lord, although without the same means to turn it into a regular tax.

Another alternative is that, since the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, within the process of accession to the different conceptual and executive resources of the “jurisdictional lordship”, the aristocratic lords in the Crown of Castile mimicked the practice of the monarchy, and thus requested the payment of *pedidos* from their vassals, as an

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20. Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. “Ingreso, gasto y política fiscal de la Corona de Castilla. desde Alfonso X a Enrique III (1252-1406)”. *Hacienda Pública Española*, 69 (1981): 27-28; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *Fiscalidad y poder real...*: 54.

21. Estepa Díez, Carlos. “La construcción de la fiscalidad”...: 65-76. Professor Ladero shows how the tax rate was maintained, at a 10% on the goods of the tax-paying residents, who had experienced the old form of *petitum* meant at collecting the extraordinary services perceived through the *pedido*. The same concept that theoretically sustained the tax also survived: Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. “Ingreso, gasto”...: 28; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. “Las transformaciones de la fiscalidad regia castellano-leonesa en la segunda mitad del siglo XIII (1252-1312)”, *Historia de la Hacienda Española. Épocas antigua y medieval*, Isabel Alfonso Antón, Luis García de Valdeavellano, eds. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, 1982: 329-334; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. “Fiscalidad regia y génesis del Estado en la Corona de Castilla (1252-1504). *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie III. Historia Medieval*, 4 (1991): 99-103, 119-120.

22. Regarding the conceptualisation of the royal taxation in late medieval Castile and its connections with the notions of sovereignty: Ortego Rico, Pablo. “Justificaciones doctrinales de la soberanía fiscal regia en la baja Edad Media castellana”. *En la España medieval*, 32 (2009): 113-138.



exceptional tribute meant for situations of need. Be that as it may, the very few references to the *pedido* in the aforementioned *Libro de Becerro* must not be understood as a sign that the seigneurial *pedido* was not requested by the lords in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century but that, above all, it responded to a more or less arbitrary appreciation of a situation of need that would justify its demand and final quantity. To the extent that it was a non-regular demand, and, therefore, not prescribed by local jurisdictions or ordinances and without a predetermined value, the subjected communities did not consider it as one of the *certain rights* and exactions (*derechos ciertos*) that they owed to their lords. In any case, the lack of explicit complaints concerning illicit demands for the *pedido* in the *Libro de Becerro* shows that, nevertheless, it was still far from being a generalised demand in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>23</sup>.

That step was taken, indeed, during the second half of the century. Here the evidence is not only restricted to the area of Castile north of the Duero, but also applies to the whole of the Northern *Meseta* and Galicia. The first news that we have located of what can be interpreted as the conversion of the *pedido* from an extraordinary request to a form of extraordinary taxation are from the time period between 1371 and 1392 in the town of Medinaceli, and were demanded by the first two counts of Medinaceli, Bernal and Gaston of Bearne. In the archive of the ducal house of Medinaceli, several notebooks attest the distribution of different charges among the tax-paying dwellers of the town and its surrounding district. These taxes appeared under concepts such as *martiniegas*, *derechos solariegos*, and *rondas y velas*<sup>24</sup>. Among them, we can also find the continuous contributions that were ordered by the count to fund the works of the ramparts and portholes of the town wall and of the fortress, annually from 1371 to 1380, in addition to a whole series of tax distributions between 1381 and 1392 under unspecified concepts<sup>25</sup>. Perhaps it is difficult to associate such demands with a form of *pedido*, but we do know that in 1374 the count *Don* Bernal ordered the levying of 30.000 *maravedís* (mrs.) from the town, and again in 1384, when he asked for 18.000 mrs. These tributes could be understood as a form of seigneurial *pedido*, since the municipal officers that responded to the actual demands used the term *servicio*.<sup>26</sup>

To these references we must add those that appear in the account books of the council of Paredes de Nava between 1393 and 1399, and show how the count of Noreña, Alfonso Enríquez, usurped the lordship from Pedro Enríquez, count of Trastámara, and therefore levied a *pedido* of 20.000 mrs. on the town. Alfonso Enríquez himself received the first yearly payment and, after the recuperation of the estate by the count of Trastámara, Alfonso's son, don Fernando, collected

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23. Some complaints were indeed raised regarding the forceful taking of *yantares*, *martiniegas*, and *sernas* or even related to generic formulations, such as *...lo que el señor les quiere tomar...*, in places such as Terradillos and Gumiel de Mercado, together with other estates of Pedro de Haro: *Libro Becerro de las Behetrias...*: II, 640-642.

24. *Documentación del condado de Medinaceli (1368-1454)*, ed. María Luisa Pardo Rodríguez. Soria: Diputación Provincial de Soria, 1993: 145-204.

25. *Documentación del condado de Medinaceli...*: 156-224.

26. *Documentación del condado de Medinaceli...*: 167, 183, 186.



the second year's payment, taking advantage of the count's presence in far away Galicia and the conflict among the factions that aimed at controlling the different positions in the town council<sup>27</sup>. Meanwhile, Juan Alfonso Pimentel levied *pedidos* on his vassals in Benavente and its surrounding area after becoming count in 1398. This imposition, that reached the sum of 20.000 mrs., was deemed as abusive by many, who denounced the tax in front of the king, together with other complaints. The sum, though, was eventually increased by another 15.000 mrs. However, the seigneurial *pedido* was further imposed for this same amount until, in 1422, in an agreement to settle the lawsuits that the council had initiated against Don Juan Alfonso, his successor, Rodrigo Alfonso Pimentel, exempted the town from paying those additional 15.000 mrs.<sup>28</sup>. In turn, the yearly demand for seigneurial *pedidos* in the towns of the Infante Ferdinand, known as "el de Antequera", his wife, and children was perfectly established during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The first known evidence for this practice comes from the town of Paredes de Nava, from 1400 onwards<sup>29</sup>, and Cuéllar, in 1402<sup>30</sup>. There is also evidence of its normalized perception in towns and villages spread throughout the Rioja, the northern *Meseta*, and present-day Extremadura<sup>31</sup>.

Advancing a little further in time, the references to seigneurial *pedidos* multiplied until the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The inventory of goods raised at the death, in 1432, of Leonor de la Vega, mother of Íñigo Hurtado de Mendoza, Lord of la Vega and later Marquis of Santillana, also shows the perception of *pedidos*. These *pedidos* were rather modest and were perceived in fixed quantities, distributed among a good part of her vassals and the towns and valleys under her dominion in the Cantabrian mountains, such as the *mayordomazgo* of la Vega and Polanco (650 mrs.), Valdegama (600 mrs.), Rioferrero, (1.200 mrs.), Argüeso (400 mrs.), valle de Anievas (1.000 mrs.), Ucieda (450 mrs.), Cabuérniga, los Tojos and Bárcena Mayor (275 mrs.), in different places in Liébana and its surrounding region (5.320 mrs.), and the town of Guardo (2.400 mrs.)<sup>32</sup>. Pedro de Stúñiga, count of Plasencia, also

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27. AMPdN, CP, Borradores, 236/09, f. 55/38v, 236/11, ff. 57/03r, 05v, 17v. See: Mitre Fernández, Emilio. "Un apunte sobre don Fernando de Antequera y el señorío de Paredes de Nava", *Anexos de Cuadernos de Historia de España*, Buenos Aires: Instituto de Historia de España, 1986: IV, 277-288; Fuente, María Jesús. "Los inicios de la contabilidad municipal en Castilla. Paredes de Nava (1386-1396)". *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie III. Historia Medieval*, 11 (1998): 70-76; Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. "La participación política de las elites locales en el gobierno de las ciudades castellanas en la Baja Edad Media bandos y conflictos de intereses (Paredes de Nava, final del s. XIV-inicio del s. XV)". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 39/1 (2009): 275-305.

