

# THE SEVILLE ABDUCTION OR THE COLLAPSE OF THE ORDER OF RITUAL IN THE PUBLIC AUDIENCE (1455)

FRANÇOIS FORONDA  
UNIVERSITÉ PARIS I PANTHÉON-SORBONNE  
FRANCE

Date of reception: 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2008

Final date of reception: 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 2009

## ABSTRACT

In 1455, in Seville, a young virgin was abducted by a Muslim in the King's guard, and his parents went to the palace to reclaim justice. The king heard the case, scolded the parents for their lack of responsibility, and annoyed by the intensity of their screams he ordered them to be flogged in public. This scandal, and obviously this collapse of the order of the ritual in public audience, is used by chroniclers to convert Henry IV into a tyrant. This study analyzes the mechanism of this defamatory system, the ritual and the role of the public audience in the definition of the good King.

## KEY WORDS

Public Audience, Ritual Order, Political Defamation, Tyranny.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Potestas conueniendi publica, Imperium ad ritus attinens, Diffamatio inter partes, Dominatio.

According to the chronicles of the fourteenth century the issue of "Exhibition and Dissimulation" still seems to have a strong link with political propaganda.<sup>1</sup> For example Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid rather insists on the exhibitionist side of Alfonso XI (1312-1350) when he depicts him holding public audience,<sup>2</sup> whereas Pedro López de Ayala describes the deceiving side of Peter the Cruel (1350-1369), when he lures his victims into his bedroom to have them executed.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the good king shows off while the tyrant hides. Set up around the middle of the fourteenth century, this principle became such a stereotype that historians at the end of the fifteenth century converted Henry IV (1454-1474) into a new tyrant and contrasted him with the kind Queen Isabel (1474-1504).<sup>4</sup> Whoever the tyrant, the momentum seems to remain the same: from the hall, the place of good government, to the bedroom, which in the fifteenth century was complemented by a room of retreat, a space of excess where only a few adherents remained with the tyrant.<sup>5</sup> And yet sometimes the tyrant resisted this discourse of confinement, and he insisted in wanting to have a public audience, as a good king would, which he longed to be. Then the chronicler attempted to distort reality, to conceal the hall where the tyrant wandered in order to lock him up in the hell of stereotypes and political libelling. I have chosen to analyse this perspective in order to try and propose additional ideas to the topic launched by Jean-Philippe Genet.

1. This article contains the talk presented under the title "From the Hall to the Bedroom. Royal Power and Reclusion in Late Medieval Castile" at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, *Power and Authority* (14-17 July 2003), in the session organised by Jean-Philippe Genet, *Exhibition and Dissimulation* (n° 1217). The texts analysed here were previously included in my doctoral thesis: Foronda, François. *La privanza ou le régime de la faveur. Autorité monarchique et puissance aristocratique en Castille (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. Paris: Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2003: I, 354-368 (publication underway by the Casa de Velázquez).

2. For more bibliographic and interpretative information about these deaths ordered by Peter the Cruel, see my reflections about aristocratic fear provoked in Castile during the 14<sup>th</sup> century by the application of policy of arbitrariness aimed at settling the sovereign difference after the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in Foronda, François. "El miedo al rey. Fuentes y primeras reflexiones acerca de una emoción aristocrática en la Castilla del siglo XIV". *e-Spania*. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2007. SEMH-Sorbonne; SIREM. 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 <<http://e-spainia.revues.org/document2273.html>>.

3. There are various works about Henry IV's reign. See in particular Phillips, William D. *Enrique IV and the Crisis of Fifteenth-Century Castile (1425-1480)*. Cambridge: Medieval Academy of Amer, 1978; Suárez Fernández, Luis. *Enrique IV de Castilla. La difamación como arma política*. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 2001. See also the communications in *Enrique IV de Castilla y su tiempo. Semana Marañón (1997 Valladolid)*. Valladolid: Secretariado de Publicaciones e Intercambio Editorial, 2000.

