

Casey, James: *Family and Community in Early Modern Spain. The Citizens of Granada, 1570-1739*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007. ISBN: 0521855896; viii, 314 p.

Rezensiert von: Teofilo F. Ruiz, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California Los Angeles

James Casey's excellent new book examines the intersection of prestige, family, power, and honor in early modern Granada. Emphasizing the parallels between family and commonwealth, Casey seeks to unveil the social, political, economic, and cultural mechanisms through which informal familial networks and the demands of personal and clan honor operated, and how these social and cultural structures shifted slowly over time. The final, though not fully accomplished, outcome was the emergence of the citizen on the eve of the Enlightenment. Granada, though different in many ways from other peninsular or western European cities because of its Islamic heritage and rugged topography, serves as a lens through which to explicate „that gradual shift from a society ... structured in terms of caste and family ... estates of the realm, guilds and commune to one more familiar to us today, where the individual is the cornerstone of the commonwealth, linked to his fellow men by anonymous ties of professional obligations ... regulated through money.“ (p. 287)

Such transformations of course also occurred in a diversity of places and in many different ways. The impact of money on late medieval society has already been well documented as well, and the inexorable undermining of a society of orders by the emergence of novel economic forms and material exchanges had been already at work since the twelfth century. In that sense, Granada was not unique. Nor is the story told by Casey in this book, one that begins in the 1570s, entirely unfamiliar. Yet, Casey's compelling narrative and analysis makes an important contribution to our knowledge of the early modern family and the workings of honor, prestige, and money. Although in Granada itself and elsewhere, lineages, new ways of thinking about family and blood had their origins in the medieval past, what is significant here

however is the new and innovative fashion in which Casey, a well known and accomplished historian of early modern Spain and the author of several impressive books, writes about these topics in this complex and detailed monograph.

Based upon a magisterial deployment of vast archival and secondary sources, Casey provides the reader with a nuanced study that illuminates not only the inner workings of Granada's civic government, and by extension that of Spanish and European cities, but the complex fashion in which families served as the sinews of urban hierarchical society in this period. Most of the families – the little commonwealth in the traditional sense dating back to Classical times – examined in this book formed part of Granada's oligarchic elite or aspired to be part of it (albeit Casey's occasional forays into humbler rural familiar groups). In studying them, that is, the leading families of Granada, Casey provides an insightful reading of how these kin-groups exercised (or sought to exercise) power. His inquiry required exploring the diverse sources of prestige and honor necessary for civic leadership, including wide ranging activities such as the sponsoring of, and/or participating in, the annual procession of the Corpus Christi (an expensive endeavor), tournaments, complex networks of marriages that linked families together, excessive display, and the familial clans' accretion of prestige and good will over decades. Thus, Casey shows the multi-pronged strategies through which honor and money – and their concomitant: the holding or purchase of public offices – provided the evolving context for Granada's gradual transformation from a city ruled by families to one governed by autonomous individuals. This process, never fully completed in the western world, was quite complex, and so are Casey's answers. His approach throughout the book is decidedly multiperspective. Though family and honor remain at the center of his inquiry, his careful attention to detail and to providing ever larger social, cultural, economic, and political contexts makes this book both demanding and deeply satisfying at the same time.

After an initial chapter in which Granada's geographical setting (an important aspect in understanding the city's social and economic

life) and historical background are carefully laid out, Casey adroitly contrasts how a culture of honor was subverted and transformed by wealth. If municipal offices were to be reserved for men of honor (or nobility), money, as we know was the case elsewhere in Spain and Europe, allowed for the re-fashioning of one's humble origins. Here revenue from the Indies, the profits of the silk trade, and service as a familiar of the Holy Office paved the way to civic prominence, or, as he succinctly puts it, for the move from „wealth to honor.“ These themes are continued through chapters three and four on different keys. In these chapters we see how the building of *solar*s or entailed estates, diverse strategies of property consolidation and purchases, inheritance, and martial pursuits propelled families to prominence. Here, and throughout the book, Casey provides elaborate prosopographies, linking Granada's important families into powerful familial clans.

Chapter five shows how families engaged in carefully plotted marriage unions to bolster their place in Granada's society, while chapter six examines interesting cases of misalliances – what Casey calls blood wedding in one of his many references throughout the book to literary examples. This leads to an interesting aside on Jesuit-sponsored moral reform and the clergy's support for freedom of marriage as opposed to the dominant parental concern for marriage of their children as a form of social promotion. The next two chapters shift the field of inquiry to the household as the physical context for the family and the construction of the citizen, providing a socio-historical analysis of household, chapel, and familiar relations – an archipelago of family units scattered throughout the city. Here issues of ancestry, purity of blood, and chivalrous traditions overlap the obvious need to promote one's ranking in society, as exemplified by the rising number of purchases of *habitos*, or membership in the prestigious Military Orders. The last two chapters, once again, shift perspectives to include aspects of the leading families' spiritual life, the role of the Corpus Christi procession, and the participation of Granada's leading families in religious festivals as a justification for their monopoly of power. Finally, these two con-

cluding chapters move from vendettas and duels as ways to uphold familiar honor to charity and other philanthropic activities as demonstrations of one's worth and right to rule. His conclusion brings us back, once again, to the central themes of the book: the transition from informal familiar networks to the first stirring of citizenship.

As all of Casey's previous books, this one also excels in its careful attention to detail, in its constant contextualization of the evidence, and in the author's masterful handling of rich archival sources and a vast secondary literature. One may have some quibbles here and there. Can one speak of absolutism in this period? One may also argue that developments in Granada and elsewhere in this period were not necessarily new. Rather, they built on a long tradition dating back to the twelfth century. Moreover, the shift from „family to citizenship“ was never clear cut, not even in Granada. It may be interesting to note the enduring survival of Ancien Regime social organization, above all familial clans, and their hold on individuals into the present. Sometimes, it is difficult to keep track of the larger themes as one is caught in a web of an amazing number of examples and asides. One of this, for example, is his short foray into cousin marriages, which he reports as being exceptional in Granada among the oligarchic groups. These comments however do not aim to diminish at all from what is a towering achievement or to lessen Casey's careful reconstruction of Granada's ruling elite. *Family and Community in Early Modern Spain* is a masterful, insightful, and stunning work. As such, it is a most timely contribution to our understanding of the early modern family, the workings of power in Granada and elsewhere in the early modern European world, and an insightful look at the first stirring of the citizen in Western Europe as a harbinger of modernity.

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