28. AHNobleza, Osuna, leg. 451, no. 11; folder 101, no. 13.

29. In 1401, the *Infantes* demanded a *pedido* of 40.000 mrs., aimed at funding the works of the bridge in Alconétar, to which another 20.000 mrs. were added in the form of a *prestido*: AMPdN, CP, 238/03, ff. 2/4v, 5r, 8v, 14v.

30. In that year, the town council received a petition of 16.000 mrs. of *pedido*: *Colección documental de Cuéllar (934-1492)*, eds. Balbino Velasco Bayón, Mauricio Herrero Jiménez, Segismundo Pecharromán Cebrían, Julia Montalvilvo García. Segovia: Ayuntamiento de Cuéllar, 2010: I (docs. 221, 364-365).

31. Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial...*: 366-372, 440-415.

32. Sánchez Prieto, Ana Belén. *La Casa de Mendoza...*: 323-327.



imposed seigneurial *pedidos* on his estates: 80.000 mrs. in Plasencia and 40.000 in Béjar, both recorded in the inventory of assets raised after his death in 1453<sup>33</sup>.

During the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the counts of Benavente levied *pedidos* in Villalón (29.000 mrs., until its permutation with the council for the rents of the *peso* and the *cuchares del pan*), in Mayorga (30.000 mrs.), which until 1430 had belonged to John of Aragon, King of Navarre, the district of San Juan de Losada in Sanabria and Carballeda (1,000 mrs.), in Milmanda and its surrounding land (3.000 and 15.000 mrs., respectively), and in Comonte (2.1000 mrs.). From what can be understood from the documentation, the *pedidos* were collected annually, and around 1448 their amount had been fixed to the amounts listed above<sup>34</sup>. The Constable Álvaro de Luna also levied the *pedido* in his vast domains, scattered throughout the kingdom, and, even more so, from the estates that he ruled as grand master of the order of Santiago<sup>35</sup>.

There is no doubt that by the 1450s the request for seigneurial *pedidos* was fully generalized in the Crown of Castile. What was the reason of this generalization in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century? The most plausible answer can be found in a combination of the fossilization of the amounts of other seigneurial rents, combined with the effects of the fossilization of the amounts of other seigneurial rents, combined with the effects of the devaluation suffered by the low-denomination coinage made of billon and the money of account, the *maravedí*, documented since the rise of the Trastámara lineage to the Castilian throne. The new issues of billon coins during the reigns of Henry II, John I, and Henry III were of an increasingly lower fineness. This, together with the official depreciation of the value of the *maravedí*, halved in 1404, led to a considerable depreciation of the common currency with respect to gold and silver coinage. In actual practice, this depreciation was even higher, and the *maravedí*'s value reached a third or even a quarter of its previous price, a phenomenon that continued, at least, during the reign of John II<sup>36</sup>. This is relevant to the extent that these billon coins were of daily use for most of the population and, therefore, the *pedidos* were collected in that same currency<sup>37</sup>.

Let us also bear in mind that the taxes that the councils owed to their lords were clearly typified, on the basis of customs but also in written testimonies. The rights and obligations of each party were limited, and several forms of income became

33. Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. "Rentas condales de Plasencia"...: 245-247; Martínez Moro, Jesús. *La renta feudal en la Castilla del siglo XV, los Stúñiga: consideraciones metodológicas y otras*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1977.

34. AHNobleza, Osuna, leg. 444, no. 1. Beceiro Pita, Isabel. *El condado de Benavente...*: 149-154.

35. Calderón Ortega, José Manuel. *Álvaro de Luna. Riqueza y poder en la Castilla del siglo XV*. Madrid: Dykinson, 1998: 255-275.

36. Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. "La política monetaria en la Corona de Castilla". *En la España medieval*, 11 (1988):79-123, 80, 85-100; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *La Hacienda real de Castilla...*: 764-785.

37. Some examples of the management of money in the form of these *white* billon coins originating from the collection of different seigneurial taxes by the town and seigneurial officers are contained in the account records of the agents of the town of Paredes de Nava in 1405: AMPdN, CP, 238/07, f. 06/19r. It is also worth mentioning the devolution by the town council of 18.000 mrs. in "white" billon coins in 1410, as a form of repayment of a loan of 12.000 mrs. they had received in coins of gold: AMPdN, CP, 238/12, ff. 11/08v.



fixed in their quantities. Therefore, these revenues were not, a priori, reviewable, except as the result of agreements between the lords and the dominated or through the mediation and intervention of other superior authorities<sup>38</sup>. This, for the time period at hand, affected incomes such as the *martiniegas*, *yantares*, *portazgos* and *derechos de merindad*, among others, provided that their distribution affected the whole of the dominated community, their ancient origin was clearly recognised, and its collection was not made by means of its lease in a public auction, and, therefore, varied from year to year according to the different bids<sup>39</sup>.

The most obvious consequence of this context of depreciation for seigneurial estates was the loss of value of these traditional rents. Thus, without neglecting the efforts to increase the amounts of the same, against the established rights and traditions and through force or negotiation, the mobilisation of the seigneurial *pedido* must have opened a stimulating window of opportunity to compensate this drop in income. In this way, the *pedido* became, for the Castilian aristocracy of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a crucial source of income, subject to its variable requirement in time and quantity, and, in principle, fully legitimate but not constrained by clear legal or customary boundaries. At that time, the *pedido* could not only function as a valuable source of income but, through its imposition, which eventually became annual and ordinary, it contributed to reinforcing the exercise of seigneurial authority over dominated communities.

Therefore, we can emphatically affirm that, firstly, the seigneurial *pedidos* in Castile were widespread throughout all or most of the kingdom. Secondly, that *pedidos* went from being tributes of a more or less extraordinary character in the central decades of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to becoming generalised as an annual levy. Third, that its amount was originally more or less variable, but that there was a tendency, already during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, towards the stipulation of a fixed amount to be paid by the councils, which, let us not forget, were in charge of the distribution and collection of this tribute among the local population. There was even room for negotiation between lords and councils, who, sometimes, reached an agreement to abolish the tax, or exchange it for other goods and incomes, as happened in the cases of Benavente and Villalón.