4. In relation with this approach, see the perspectives developed in Foronda, François. "Les lieux de rencontre. Espace et pouvoir dans les chroniques castillanes du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Aux marches du palais. Qu'est ce qu'un palais médiéval? Actes du VII<sup>e</sup> Congrès international d'Archéologie Médiévale (Le Mans-Mayenne 9-11 septembre 1999)*, Annie Renaux, ed. Le Mans: Publications du Laboratoire d'Histoire et d'archéologie Médiévale, Université du Maine, 2001: 123-134. See also the reading of the ceremonial development in Trastámara Castile by Nieto Soria, José Manuel. "Del rey oculto al rey exhibido: un síntoma de las transformaciones políticas en la Castilla bajomedieval". *Medievalismo*, 2 (1992): 5-27; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. *Ceremonias de la realeza. Propaganda y legitimación en la Castilla Trastámara*. Madrid: Nerea, 1993.

5. About these latter comments, see the lines followed and references proposed, in particular about the fate of the chronic battle between Alfonso de Palencia and Enriquez del Castillo, in Foronda, François. "Le prince, le palais et la ville. Ségovie ou le visage du tyran dans la Castille du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle". *Revue Historique*, 627 (2003): 521-541.



Towards the end of July 1455, in Seville, a young virgin was abducted by the man who loved her. According to Alfonso de Palencia, in charge of revising the mistakes of the royal historian Diego Enríquez del Castillo,<sup>6</sup> the Seville abduction became the ultimate evidence of the tyranny of Henry IV.<sup>7</sup> Several historians recount the

6. Version A: *"Neque Mauris Granatensibus qui ut preferetur prosequerentur regem commoditas hospitorum defuit, uerumtamen Mofarrae et Reduano Vanegas copia conceditur hospitalitatis aptae, quam efenris libido fedauit. Hospiti namque Mofarrae Didaco Sanchez de Orihuela erat filia carissima aetate pulcritudineque florens. Hanc perditae amabat Mofarrae; etsi ut leuis est natura puellarum ex assuetudine significati amoris clanculum nutibus parum pudice responderet, est tanem tam exosa conuersatio barbarorum tanque prohibita legibus, quod recusabatur amoris affectus, ita ut Maurus fretus licentia regis, que libidinibus Granatensium fauere solebat, uiolentiam audacem amori uiolento addiderit. Itaque captauit occasionem ubi parentes a domo abessent et filia nihil tale uerita nutibus colloqui consentiret. Nec mora quin Mofarrae iam raptui praeparatus cum famulis Granatensibus raptae puellae os obturauit, caput contextit, manus colligauit quoniam unguibus coepisset carpere genas, ubi iam clamoris fuit impositus, et confestim ut si esset sarcina dorso muli portatur fimbriis colligata clitelae; ipsi autem Mauri tanquam ad iter procincti equites circum ibant nullam suspicionem facinoris inferentes illius uiciniae ciuibus. Haud multo post superuenere parentes, et uacuum domum uidentes excitauere clamorem. Omnium in re perturbata et repentina fuit sententia ut confestim uociferantes cum illo clamore atque eiulatu recurrerent implorarentque regiam subuentionem. Ita scissis uestibus mater praesertim puellae uociferans carpensque genas regi exeunti flagitium denunciat. Rex autem subuentionis uice uituperauit stoliditatem insaniamque clamantium, quod filiam negligenter custoditam solum quoque domi dimisissent et leuitati occasione addidissent. Hoc iniquissimo responso parentes percepto magis magisque clamores extulere iusticiam postulantes. Tunc rex furibundus iussit carnificem, ut uerberibus publice cederet eos qui nec cedere nec silere uolebant. Sed comites Beneuentanus atque Gundisaluus de Guthman incusarunt regem. Cui Gundisaluus 'Opereprecium erit', inquit, 'o rex, ut etiam explices uerba quae praeco per uias publicas urbis prolaturus sit: scilicet, quod ob nefarium scelus uiolentiamque Maurorum intra menia tantae urbis perpetratae parentes raptae ab eis puellae, quoniam subuentionem a tua maiestate clamoribus implorabant, uerberari iubes'. His dictis prouidit quodammodo regem incusationis et nutu eius satellites expulere clamantes. Interea Mauri potuerunt rapina gaudere; puellam enim Mofarrae in loca sibi tuta regni Granatae deduxit suisque complexibus retinuit concubinam sectae Machometicae obnoxiam filiorumque matrem in contumeliam cruces"* (Palencia, Alfonso de. *Gesta hispaniensia ex annalibus suorum dierum collecta*, eds. Brian Tate, Jeremy Lawrance, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1998: I, 117).

