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Review Essay: María Jesús Fuente Pérez, *La ciudad de Palencia en el siglo xv: Aportación al estudio de las ciudades castellanas en la Baja Edad Media*

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an overview of twentieth-century *Confessio* criticism and is a strong critical piece in its own right, containing useful information on new directions in Gower criticism.

The *Index* will be unusually valuable for scholars who wish to focus their research on topics and passages that have been neglected. Such unplumbed areas can now be found in a matter of minutes rather than in the many hours it once took.

The information in the *Index* seems accurate: a solid spot check revealed that the author's information was correct and that he had summarized his sources impeccably. And Gower scholars will probably concur with Nicholson's decisions about which criticism was important enough to include.

Scholars may wish that the list of Works Cited had included cross-references to lines and passages: it would be useful to know which passages a specific scholar had referred to. It would also be useful to have a list of Gower's sources (Ovid, for example) with cross-references to passages. But to include such cross-references might have made the *Index* too costly and cumbersome. As it stands now, the *Index* is an excellent tool for Gower scholars: its publication will assist incalculably in expediting and broadening the base of scholarship on the *Confessio amantis*.

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María Jesús Fuente Pérez, *La ciudad de Palencia en el siglo xv: Aportación al estudio de las ciudades castellanas en la Baja Edad Media*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1989.

Rafael Sánchez Saus, *Caballería y linaje en la Sevilla medieval: Estudio genealógico y social*, Diputación Provincial de Sevilla and Universidad de Cádiz, 1989, 531 pp., 2500 pesetas esp.

While treating different cities in widely separated regions, the distinctive approaches of these two books allow them to serve as companion studies. Fuente Pérez provides a detailed examination of the often tangled internal affairs of Palencia, a seignorial city. The bishop, lord of Palencia, was responsible for guaranteeing its citizens (*vecinos*) effective judicial administration under the provisions of the charter (*fuero*) of 1180 in exchange for certain economic benefits. Lordship was particularly complex in Palencia because the cathedral chapter was lord of the village of La Puebla, which had been incorporated into Palencia as

the city grew, and Palencia's bishop was also lord of the city's separate Jewish and Muslim communities. As in any Castilian seigneurial municipality, Palencia's free citizens under the terms of the charter controlled their own affairs and managed the city's corporate assets (*propios*). Initially, these tasks were done by officials elected in the open council (*concejo abierto*) of all citizens, but by the fifteenth century community administration had become dominated by a small patrician council (*concejo cerrado*), although citizens sometimes asserted their right to meet in open council. As Palencia developed, it became difficult to apply the charter's terms to new situations, and the resulting conflicts among lords, small council, and citizens permitted more frequent direct royal intervention, culminating in the virtually permanent presence of a royal justice (*corregidor*) and the resulting reduction in seigneurial authority. Struggles between tax-exempt knights and taxpayers and between farmers and herders accompanied these jurisdictional conflicts.

Fuente Pérez provides a detailed and fascinating study of the great complexity and dynamism of Castilian municipal life at the close of the Middle Ages, a study that should be mined for future comparative and specialized works (although since there is no index, such use will be difficult). However, she does not adequately explain the relationship and conflicts between the bishop and the cathedral chapter, often incorrectly treating the two entities as manifestations of a single lordship, which they were not. Also, her treatment of the *merino*, a seigneurial judicial official whose role appears to have been transformed from appellate justice to some kind of police function, lacks clarity. She is vague about the geographical extension of Palencia's rural territory (*término*), and she fails to indicate whether the bishop's nearby seigneurial villages were carved from the city's boundaries. She also leaves the reader wondering how the citizens' open council was rendered increasingly powerless by a small council dominated by a few wealthy families.

While Fuente Pérez's sources do not permit her to trace the development of Palencia's oligarchic patriciate, Sánchez Saus employs a different type of documentation to expose the emergence of Seville's urban nobility as it established its administrative primacy and scale of values. Starting from prominent families' genealogies prepared in the late sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and combining these with data drawn from archival and chronicle sources, Sánchez Saus has put together chapters on 25 representative lineages (of the 84 studied) of Seville's late medieval patriciate, with particular emphasis on the fifteenth century. For each lineage he provides a genealogical table with detailed notes, brief biographies of the principal members, and concluding comments about the course of its development. These chapters are preceded by two general chapters in which Sánchez Saus attempts to interpret the importance of lineage

and the nuclear family on the basis of his examination of 695 individuals and 588 marriages. Anyone working on late medieval Castile will be indebted to the author for the years of research this book represents.

While no real commentary on so much detail is possible here, I do have some general reservations about the author's focus on lineage to explain the motives for individual actions. Influenced as they were by an increasing early modern emphasis on genealogical proofs of racial purity (*limpieza de sangre*) and nobility (*hidalgúia*) for access to all sorts of opportunities, by the ever greater significance of entailed estates (*mayorazgos*), and by the diffusion of Italian treatises on nobility, the authors on which Sánchez Saus has relied tended to see lineage, meaning a genealogical entity binding together a certain group of people over a long span of time, as a far more important source of motivation than it was for late medieval Sevillian leaders. Unfortunately, in his general chapter on lineage Sánchez Saus attributes this early modern view to the individuals he has studied despite the huge quantity of evidence he presents showing that medieval patricians responded to a different scale of values. This difference will become clear only when someone brings together for a single city the two types of research these two books represent.

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Michael Aston, David Austin, and Christopher Dyer, eds., *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England: Studies Dedicated to Maurice Beresford and John Hurst*, Basil Blackwell, 1989, x, 318 pp., ill., maps, index, \$65.00.

This book was prepared in the spirit of a *Festschrift* for two longtime leaders in English local history, Maurice Beresford and John Hurst. Its purpose is to present a multidisciplinary view of current research into the origin and development of rural English communities. The essays collected by the editors present an overview of the latest research methods and update readers on developments in the study of medieval English communities since the publication of Beresford and Hurst's *Deserted Medieval Villages* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1971).

The book is divided into three parts, representing the research specialties of contributors. Historical archaeologists dominate the list of contributors and give the work its archaeological flavor.

Part One, History and Geography, includes discussions by researchers who have attempted to reconstruct rural communities on the basis of contemporary documents, nineteenth-century ordinance survey maps, and archaeological