In the end, we can verify that the extension of the *pedido* as another form of ordinary tax among the seigneurial exactions on towns and villages was not only limited to the elite of the aristocracy, made up by the main *ricos hombres* and *grandees* of the kingdom. The accounts presented by María de Guzmán, mother, curator and guardian of her son Pedro Núñez de Herrera, heir of marshal García

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38. This is the case of the authorisation that king Henry III gave to his brother, the *Infante* Ferdinand, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October of 1404, after the depreciation of the value of the *maravedí*, thus allowing the adjustment of the nominal quantity of his seigneurial rents to the double of their former value: *Colección documental de Cuéllar...*: I, doc. 233, 395-396.

39. In a general fashion, Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "Haciendas señoriales nobiliarias"...: 767-798; Quintanilla Raso, María Concepción. "Haciendas señoriales andaluzas...": 255-257. For a more specific approximation to the traditional feudal rents in northern Castile after the 14<sup>th</sup> century and until the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century: Beceiro Pita, Isabel. *El condado de Benavente...*: 145-167; Estepa Díez, Carlos. "Le Libro Becerro de las Behetrías (1352)"...



González de Herrera, of her exercise in the administration of the assets of her son's estate between 1405 and 1409 show the collection of *pedidos* in the towns of Pedraza (14.000 mrs. per year) and Torremormojón (5.000 mrs. per year<sup>40</sup>). This example may be valid to show how the generalisation of this tribute throughout the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the considerable increase in income that it entailed also affected the junior ranks of the aristocracy.

In this way, by the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the *pedido* had become a central element of the income that the Castilian aristocrats took from their vassals, due to its amount and significance in terms of the exercise of power over the dominated communities. At least in practice, the *pedido* had gone from being an extraordinary and discretionary exaction to be recognized by the local councils as a legitimate and ordinary demand, placed by their lords and linked to their condition as such. However, resistance to the imposition of the *pedido* or the opening of negotiation scenarios for the establishment of its final amount cannot be neglected.

#### 4. Negotiating the *pedido*: demands, coercion, resistance, and agreement

We have previously pointed out how, in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the seigneurial *pedidos* became an "ordinary" stately yield that tended to increase in quantity. The accounting records made between 1446-1448 relating to the income and expenses of the Pimentel, counts of Benavente, show this transformation in their villas and domains. The references relative to the amount of the seigneurial *pedido* in different towns under the lordship of Ferdinand of Antequera, Eleonor of Alburquerque, and John and Herny of Aragon during the first fifty years of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Haro, Paredes de Nava, Villalón, Peñafiel, Cuéllar, Medina del Campo, Olmedo, Alba de Tormes, Ledesma, Granadilla), in turn, allow us to verify that the *pedido* contributed between 40% and 70% of the total of the ordinary seigneurial income in said towns<sup>41</sup>.

In any case, it is convenient to insist on two specific characteristics that will help us to better understand the dynamics of negotiation around the *pedido* between the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. To this effect, the study of the towns under the lordship of the *Infantes* Ferdinand and Eleonor and their children provides us with very illustrative information. These particularities have to do with the variability of the amount demanded for the satisfaction of this tax in each annuity in which it was claimed. Thus, within the logic of the "extraordinary" and arbitrary nature of the *pedido*, its request and collection were subject to extreme fluctuations. On the one hand, new additional payments could be requested during

40. AHNobleza, Frías, Caja. 445, nO. 16.

41. Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial...*: 366-372. This calculation does not include the value of the *alcabalas* and *tercias* from the moment they were collected by the *Infante* Ferdinand and, after him, his heirs, from 1407 onwards: Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *El poder señorial...*: 388-397.



said annuity, in the form of a *prestido* or *empréstito* (loan), as stated in the extant documents. Thus, these payments increased the fiscal pressure sustained by the dominated. On the other hand, the successive acceptance by the councils of the demands for *pedidos* and *prestidos* could lead to reductions and commutations of the required quantities and even an exemption of payment in a certain year.

A first assessment could suggest that these *prestidos* could be understood, in effect, as loans, tax advances made by the town councils to their lords that, in a more or less short term, had to be returned. The terms of the request for the *prestido* of 60.000 mrs. that the *Infante* John of Aragon requested from the town of Villalón in 1420 point in this direction. The *prestido* was required in an alleged situation of need, after which:

... nuestra merçed e uoluntad es de uos los ir a dar e tornar e pagar, e uos entreguedes dellos de qualesquier mrs. que en qualquier manera a nos pertenesçen en esa dicha uilla e su tierra, así de pechos e derechos ordinarios como del nuestro pedido e de otros qualesquier mrs. que en qualquier manera a nos fueren librados e ayamos de auer del dicho sennor Rey así en las alcualas e tercias desa dicha uilla e su tierra commo en otra manera qualquier<sup>42</sup>.

However, the evidence that we have been able to recover in relation to the demands for, negotiations, and collections of *pedidos* and *prestidos* in the different towns of Ferdinand of Antequera, Eleanor of Alburquerque, and their children in the first third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, allow us to doubt whether there was a real obligation in practice on the part of the lords to reimburse the councils with the precise amounts received in the form of such *prestidos*. In any case, the terms mentioned here also betray certain principles of proportionality and compensation when conducting negotiations and setting the annual amount of seigneurial *pedidos*.

From the abundant accounting documentation emanating from the town council of Paredes de Nava, we have registered the total amount that said town paid in the form of the seigneurial *pedido* between 1401 and 1420. Paredes de Nava was one of the main urban centres of north-eastern Castile at the end of the Middle Ages, located in the eastern part of Tierra de Campos. Its municipal archive has the most complete series of council accounting documentation in the area and, in fact, of all the localities under the lordship of the *Infantes*. Table 1 shows how the *pedido* oscillated around intermediate levels of 40.000 mrs., just double the amount usually requested by the lords who preceded the *infante* Ferdinand and before the application of the compensation of deeds in old coinage to their equivalent in current currency, authorised by King Henry III in 1404. Between 1406 and 1410 there was a notable fluctuation in its value, with years in which it was not requested at all and others in which it reached a particularly high value. Thus, the amount

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42. "...It is our will that you will return them and repay them, of any sum of mrs. that, in any way, belong to us in said town and its land, such as ordinary taxes, our *pedido*, and any other mrs. that we could obtain in whatever form, from our lord the king, and through the *alcabalas* and *tercias* from said town, or in any other fashion...": ARChVall, Protocolos y Padrones, Caja. 176, no. 1, f. 30v-31r, in a letter issued in Olmedo, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1420.



requested through the *pedido* reached its maximum in 1407, with 150.000 mrs. This impressive figure included an important *prestido*, which the *infante* requested coinciding with three main events: his access to the regency of King John II; the monitoring of the campaigns against Granada in 1407 and 1410<sup>43</sup>; finally, the deals to obtain the *maestrazgos* of the orders of Alcántara and Santiago for his children in 1409. The amount of the *pedido* was set at 46.100 mrs. between 1411 and 1415, during the reign of Ferdinand in Aragon and the administration exercised by Sancho de Rojas in the Castilian domains of the Aragonese monarchs, notwithstanding a minimum variation in 1414. After the death of Ferdinand in 1416 there was a consequent breakdown in the rhythms of request and fulfilment of the *pedido*, until the *Infante* John of Aragon readjusted its amount to 60.000 mrs. In 1420, because of the events caused by the kidnapping of King John II by the *Infante* Don Enrique, it reached the extraordinary sum of 85.000 mrs<sup>44</sup>. These amounts show that the years in which the *pedido* was not requested did not offset the accumulated tax burden, neither the *prestidos* from previous years. Nor has it been possible to locate in the documentation any evidence of compensation by the town council in the form of other royal or stately incomes, nor through the presentation of money or other favours.

