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978-0-521-56325-3 - The Village and the Outside World in Golden Age Castile: Mobility and Migration in Everyday Rural Life

David E. Vassberg

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This book, based upon a vast range of documentary and secondary sources, shatters the disproven but persistent myth of the closed immobile village in the early modern period. It demonstrates that even in traditionalist Castile, pre-industrial village society was highly dynamic, with continuous inter-village, inter-regional, and rural–urban migration.

The book is rich in human detail, with many vignettes of individuals making decisions in everyday life. Professor Vassberg examines such topics as fairs and markets, the transportation infrastructure, rural artisans and craftsmen, relations with the state, and life-cycle service. The approach is interdisciplinary, and pays special attention to how rural families dealt with economic and social problems. The rural Castile that emerges is a complex society that defies easy generalizations, but one which is unquestionably part of the general European reality.

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DAVID E. VASSBERG

University of Texas – Pan American



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PREFACE

This is not the book that I had originally intended. After completing my *Land and Society in Golden Age Castile* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), which was a study of early modern Castilian property ownership, I planned a companion volume entitled *Daily Life in a Golden Age Castilian Village*, which would depict the day-to-day activities of the typical rural Castilian. As late as September of 1991 I still thought that my next book would be a general treatment of daily life. But while still in the research stage, I became increasingly intrigued by one aspect of everyday activities: the interrelationship between the village and the wider world. Realizing that this topic deserved book-length treatment, I altered my plans and developed the present volume.

When invited to contribute a paper for the 1992 Meeting of the American Historical Association (Washington, D.C.), I was able to prepare "Mobility and Migration in Sixteenth-Century Spanish Villages" by extracting portions of several chapters in progress. Later, I was invited to present an updated Spanish version of that paper for the Séminaire Histoire et Civilisation de l'Espagne of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris, 1994). Segments of Chapter 5 went into the paper "Life-Cycle Service as a Form of Age-Specific Migration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Rural Castile as a Case Study," for the 1st European Conference of the International Commission on Historical Demography: Internal and Medium-Distance Migrations in Europe, 1500–1900 (Santiago de Compostela, 1993). And I used parts of my first chapter for the papers "Sociocentrism and Xenophobia in Golden Age Castilian Villages" for the Meeting of the Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (Chicago, 1994); and "Local Loyalties and Inter-Municipal Border Conflicts in Sixteenth-Century Castile" for the Meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association (Fullerton, California, 1994). I discovered that the process of developing conference papers from the book in progress was highly beneficial, because the segments involved were invariably improved by the time they returned to their respective chapters. But heretofore, no part of this book has been in print except for the 1993 Santiago paper, which appeared in

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proceedings (*Actas*) distributed at the Conference, and in a subsequent published version edited by Antonio Eiras Roel and Ofelia Rey Castelao.

I am grateful to my department and to my university for cheerfully allowing me release time for research and writing, even when my absence from the classroom was highly inconvenient. Welcome financial support came from a National Endowment for the Humanities Research Fellowship, and from a Faculty Research Grant and a Title III Program administered by the University of Texas–Pan American. Additional support was provided coincidentally, because of overlapping topics and timetables, by a National Research Service Award for Senior Fellows administered by the National Institutes of Health. I am thankful to the many archivists and librarians who facilitated my research in Spain and in the US. I am grateful to Spain's Ministerio de Cultura and Archivo General de Simancas and Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid, to the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, and to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin for permission to reproduce materials from their collections (specific acknowledgment accompanies the appropriate illustrations). And I am indebted to countless colleagues and friends for their comments and suggestions. The colleague to whom I owe the most is my wife Liliane Mangold Vassberg, who unselfishly put her own career on hold while helping me in Spanish archives, and who supplied the emotional support necessary for the project's completion. And finally, I want to recognize the long-term assistance and loving encouragement of my parents, who were unfailingly supportive, even when neither they nor I knew exactly what direction my life would take. It is appropriate that I dedicate this book to my mother and to the memory of my father, who themselves are exemplars of multi-generational long-range migration in and out of rural communities.