7. Version B: *"E acaesio que Mofarias, un moro de los que alli venian con el rey, fue apossentado en la cassa de un mercador llamado Diego Sanchez de Origuela, el qual tenia una fija muy fermosa, de la qual aquel moro se enamoro, e como a la donzella fuese aborresgible la habla suya e no quisiesse dar lugar a la voluntad del moro, el aguardo tiempo en que el padre e la madre no fuessen casa, e tomo la donzella e atapole la boca de manera que pudiese dar boce, e atole las manos e pusola ençima de vn cavallo e çiertos moros con ella, e asi lleuo de la çidad. E quando los padres vinieron e fallaron su fija llevada, començaron a dar muy grandes gritos, a que toda la vezindad se junto, e ovieron del caso tan gran turbaçion quanto la razon queria que se oviessse de tan enorme delito, e asi junta una grand multitud de gente se fueron al palacio real donde la madre y el padre, dando muy grandes bozes e llorando gravemente, demandaron al rey justicia; y el rey oyda su querella vitupero fuertemente a la madre, diziendo ser loca e aver puesto mal recabdo en su fija dexandola sola en su cassa, diziendo ellos aver dado cabsa al caso acaesçido, con la qual respuesta los padres dieron muy mayores bozes, demandando a Dios justicia; de lo qual el rey ovo tan grande enojo, que mando llamar un verdugo mandando que los açotassen por la çidad. E llegando a esto don Alonso Pimentel, conde de Benavente, y el conde Gonçalo de Guzman oyendo el mandado del rey, el conde Gonçalo le dixo: señor, dezid çomo dira el pregonero quando se executase esta justicia que mandays fazer? El rey ovo enojo de lo quel conde Gonçalo le dixo, e metiosse en su palacio; e los que çerca del rey estavan fizieron yr de alli a los que con esta quexa vinieron. E asy el moro Mofarias lleuo la donzella e pusola en salvo en un lugar de Granada, e asy la tovo por mançeba, en ynjurja de nuestra santa fee catolica",*

"And it happened that Mofarias, one of the Moors who had come there with the king, was lodged in the house of a merchant called Diego Sanchez de Orihuela, who had a very lovely daughter, with whom that Moor fell in love, and as the maiden abhorred his talk and did not wish to permit the desires of the Moor, he waited until the father and the mother were not at home, and took the maiden and covered her mouth so she could not cry out, and tied her by the hands and put her on a horse and certain Moors with her, and thus took her from the city. And when the parents came and found their daughter taken, they began to cry out loudly, and all the neighbourhood came together, and there was from the case such great consternation the more reason they wanted there to be such a heinous crime, and thus together a great multitude of peo-



event: in the *Crónica castellana* (or *anónima*), written from 1481,<sup>8</sup> in the *Memorial de diversas hazañas*, written by Diego de Valera between 1480 and 1486,<sup>9</sup> and finally

ple went to the royal palace where the mother and the father, crying out and weeping intensely, demanded justice from the king; and the king having heard their complaint was very scathing to the mother, calling her mad and having put her daughter in danger by leaving her alone at home, telling them that they were to blame for the case that occurred, with which response the parents cried out even louder, demanding justice from God; with which the king became very annoyed, and ordered an executioner called to flog them round the city. And arriving in this, don Alonso Pimentel, Count of Benavente, and the Count Gonçalo de Guzman hearing what the king ordered, the Count Gonçalo said to him: Lord, say what will the crier say when this justice that you order done is executed? The king was annoyed with what Count Gonçalo told him, and went back into his palace; and those who were close to the king made those who went with this complaint go from that place. And thus the Moor Mofarías took the maiden and placed her safely in a place in Granada, and thus took her as a slave, in insult to our Holy catholic faith" (*Crónica anónima de Enrique IV de Castilla, 1454-1474 (Crónica castellana)*, ed. María Pilar Sánchez Parra. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1991: 46-47).