**Table 1: Total sum of the seigneurial *pedido* in Paredes de Nava (1401-1420)<sup>45</sup>**

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1401 | 40.000 mrs.<br>(plus 20.000 mrs. of <i>prestido</i> )               |
| 1402 | 20.000 mrs.<br>(plus another 30.000 mrs. that were requested later) |
| 1403 | 40.000 mrs.   |
| 1404 | 40.000 mrs.   |
| 1405 | It was not requested<br>(initially, 45.000 mrs; then condoned)      |
| 1406 | 70.000 mrs.<br>(as compensation for not levying the <i>sisá</i> )   |
| 1407 | 90.000 mrs. (plus 60.000 mrs. of <i>prestido</i> )                  |
| 1408 | 48.00 mrs. (initially 60.000 mrs.)                                  |

43. González Sánchez, Santiago. *Los recursos militares de la monarquía castellana a comienzos del siglo XV. Las campañas granadinas del infante Don Fernando. Setenil y Antequera (1407-1410)*. Madrid: Dykinson, 2016.

44. Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. *Fernando 'el de Antequera'*. ...: 99-117, 165-180.

45. AMPdN, CP, 236/01-24, 237/01-05, 238/01-13, 239/01-09.



|      |  |
|------|--|
| 1409 | 100.000 mrs. (initially 128.000 mrs.)  |
| 1410 | It was not requested<br>(the <i>infante</i> received 108.000 mrs.<br>corresponding to the donation<br>approved in the estates' assembly) |
| 1411 | 46.100 mrs.  |
| 1412 | 46.100 mrs.  |
| 1413 | 50.500 mrs.  |
| 1414 | 46.100 mrs.  |
| 1415 | 46.100 mrs.  |
| 1416 | 23.000 mrs.<br>(plus 11.000 mrs. that were<br>delivered the following year)  |
| 1417 | 60.000 mrs.  |
| 1418 | 60.000 mrs.  |
| 1419 | 54.500 mrs. (initially 60.000 mrs)   |
| 1420 | 85.000 mrs.<br>(a <i>prestido</i> of 100.000 mrs. was requested;<br>although it apparently never materialised)                           |

Neither the fluctuations in the quantities demanded by the *Infantes* as a seigneurial *pedido*, nor the requests for additional money in the form of *prestidos* were exclusive to Paredes de Nava. Such requirements were normally accompanied, in the seigneurial letters and in the public declarations of the collectors at the service of the *Infantes*, by the exposition of the reason that led to the request for the *pedido* or, more specifically, an extraordinarily large sum, both in the form a *pedido* and a *prestido*.

Thus, in 1409, Don Ferdinand demanded from the council of Villalón—another of the great towns in the Tierra de Campos, located in its western area—a contribution of 85.000 mrs. According to the *Infante*, such sum was needed because of "...my needs regarding the war..." against the muslims of Granada. Despite this, in December of that same year only 42.750 mrs. had been paid<sup>46</sup>. Meanwhile, in 1419, the *pedido* levied on that same council was finally set at 42.160 mrs., after a reduction of 4.000 mrs. from the amount initially requested by the *Infante* John of Aragon. An extra 6.200 mrs. were requested from the town's Jewish community (*aljama*), adding up

46. AMVillalón, LdA, no. 1, 25<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> December 1409.



to a total of 48.360 mrs. We can thus establish that the Jewish *aljamas* contributed separately to these seignorial demands, although the specific documentary evidence containing the actual requests is scarce. The following year of 1420, the same amounts were required: 46.120 mrs., with another 6.200 mrs. levied from the *aljama* (52.360 mrs. total), to which a *prestido* of 60.000 mrs. was later added, finally exceeding the sum of 112.000 mrs. The rationale and circumstances behind the request were similar to those observed in the case of Paredes de Nava: the *Infante* claimed that *...ouimos de enuiar a iuntar çierta gent d'armas e de a pie por guarda del seruicio del dicho sennor Rey e bien de sus regnos, çerca de lo qual se nos ha recresçido e esperan recresçer grandes costas e misiones*<sup>47</sup>.

In 1423 the *Infante* John required 40.000 mrs. from the town council, a sum that was later reduced to 30.000, and 3.500 mrs. from the town's Jewish community. According to the town council, the aforementioned tax reduction was necessary because of their poverty:

*...estar muy pobres e menesterosos por rrason de la carestía del pan de los annos pasados e otros y porque fallescen d'ella mucha gente asy por rrason de la dicha pestilencia que Dios quiso dar en ella en los annos pasados commo por algunas personas se aver desavesindado d'ella de tres annos a esta parte a se aver ydo a beuir a otros sennorios*.<sup>48</sup>

Switching to the town of Cuéllar, in the eastern part of the Castilian region of Extremadura, the *Infante* Ferdinand requested 16.000 mrs. of *pedido* in 1402, while the only well documented levy on the Jewish community happened in 1411, with a sum of 6.100 mrs. This last *pedido* was requested because of the Crown succession in Aragon, the purchase of the town of Alba de Tormes, and the daily expensed related to the war with Granada and the general ruling of the kingdom<sup>49</sup>. If we accept the existence of some kind of proportionality between the requests placed on the Jewish communities and those placed on the town councils, together with the example of later *pedidos* on the town of Vilallón<sup>50</sup>, the *pedido* requested from the town of Cuéllar in 1411 could have amounted to 40.000 mrs, that were placed on both Christian and Jewish tax-paying residents.

In the case of Alba de Tormes, located in the western area of the Castilian-Leonesa *Extremaduras*, the town and its surrounding region (*tierra*) paid a sum that, between 1407 and 1429, oscillated between yearly payments of 15.000 and 35.000

47. "...we must assemble some men of arms and foot soldiers to answer the king's call and for the well-being of his kingdoms, reason for which we have been requested to spend and we except an great increase in costs and spending": ARChVall, Protocolos y Padrones, Caja 176, no. 1, ff. 3v, 6r-7r, 30v-31r.

48. "...we are very poor and in great need because of the lack of bread in the previous years, and because so many people have passed away from the plague that God saw fit to send in the previous years, and because some people have left the town and, in the past three years, have gone to live in other estates": AMVillalón, LdA, no 1, ff. 30r-v, 35r.

49. *Colección documental de Cuéllar*...: 43-433 (doc. No. 259).

50. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Diversos de Castilla, leg. 4, f. 6r-v. Suárez Fernández, Luis. "Las rentas castellanas del infante don Juan, rey de Navarra y de Aragón". *Hispania. Revista española de Historia*, 85 (1959): 192-204.



mrs., to which we must add the amounts levied on the Jewish communities, which oscillated between 3.000 and 8.000 mrs, depending on the year<sup>51</sup>. Between 1411 and 1413, after the final purchase of the town of Alba de Tormes by the *Infante*, a *prestido* of 44.000 mrs. was requested on said town by Juan García Tablares, the main royal tax collector in the bishopric of Plasencia. He was acting as an agent of Juan García de Paredes, the main treasurer of king Ferdinand I of Aragon in Castile, who requested such *prestido* of 44.000 mrs. to pay for the Castilian men at arms that he had assembled to fight the rebellious count of Urgell<sup>52</sup>. In 1418, in a context of relative normality, the *pedido* amounted to 30.000 mrs., of which 22.000 were levied from the town and its region and 8.000 from the Jewish community. The beneficiaries of this *pedido* were the widower Queen Eleonor of Albuquerque and Sancho de Rojas, archbishop of Toledo, who acted as executors of the last will of the recently deceased king Ferdinand<sup>53</sup>. From 1420 to 1429 we can document large fluctuations under the lordship of John of Aragon, although, by the end of the decade, the *pedido* was seemingly fixed to 20.000 mrs, notwithstanding the unknown sum demanded from the Jewish community. This sum was completed by the demand for *prestidos* in 1413 and 1424, corresponding to 44.000 mrs. and 35.0000 mrs. respectively<sup>54</sup>.

Data regarding the amount of the *pedido* in other towns, from La Rioja to the *Extremaduras*, is displayed in Table 2. The collected information refers to a single year and thus does not allow us to document in detail the negotiation processes that revolved around the fixation of a definitive annual amount. The table also includes data related to other towns that were under the lordship of John of Aragon between 1439 and 1445, and that he had not obtained through his parents' inheritance (Roa de Duero, Aranda de Duero, Atienza, and the towns and villages of the lordship of Villena), but in the form of compensation for other estates he lost in 1430. This data shows the wide extension of the seigneurial *pedido* in the southern regions of Castile, in addition to clarifying the evolution of this tribute during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century regarding its negotiation between lords and dominated communities.

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51. Monsalvo Antón, José María. *El sistema político concejil. El ejemplo del señorío medieval de Alba de Tormes y su concejo de villa y tierra*. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1988: 367.

52. The tax collector gave the council a letter of payment for the delivery of 21.000 mrs., on account of that *prestido*, on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1414: AMAdT, LAC, 1411, f. 2v; LAC, 1413, ff. 42r-v, 45v-r. For further information about the revolt of the count of Urgell and the assembling of Castilian resources by the king Ferdinand I of Aragon: Muñoz Gómez, Víctor. "Compañeros de armas: ejemplos de sociabilidad en las fronteras marítimas ibéricas durante el reinado de Fernando I de Aragón". *Vegueta. Anuario de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia*, 18 (2018): 133-136, more specifically 136-147; González Sánchez, Santiago. "La presencia de hombres de armas castellanos en el cerco a Balaguer, 1413". *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum*, 12 (2018): 337-419.

53. AMAdT, LAC, 1418, ff. 24r-25v.

54. Monsalvo Antón, José María. *El sistema político...*: 368.



**Table 2: Total sum of the seigneurial *pedido* in other towns of the Aragonese Trastámara (1401-1444)<sup>55</sup>**

|  |  |             |
|--|--|-------------|
| Granadilla – 1402                                | Specific amount for that year                | 11.500 mrs. |
| Haro – 1419                                      | Specific amount for that year                | 15.840 mrs. |
| Briones y Cerezo – 1444                          | Free from the <i>pedido</i> due to privilege | 0 mrs.      |
| Roa de Duero – 1444                              | ¿A fixed sum?                                | 30.000 mrs  |
| Aranda de Duero – 1444                           | ¿A fixed sum?                                | 25.000 mrs. |
| Peñafiel – 1444                                  | The usual sum                                | 15.000 mrs. |
| Cuéllar – 1444                                   | The usual sum                                | 40.000 mrs. |
| Olmedo – 1444                                    | The usual sum                                | 30.000 mrs  |
| Medina del Campo – 1444                          | The usual sum                                | 70.000 mrs. |
| Atienza, its region, and Jewish community – 1444 | A fixed sum?                                 | 41.000 mrs. |
| Castillo de Garcimuñoz – 1444                    | A fixed sum?                                 | 15.000 mrs. |
| Alarcón, its cowpath and the region's council    | A fixed sum?                                 | 40.000 mrs. |
| Albacete   | A fixed sum?                                 | 10.000 mrs. |
| Hellín   | A fixed sum?                                 | 10.000 mrs. |
| Tobarra  | A fixed sum?                                 | 2.000 mrs.  |
| Yecla  | A fixed sum?                                 | 1.000 mrs.  |
| Sax  | A fixed sum?                                 | 1.000 mrs.  |
| Ledesma – 1446-1448                              | A fixed sum                                  | 60.000 mrs. |

From all this data, and specially from the accounting records of Paredes de Nava, we can determine the level of intensity of the tax burden imposed by Ferdinand of Antequera in the form of the seigneurial *pedido* and other extraordinary forms of contribution through his whole life and those of his widow and sons during the decade of 1420. Undoubtedly, this was the most flexible resource that the Aragonese Trastámara had to increase the income of their *house*. Indeed, these relatives of the Castilian king had an impending need for new resources, due to their projects of

55. ACDAlba, Caja 346, no. 1; AMHaro, CP, 1419-1420, f. 10 r.; AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Diversos de Castilla, leg. 4, f. 6r-v.; AHNob, Osuna, Caja 444, no. 1, ff. 128r-141v.



seigneurial expansion, the acquisition of new feudal clients in Castile, the need to sustain their rule over the kingdom (firstly during the regency of John II, and afterwards during the first phase of his reign until 1429-1430), and, finally, the rise of Ferdinand to the then vacant Aragonese throne and the consolidation of his reign after 1412. In any case, we should not forget that the demands for *pedidos* and *prestidos* were not regulated by any legal code nor by any written, legal bidding document agreed upon by the lords and their vassals and, therefore, could only be subjected to customary considerations. Since we cannot document that any vassals refused to pay the tax, we must conclude that the *pedido* was understood as a regular burden that had come to be a common, unwritten right. From the point of view of the town councils, the levying of the tax only had to be regulated in order to avoid its increase over time. In the frequent cases in which these increases took place, negotiation between the lords and the representatives of the towns became the main tool to determine the conditions of the seigneurial request and its final completion by the towns.

