

Ordenanzas de la tierra, sobre defensa de cultivos y pastos and Ordenanzas sobre heredades
[Land statutes concerning the protection of cultivated land and pastures]

In Spanish, manuscript on paper

Spain, Segovia, c. 1485-1500, after 19 April 1483

i + 26 folios + i (collation i⁴³) complete, paper (225 x 157 mm.), watermarks, main aux quatre doigts serrés, le pouce seul écarté, similar to Briquet 11154 (Palermo 1482), notarial cursive script in brown ink, no ruling (writing space 162 x 120 mm.), 23-30 lines per page, single column text throughout, foliation in lower left corner of verso side in Arabic numerals (1-12), sporadic marginalia in two distinct cursive scripts (one in black ink), pointing bands appear on ff. 14v, 17v, and 20r, nota bene mark on f. 19v, small face sketch formed from letter "p" on f. 19v, notarial paraps in bottom margins, notarial line fillers in top margins, manuscript content description on f. 1r, moderate chipping on fore-edge of ff. 1 and 25-26, mild to medium browning throughout, soiling f. 1 r, moderate bleeding of ink on first folios, mildew stains on f. 1 and 25r, sporadic small stains throughout. Bound in a late-16th-century vellum manuscript bifolium written in a fifteenth-century gothic-humanistic cursive script in brown ink over cardboard, flyleaves in paper with an unidentified late sixteenth, early seventeenth-century watermark (pot à un anse) on front flyleaf, manuscript is worn and stained damaging the text on the upper half of the front and rear cover, smooth spine, small stain near spine edge front cover, no pastedowns. Dimensions 227 x 160 mm.

Complete, written in the vernacular, and with a vellum Latin charter used for the binding, this manuscript survives as one of only two known notary copies of the Land Statutes of late medieval Segovia. Recently edited, the rare document offers material witness to the type source social historians of late medieval Iberia increasingly mine to construct credible local histories. Further study of its use of language would also contribute important linguistic evidence for evolving legal and land tenure vocabulary in late medieval Spain.

PROVENANCE

1. Segovia: one of the most important cities of Old Castile, where Isabel I was crowned in 1474 and the location of the famous Alcazar and Roman aqueduct.

2. Private Collection.

TEXT

ff. 2-24, "En la muy noble e leal çibdad de Segovia, a diez e nueve dias del mes de abril, año del nasçmiento de nuestro señor ihesu cristo de mill e quatroçientos e ochenta e tres años...de los consejeros de la çibdad de segovia.

Ed. González, 1986, p. 610ff.

2. ff. 24rv, "En la muy noble e leal çibdad de Segovia, a veynte e dos dias del mes de abril, año del nasçmiento de nuestro señor ihesu cristo de mill e quatroçientos e ochenta e tres años...de las cosas ordenadas.

Ed. González, 1986, p. 610ff.

This manuscript contains the lengthy *Ordenanzas*, or statutes, governing property law, land tenure, and inheritance rules approved by the town council of Segovia in April 1483. The original document was completed by notary public, Francisco García de la Torre, and witnessed by Ruy Lopez e Francisco Rodriguez, procurators of Segovia, and Pedro de Baeza, from the town council. The text is notable for its detailed description of local legal history, as Segovia, a town governed by its own charter (*fuero*) had rights not accorded to towns governed by the crown.

The laws contained in this document reflect the growing power of the town council at the end of the Middle Ages and the need to reformulate the laws governing property and inheritance after the wars of succession and the reorganization of the Kingdom of Castile and León under Isabel I. Copies of town statutes were commonly made during the time (even printed), but few complete texts survive from the period. Most frequently, town leaders (*corregidores*, *regidores*, *procuradores*), wealthy families, or lawyers would have copies made for personal reference to adjudicate legal cases. This copy, made from the original, contains the notary's *paraph* at the bottom of each page in addition to line fillers at the top of the page to ensure that no text can be added to the copied statutes. The manuscript lacks the original list of witnesses. However, this is a common practice in such copies as the notary himself attests to authenticating them prior to making his copy. The other known copy now in the Archives in Segovia, edited by González, is also a copy from the original; the original is missing or no longer extant.

The fifteenth-century manuscript fragment used to bind the text is notable for its script. The text is an unidentified legal document, written in Latin, in a fine gothic cursive script with humanistic characteristics. This form of writing was common for the well-educated notaries of the Castilian court. The fragment likely forms part of a longer land exchange or sale, but it is difficult to fully ascertain the complete nature of the text due to its fragmentary state. Nevertheless, it is a quality example of a fine script and excellent example of recycling vellum manuscripts for binding in the sixteenth century.

The *Ordenanzas* have considerable interest for legal historians, urban history, and land tenure scholars, as well as historians of the book given its manuscript binding. The text provided the foundation of María Asenjo González's monumental 1986 study of land tenure and society in Segovia. Her study contains a modern edition of the statutes, including the names of witnesses and other information not found in this manuscript copy. Being composed in the vernacular, the text provides important linguistic evidence for evolving legal and land tenure vocabulary at the end of the Middle Ages.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

LHE - Legislación Histórica de España: Historical Selection of Spanish Laws 13th to 19th Centuries.

<http://www.mcu.es/archivos/lhe/>

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