8. Version C: "Y estando el rey en aquella ciudad, acaescieron dos cosas muy estrañas y feas, las cuales fueron que Mofarás, vn moro quel rey consigo traya, fué aposentado en la casa de vn mercader llamado Diego Sánchez de Orihuela, el qual tenía vna hija muy hermosa, de que el moro se enamoró; y como a la donzella fuese aborrecible la habla suya y no quisiese dar lugar a su voluntad el moro aguardó tiempo en que el padre y la madre estuviesen fuera de casa, y tapóle la boca de manera que no pudiese dar boçes, y atóle las manos y písola en vn caballo y con ciertos moros la sacó de la çibdad. Y quando los padres vinieron y hallaron su hija lleuada, dieron muy grandes boçes, a que toda la vezindad se juntó, y así vna gran muchedumbre de gente fueron al palacio real con el padre y la madre, que yban dando muy grandes boçes, muy agramente llorando, demandando justicia. Y llegados al rey, oyda su querella, el rey vituperó muy fuertemente a la madre, diziéndole ser loca, y aver puesto muy mal recado en su casa y fija dexándola sola, y dando el cargo al padre y a ella del caso acaescido, con la qual respuesta ellos començaron muchas mayores boçes, demandando justicia a Dios; de que el rey ovo tan grande enojo, que mandó llamar un verdugo para que los açotase por la çudad. Y en este punto llegaron allí don Alonso Pimentel, conde de Benavente, y el conde don Juan de Guzmán; y viendo el mandamiento, el conde don Juan le dixo: —Señor, çómo dirá el pregón cuando se executare esta justicia que mandáis fazer? Y el rey con enojo se metió en su palacio, y los que cerca dél estaban fizieron yr de allí a los que con esta querella venieron; y así el moro Mofarás llevó la donzella y písola en saluo en vn lugar de Granada, y así la tomó por manceba, en injuria de nuestra sancta Fe".

"And with the king being in that city, two very strange and ugly events happened, which were that Mofarás, a Moor that the king brought with him, was lodged in the house of a merchant named Diego Sánchez de Orihuela, who had a very lovely daughter, with whom the Moor fell in love; and as the maiden abhorred his speech and did not wish to give way to his desires the Moor waited his time until the father and mother were out of the house, and covering her mouth in such a way that she could not cry out, and tying her hands and put her on a horse and with certain Moors, took her from the city. And when the parents padres came and found their daughter taken, they gave the alarm, and all the neighbourhood came together, and thus a great mob of people went to the royal palace with the father and the mother, who were crying out and very bitterly weeping, demanding justice. And when they reached the king, after hearing their complaint, the king was very strongly scathing with the mother, calling her, and having left her daughter very unprotected in their house leaving her alone, and blaming the case of the father and her for what had happened, with which answer they began to shout louder, demanding justice from God; at which the king became so annoyed that he ordered an executioner to be called to flog them round the city. And at this point there arrived don Alonso Pimentel, Count of Benavente, and the Count don Juan de Guzmán; and seeing the sentence, the count don Juan said to him: —Lord, what will the crier say when he hears this justice you order done? And the king with annoyance went into his palace, and those who were near him were made those who with the complaint had come leave there; and thus the Moor Mofarás took the maiden and put her safely in a place in Granada, and thus took her as his slave, in insult to our holy faith" (Valera, Diego de. *Memorial de diversas hazañas, crónica de Enrique IV*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1941: 29).