In the context of these negotiations, the lords' claim to increasing levels of need did not seem to be enough to ensure the final payment of the requested amount. We can document some instances of towns resisting the tax collectors of the *Infantes*. Thus, in 1409, the collector of the *Infante* Ferdinand in Villalón, Día Sánchez de Basurto, had to appear on successive occasions before the town council demanding the collection and delivery of the seigneurial *pedido*. Facing such resistance, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October of the same year he threatened the council with the taking of a forfeit from the town's residents<sup>56</sup>. In the month of December, the council of Villalón appointed an officer that had to distribute among the town's *quarters* the second half of the payment of the 85.000 mrs. that the *Infante* had requested, since 42.750 mrs. had already been paid. This only happened after García Fernández de Nieva, a mounted crossbowman at the service of the *Infante*, turned up with a letter from his lord. In the letter, addressed to the towns of de Mayorga, Villalón, Paredes de Nava, and Saldaña, the *Infante* demanded that the councils agreed to the payment of the *pedidos* and *prestidos* without any further delay, under the threat of imprisoning the town officers for their disobedience<sup>57</sup>. In turn, at the end of November of 1420, the councils of Villalón and Castrojeriz, had only paid a part of the *prestido* that their lord, the *Infante* John of Aragon, had requested, and refused to deliver the total amount to Lope Álvarez de Sepúlveda, the main tax collector of Blanche of Navarre, the wife of the *Infante*. Lope Álvarez, backed by the power of attorney given by the *Infante's* chief treasurer, threatened to seize the property of the residents of both towns, and finally managed to get the town council of Villalón to agree to deliver him the 14.000 mrs. that remained to be paid, in addition to another 2.000 mrs. as a penalty for the costs incurred because of said delay<sup>58</sup>.

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56. AMVillalón, LdA, no. 1: 24<sup>th</sup> August, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1409.

57. AMVillalón, LdA, no. 1: 1<sup>st</sup> December 1409. Letter issued in Palencia, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1409.

58. ARChVall, Protocolos y Padrones, Caja 176, no. 1, f. 28r-v.



Nevertheless, the lords did not always employ such expeditive means to ensure the collection of the requested sums. In other cases, more subtle options were chosen to pressure the town councils, although these were not void from a certain element of coercion. In 1406, the *Infante* Ferdinand managed to obtain the acquiescence of the town council of Paredes to an important rise in the value of the *pedido*, from the usual sum of 40.000 mrs. to 70.000 mrs. This rise was accepted in return for an exemption from a custom tax on wine that the *Infante* had previously decreed<sup>59</sup>. It is important to mention such cases, since no negotiation between the lords and those place under their lordship was developed under equal terms, but with a self-evident asymmetry that favoured the former. This principle is applicable to the levying of taxes, but also to any other aspect related to the seigneurial administration of towns, villages, and estates. Notwithstanding this, the challenges related to the timely fulfilment of the payments, and, conversely, the delays in which the town councils concurred in the delivery of the collections allowed from some leeway in the negotiation of more favourable terms from their lords. Also, the towns under the lordship of the *Infante* experienced a notable rise in their royal and seigneurial burdens, specially between 1407 and 1413, due to the war against Granada and the campaigns of Ferdinand in the Crown of Aragon, until the defeat of the rebellious count of Urgell and his final consolidation as king. This context also facilitated negotiations for the towns.

Again, the data collected from the town of Paredes de Nava is symptomatic. In 1405, after the acquisition of the lordship of the town by the *Infante* Ferdinand, the amount of the *pedido* was doubled to the yearly sum of 40.000 mrs. Despite this, there is no documentary evidence of the actual request of the tax for that year, maybe as the result of a petition from the town aimed at alleviating the tax effort of previous years<sup>60</sup>. The seigneurial answer happened in 1406 and 1407. In 1406, the town had to accept a new *pedido* that was meant to compensate for the amount that was not collected in the previous year. The demand was made under the threat of imposing new taxes, as we have previously seen with the custom tax on wine (*sisá*). The following year, in the context of the first campaign against Granada under the command of Don Ferdinand, the *pedido* and *prestido* reached the large amount of 150.000 mrs.<sup>61</sup>, a sum partially meant to pay for the supplies and wagons that the *Infante* had commissioned from the town to be sent to Andalusia<sup>62</sup>. In this occasion,

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59. AMPdN, CP, 238/08, ff. 7/22v, 238/09, f. 08/27v. Apparently, the collection of the *sisá* had already started when, after the deal regarding the *pedido* in 1407, the tax collectors returned the amounts they had collected.

60. The *pedido* was first reduced to the sum of 20.000 mrs, which were delivered to the confectioner of the *Infanta* Eleonor, Miguel Estébanez, so he would transport the sum to Medina del Campo. After this, in 1402, another 30.000 mrs. of *pedido* were paid to a tax collector at the service of the *Infante*, Pedro García: AMPdN, CP, 238/03, ff. 2/5v, 14v, 238/04, ff.3/2v, 4r, 5v, 6r, 7r. Everything points at the town council requesting that the payment of the *pedido* was subject to the previous tradition, a proposal that was initially accepted by the *Infante*, who, after realising that the payment did not meet his needs, reconsidered his position and imposed an even larger demand.

61. AMPdN, CP, 238/09, ff. 8/1 v-3r, 34v.

62. AMPdN, CP, 238/09, ff. 8/29v, 30v-31r, 40v, 41v.



the town council sent its representatives to the *Infanta* Eleonor, then in the town of Medina del Campo, who dealt with the administration of her husband's estates while he was warring in the border. These representatives aimed at obtaining a letter of mercy from the *Infanta*, in which some assurances had to be given concerning their heavy tax burden, worsened by some extra payments derived from the subsidies approved at parliament (*servicios de cortes*). All things considered, it must have been a difficult situation for the town officers, who had to directly face their neighbours. Apparently, the representatives got the letter, meant as a form of justification of the tax, since the town council agreed to the payment of a *prestido* of 60.000 mrs. with the bishop of Coria, the Dominican friar García de Castronuño, who was both the *Infante's* chaplain and the *Infanta's* envoy for the specific purpose of collecting such contribution<sup>63</sup>. After this effort, the town council sent Alfonso Fernández Rebollero and Fernán Alfonso de la Barría as envoys in front of the *Infante*, then in Guadalajara, with the mission of negotiating a necessary reduction in that year's *pedido*. They were successful, probably because of the good will that the aldermen from Paredes had shown in the two previous years. Thus, they obtained a reduction of 12.000 mrs., lowering their contribution from 60.000 mrs. to 48.000 mrs, together with a confirmation of the rights and privileges of the town that can be understood as some form of assurance regarding the further reduction of their tax burden in the following years<sup>64</sup>.