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GLOSSARY

Actas: published proceedings of the Castilian Cortes

alcabala: royal sales tax, theoretically 10 percent of the value of all transactions, but in practice usually set at about 3.5 percent

alcaide: governor or warden of a castle or fort

alcalde: municipal official with certain administrative duties, but primarily functioning as a judge with civil and criminal jurisdiction

Alpujarras: mountains in Granada province where Moriscos staged unsuccessful armed rebellions in 1499–1501 and 1568–70

arbitristas: sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reform writers, so called because of their *arbitrios* (reform proposals)

arriero: muleteer

arroba: unit of liquid measure varying by region, but commonly equivalent to about 12.5 liters (3.32 US gallons) of oil, or 16 liters (4.26 US gallons) of wine; as a unit of weight equal to about 11.5 kilograms (25 pounds)

Audiencia: see Chancillería, below

cabrito: suckling kid, or goat, making a tasty meat dish

cañada: especially designated sheep walk or trail for seasonally migratory herds and flocks

cántara: measure of liquid varying by region but commonly equal to about 16 liters (4.25 US gallons)

carga: dry measure equal to 3 or 4 *fanegas*

Chancillería: Supreme Tribunal, or appellate court. After 1505 there were two in Castile: one in Valladolid, and the other in Granada, their jurisdictions separated by the boundary of the Tajo River

complant: medieval contract conferring upon a peasant the ownership of half of a vineyard once he had planted and tended it for the proprietor for a specified number of years

Comuneros (Revolt of): unsuccessful armed rebellion (1521–2) of Castilian cities against the Habsburg emperor Charles V

corregidor: royal official appointed to preside over important towns. Served as president of the municipal council, and had extensive judicial, administrative, and financial authority

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Cortes: National Assembly of Castile, composed during Philip II's reign of delegates from eighteen major cities

ducado: unit of account, equal to 375 *maravedís*

escudo: gold coin worth 350 *maravedís* until 1566, and 400 mrs thereafter

fanega: unit of dry measure roughly equivalent to an English bushel, or about 55.5 liters of grain; unit of area varying in size, usually equal to about 0.646 hectares (1.59 acres)

forastero: outsider or outlander, a person from another village or town, or a foreigner

fuero: law code; municipal charter; privilege or exemption granted to a certain province

Guadarrama (Sierra de): mountain range marking the boundary between Old and New Castile

hidalgo: member of the untitled lower nobility, possessing social prestige and certain privileges including tax exemptions

hidalguía: nobility, or the rights and privileges thereof

hospital: charitable institution usually dedicated to the care of the needy; but sometimes a medical facility caring for the sick or injured

jornalero: literally a day laborer, a salaried worker in practice usually contracted for periods longer than a day

juez: judge, or magistrate

labrador: independent peasant-farmer, term often used in contrast to the *jornalero*, who worked for someone else

legua: league, unit of distance of varying length, but in Castile normally about 5.6 kilometers (approximately 3½ miles)

Mancha (La): virtually treeless plain in southern New Castile, mainly in the province of Ciudad Real

maragatos: villagers from the western part of León province, famous throughout Spain as owner-operators of mule trains

maravedí (mr.): unit of account, of depreciating value, used for calculating prices in early modern Castile

Mesta: royally chartered stock owners' association, notorious for the privileges it had gained for its migratory flocks and herds. *Mesta* power ebbed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

monte: brushland or forest, used for pasture and forest products

Moriscos: Spaniards of Moorish ancestry

mozo (*moza*): an unmarried youth

mozo (or *moza*) *de soldada*: literally a salaried youth, term applied to a life-cycle servant, and often also to adult servants

patria chica: literally "little fatherland," exaggerated loyalty to one's home town

pícaro: clever person able to make a living through various deceitful schemes; a scam artist

pueblo: village, town, or community; or the people thereof

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real: silver coin equal in value to 34 *maravedís**Reconquest (Reconquista)*: struggle by Christian rulers to regain control over the Iberian peninsula after the Muslim invasion of 711. Concluded with the capture of Granada in 1492*Relaciones [topográficas]*: answers to questionnaires sent by the royal government to towns and villages in Castile in the 1570s. A primary source of information about rural society*Rioja (La)*: district in Logroño province famous for its wines*Santa Hermandad*: rural police force, operated by towns and cities under the auspices of the crown*Sierra de Guadarrama*: *see* Guadarrama*Sierra Morena*: mountain range along the northern boundary of Andalusia*tasa*: government ceiling on the price of grain*Tierra de Campos*: rich grain-growing area embracing parts of the provinces of León, Palencia, Valladolid, and Zamora*tierras baldías*: common lands, or crown lands*vecino*: citizen of a village, town, or city; or the citizen head of a household; or (today's usual meaning) a neighbor*villa*: municipality possessing juridical independence*villazgo*: attainment of *villa* status for a dependent village

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACHGR	Archivo de la Chancillería de Granada
ACHVA	Archivo de la Chancillería de Valladolid
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
BN	Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid)
EH	Expedientes de Hacienda
FA (F)	Fernando Alonso (Fenecidos)
mrs	<i>maravedis</i>
PC	Pleitos Civiles