However, the issues related with the acquisition of the *maestrazgos* of the orders of Alcantara and Santiago by the *Infante* Ferdinand eventually shortened any agreement on moderate taxation and minimal requests for the *pedido*. In 1409, the *Infante* visited the town of Paredes and demanded an extraordinarily high *pedido* of 128.000 mrs., which, in turn, opened a new wave of negotiations with the town council. The petitions for a reduction, due to the intensity of the fiscal effort, were almost immediate and had a considerable effect. The town's scribe, Alfonso Fernández, appeared in front of the *Infante* in Becerril and Palencia, and obtained a reduction from the initial demand of 100.000 mrs<sup>65</sup>. In 1401 the *pedido* was not requested, and the *Infante* used the 108.000 mrs, he had obtained from a parliamentary subvention (*servicio*) to fund the gathering of lancers and crossbowmen for the siege of Antequera. In this case, he took advantage of the provincial division of the Crown's regency, according to which the *Infante* controlled the levying the Crown's taxes in all its towns<sup>66</sup>. Between 1411 and 1415, the demands for the *pedido* became fixed to 46.100 mrs, despite a slightly larger request in 1413. This could be understood as a return to the normal amount for the *pedido*, using the initial sum of 40.000 mrs. as a reference<sup>67</sup>. This situation might have been favoured by the ascension of Ferdinand

63. AMPdN, CP, 238/09, ff. 8/11v, 23r-23v, 28r-v, 29r-v.

64. AMPdN, CP, 238/10, ff. 9/9v, 20r-v.

65. AMPdN, CP, 238/11, ff. 10/14r, 24r, 37r, 41r, 45r, 46 r.

66. AMPdN, CP, 238/12, ff. 11/02 r-39v. Torres Fontes, Juan. "Dos divisiones político-administrativas en la minoría de Juan II de Castilla". *Anales de la Universidad de Murcia*, (1946-1947): 339-353.

67. AMPdN, CP, 238/12, 239/01-04.



to the Aragonese throne and the appointment of Sancho de Rojas as administrator of the *Infante's* estates in Castile.

The readjustments of the *pedido* in Paredes in 1416 can be explained by the reception of the news of the decease of king Ferdinand I of Aragon, the former *Infante*. In this context, the town council used the uncertainty regarding their lord's death to cancel the payment of the *pedido*, at least until further news were obtained. As a result, the archbishop Sancho de Rojas granted an initial exemption of the first half of the *pedido*, a measure that was later revisited, when he demanded the payment of an extra 11.000 mrs. to the regular payment of 23.000 mrs., which were eventually paid in 1417. Nevertheless, the town's officers realised, before fulfilling the demand, that the towns of Villalón and Mayorga had resorted to the archbishop of Toledo to try to avoid the payment of the *pedido* to the new lord, the *Infante* John of Aragon<sup>68</sup>. Similar resistance to the payment of the *pedido* is also documented in Alba de Tormes, where the town council was notably reluctant to pay the sum of 20.000 mrs. demanded by Alfonso Martínez de Salvatierra, a neighbour who acted as the lord's tax collector. This resistance was prolonged through the whole summer, but in September Toribio González de Paredes, a scribe who was acting as an agent for the tax collector, was in possession of the money<sup>69</sup>.

The establishment of the *Infante* John of Aragon finally meant that the *pedido* in Paredes would be revalorised to the sum of 60.000 mrs. from 1417, with a subsequent reduction, requested by the town council, of 5.000 mrs. in 1419, and an extraordinary rise in 1420, reaching the sum of 85.000 mrs., that was linked to the matrimony of the *Infante* John with Blanche of Navarre, together with the ongoing conflict with his brother Henry. This evolution and its determining factors are similar to those observed in the documentation regarding the *pedidos* levied in the vicinity of Villalón<sup>70</sup>. The dynamics of negotiation between the council of Paredes and their lord continued in the following years until 1429, when John of Aragon lost the town in the war against king John II and his favourite, Alvaro de Luna. Then, the amount of the *pedido* was readjusted between the two factions and oscillated between 60.000 mrs. and 75.000 mrs<sup>71</sup>. It does not seem necessary to delve any further into this already large exhibit of data from this case study. The data from Paredes and other seigneurial towns show that, despite the acceptance

68. AMPdN, CP, 239/05, ff. 17/4 r, 9v, 10r, 16r, 24v, 28v, 29r, 35r, 37r.

69. AMAdT, LAC, 1416, ff. 54r-55r, 62r-63v, 64r-v, 68v, 70v, 72v.

70. AMPdN, CP, 239/08, 4v, 239/09, ff. 21/2 v-11v, 14r-23r. We must add a first requirement for a *prestido* of 100.000 mrs., meant to fund the payment of more than 600 infantrymen, armed with shields and crossbows, that the *Infante* John had assembled at Olmedo. However, once he decided to stop this mobilization, there is no further news of the request for those 100.000 mrs. he had insisted upon. In Villalón a reduction of the *pedido* of 4.000 mrs is also documented in 1419, as we have already said, in addition to this mobilization of peons from their towns, which was presented to the council on July 31st, 1420, and a few days later, ordering the stop of such assembly of troops, initially arranged in Cuéllar. Already at this point it had been ordered that the peons did not march and only his vassals on horseback attended the call: ARChVall, Protocolos y Padrones, Caja 176, no. ff. 23v-25r, 27 r-v).

71. Martín Cea, Juan Carlos. *El mundo rural castellano a fines de la Edad Media. El ejemplo de Paredes de Nava en el siglo XV*. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1991: 235-238.



by the councils of their lords' rights to demand tribute in the form of *prestidos* and *pedidos*, this new form of fiscal pressure was protested with different movements of resistance and negotiation.

## 5. Conclusions: negotiating to rule

We are, at last, in a position to synthesize the main ideas of this study on the seigneurial *pedido* and its role in defining the relations of seigneurial domination in the Crown of Castile during the end of the Middle Ages. Beyond its more remote origin, which had its roots in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the seigneurial *pedidos* are more clearly documented in the area of Castile north of the Duero in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. During the last third of that century, the references to their requests on seigneurial towns and estates multiplied and, by the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, what had arisen as an extraordinary demand on the part of the lords had become a regularly required seigneurial right. In fact, it had become a central element among the forms of seigniorial exaction over the dominated, linked to the extension of the exercise of lordship articulated around the notion of jurisdiction. In this way, the *pedido* provided these lords with an effective instrument not only to increase their sources of income but, equally or more importantly, to intensify the power they exercised over the dominated communities.

In any case, tanking this into account, and exploring the evidence from the towns under the lordship of Ferdinand of Antequera, Eleonor of Albuquerque, and their children, we can show how the aristocratic *houses* and the town councils under their dominance arm-wrestled around the demands for seigneurial *pedidos* in Castile at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the first decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The discretionary nature of these seigneurial demands and the consequent increase in the tax pressure linked to said request, combined in turn with the increase in royal taxation in the form of the *alcabalas* and *tercias reales* and the demands of parliament approved subventions (*servicios*)<sup>72</sup>, allow us to understand the succession of actions that the town councils initiated to avoid their payment or, at least, to delay them and achieve reductions and compensations of their fulfilment. It is true that the cases of the seigneurial towns under the Aragonese Trastámara were characterized by an especially intense fiscal pressure in the first three decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, in accordance with the expansive policy developed by Don Ferdinand, Doña Eleonor, and their heirs. In any case, this context of expansion has allowed us to observe

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72. Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *La Hacienda real de Castilla...*: 57-90, 401-431; Ortego Rico, Pablo. *Hacienda, poder real y sociedad en Toledo y su reino (siglo XV-principios del XVI)*. Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid (PhD Dissertation), 2013: 41-52, 75-77; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *Poder financiero y gestión tributaria en Castilla: los agentes fiscales en Toledo y su reino (1429-1504)*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Fiscales, 2015: 21-27; Triano Milán, José Manuel. *La llamada del rey y el auxilio del reino. Del "pedido" regio a las contribuciones de la Santa Hermandad (1403-1498)*. Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2018: 79-130.



how different arguments were employed to justify this type of contribution (service to the King and the realm, extraordinary financial needs such as military expenditures, non-current expenses another unforeseen charges), the different measures of resistance against seigneurial exactions (pleadings alleging lack of resources, plague, succeeding bad harvests, food shortage, flight of local inhabitants and the risk of depopulation of the town), and how negotiations process (exchange of letters and emissaries as representatives and negotiators, combination of threats, coercive measures, offers of compensation and agreement) resulted in the town's compliance with the payment of the *pedidos* and *prestidos* and their normalization as forms of ordinary seigneurial income.

In this sense, the Castilian aristocratic houses gained an important resource in the enterprise of asserting their power over the dominated communities. But the truth is that the town councils under their lordship also achieved considerable success in resisting this exaction<sup>73</sup>. In this way, arguing it as an excessive demand within the relationship between subjected communities and their lords and establishing limits to this tax burden, they were able to set the framework for the exercise of their domination. Thus, the position of Ferdinand of Antequera, John of Aragon and the officers of their estates is exemplary. The demands for seigneurial *pedidos* tended towards compensatory strategies in favour of their vassals. Thus, after years of particularly demanding requests, negotiation with the dominated led to exemptions and rebates, aimed at obtaining the community consent to the tribute. Communication links were established between seigniorial agents and council members to dismantle conflicts and, finally, guarantee compliance with the lordship and payment of the *pedido*. Despite the recurrence of coercive measures by the lords, these negotiations seem to have been more characterized by the search for agreements based on mutual concessions in these first decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, this long-term struggle for the seigneurial *pedido* was often won by the councils. As a result of their continued acceptance of the *pedido*, in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the lords came to fix the *pedido* at a certain, non-revisable amount. We have already cited various examples of this practice between the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and the 1450s.

As shown in Table 2, the towns under the lordship of John of Aragon underwent, by 1444, a similar trend. The references to the payments of the *pedido* in the towns of Medina del Campo, Olmedo, Cuéllar, Peñafiel, and, perhaps, Roa, Aranda de Duero, Atienza, and the towns and places of the Marquisate of Villena, allow us to show the existence, in the middle of the century, of negotiation margins in the setting of the final amount of the *pedido* between lords and vassals<sup>74</sup>. However, this data also allows us to recognise how the negotiating dynamics that characterized the imposition of the *pedido* also enshrined the fixing of a specific amount of income, within a relatively narrow range of values that were assumed by both parties. Along

73. Nieto Soria, José Manuel. "La gestión bajomedieval del derecho de resistencia en Castilla: modelos interpretativos". *Cahiers d'Etudes Hispaniques Médiévales*, 34 (2011): 13-27.

74. AGS, Cámara de Castilla, Diversos de Castilla, leg. 4, f. 6r-v.



these lines, the greatest beneficiaries had to be the town councils, who achieved a symbolic gain in the curtailing of seigneurial exaction. A gain that also brought them economic benefits. The income became fossilised and could not be revised, and was mostly levied in billon coinage that suffered from constant depreciations in 1429 and 1430 and during the reigns of John II and Henry IV<sup>75</sup>. This condemned the ordinary forms of seigneurial *pedido* to an evident depreciation of its effective value. These factors resulted on the relief of the fiscal pressure on the councils, with the consequent impairment in the obtention of seigneurial income.

In any case, the seigneurial *pedido* did not disappear. It retained its character as a right and instrument in the exercising of the “jurisdictional lordship”, subject to norms and customs in its request. It did, though, lose its centrality within the seigneurial treasuries from the central decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, in comparison with the greater opportunities offered by the participation in forms of royal taxation and the development of new tax concepts that were established on their domains, although without a unified model for the entire kingdom<sup>76</sup>. This included the rethinking of the exercise and justification of the extraordinary taxation that was not subject to the regulatory limits in which the original development of *pedidos* and *prestidos* had been sustained. Thus, although this matter is beyond the scope of this article, the demands for discretionary contributions, more or less onerous, placed by the lords on the communities under their control, were maintained through new forms of contribution and, therefore, legitimation and negotiation. Meanwhile, the seigneurial *pedidos* remained stabilized at fixed values, and even subjected to downward revisions with the town councils or commuted for the perception of different types of income that were more substantial and resistant to the processes of monetary devaluation<sup>77</sup>.

In conclusion, through the study of the origins and evolution of the seigneurial *pedido* in Castile until the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, an attempt has been made to underline the largely transactional nature of seigneurial domination in late medieval Castilian society. The example of the *pedido* shows how one of the fundamental pillars for the development of the “jurisdictional lordship”, such as the levying of

75. Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. “La política monetaria”...: 93-110.

76. Research on aristocratic seigneurial rents of the late Middle Ages and the 16<sup>th</sup> an 17<sup>th</sup> centuries shows some regional divergence, at least in the central *Meseta*, Extremadura, and Andalusia, regarding the proportion of income that came from royal rents, the exploitation of land holdings, and the taxation of commercial activities. Nevertheless, these differences could also be explained with other factors, such as the rank and social hierarchy of the aristocratic houses or their implantation or lack of thereof in commercial crossroads. There still lies much work ahead: Yun Casalilla, Bartolomé. *La gestión del poder...*: 13-42; Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. *Guzmán. La casa ducal de Medina Sidonia en Sevilla y su reino (1282-1521)*. Madrid: Dykinson, 2015: 339-416; Álvarez Borge, Ignacio. “Patrimonio, rentas y poder”...: 114-117; Salas Almela, Luis. *La más callada revolución...*

77. The references at hand for the different estates of John of Aragon, the Pimentel, the Fernández de Velasco, the Manrique, or the Álvarez de Toledo, among others, show this in most of the territory of the Crown of Castile between 1422 and 1503: Monsalvo Antón, José María. *El sistema político...*: 367-369; Martín Cea, Juan Carlos. *El mundo rural castellano...*: 236-237; Beceiro Pita, Isabel. *El condado de Benavente...*:125-173; Goicolea Julián, Francisco Javier. *Haro: una villa riojana del linaje Velasco a fines del Medievo*. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1999: 224-225.



taxes, could not happen without the search of some form of agreement between the seigneurial powers and the dominated communities in relation to its legitimacy, its need, and the conditions and limits of its exercise. From at least the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the objects and the terms of communication and agreement between lords and communities changed, and the *pedido* was raised and lowered as one of the nuclear aspects in the relations of domination established between them. However, what did not cease to be innate to the social, economic, and institutional dynamics of late medieval feudal society was the absolute need for the continuous negotiation of exaction as a form of exercise of seigneurial power.