9. Version D: "Con todo eso la gente del rey fue muy bien aposentada y graziosamente rezivida por los huespedes, pero acaesció que Mofarrax, un moro de los que allí venian con el rey, fue aposentado en la casa de un mercader llamado Diego de Origuuela, que tenía una hija muy hermosa, de la qual aquel moro se enamoro, y como la donzella

in the chronicle by Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal in 1517.<sup>10</sup> The various narratives of the event offer no major transformations. Indeed the pattern of narration set up by Alfonso de Palencia is only translated, simplified and often shortened. From one version to another, the integration of the event confirms the leniency with which the reign of the Catholic Kings accepted the defamation of a king in order to make him politically repulsive.

But what are the facts? A Muslim in the king's guard, who was living with Seville merchant, seized the opportunity of their absence to abduct their daughter, with

---

*fuese aborrezible su hablar e no quisiese dar lugar a la voluntad del moro, el aguardo tiempo a que el padre y la madre no estuviesen en casa y tomo la donzella y tapole la boca, de manera que no pudiese dar voces y atole las manos e pusola encima de un cavallo e ciertos moros con el e ansi la llevó e de la ciudad. Y quando los padres vinieron e fallaron su hija llevada, comenzaron a dar muy grandes voces e gritos, a que toda la vezindad se junto, e vinieron del caso tan grande turbación quanta razon queria que se tuviese de tan enorme delito y ansi junta una gran multitud de gente se fueron al palacio real, donde la madre y el padre dieron muy grandes voces y llorando, gravemente demandaron al rey justicia, y el rey oida su querella, vituperó mucho a la madre, diciendo ser loca y aver dado la causa al caso acontecido y puesto mal recaudo en su hija dejandola sola en su casa, con las cuales respuestas los padres dieron muy mayores voces demandando a Dios justicia; de lo qual el rey ovo tan grande enojo, que mando llamar un berdugo para que los açotase por la ciudad. Y llegando a esto don Alonso Pimentel, conde de Benavente y conde Gonzalo de Guzman; oyendo el mandado del rey, el conde Gonzalo dixo: "Señor, ¿dezir como dira el pregonero quando se executare esta justicia que mandais hazer?". El rey ovo enojo de lo que el conde Gonzalo le dixo, y metiose en su palacio, y los que cerca del estaban hizieron ir de alli a los que con esta queja vinieron, y ansi el moro Mofarrax llevo la donzella y pusola en salvo en un lugar de Granada y la tuvo por manceba en injuria de nuestra sancta fee catolica".* "With all these people of the king was very well housed and graciously received by the hosts, but it befell that Mofarrax, one Moor of those who went there with the king, was lodged in the house of a merchant named Diego de Origueta, who had a very lovely daughter, with whom the Moor fell in love, and as the maiden was abhorred by his talk and did not wish to give way to the wishes of the Moor, he waited until the father and mother were not at home and took the maiden and covering her mouth, in a way that she could not raise the alarm and tying her hands and placing her on a horse and certain Moors with him and thus he took her from the city. And when the parents came and found their daughter taken, they began to cry out and shout, and all the neighbourhood came together, and from the case came such great consternation and so important did they feel this heinous crime and thus a great mob of people came together and went to the royal palace, where the mother and the father called out loudly and weeping, solemnly demanded justice from the king, and the king heard their complaint, was very scathing with the mother, calling her mad and having been responsible for the case that had happened and badly protecting to her daughter leaving her alone in the house, with which answers the parents cried out louder demanding justice from God; and when the king heard that he was so annoyed that he called for an executioner who he ordered to flog them around the city. And reaching this don Alonso Pimentel, Count of Benavente and Count Gonzalo de Guzman; hearing the king's order, the Count Gonzalo said: "Lord, tell me what the crier will say when this justice that you order done is executed?". The king was annoyed with what Count Gonzalo told him, and went into his palace, and those who were close to him were told to leave to those who came with this complaint, and thus the Moor Mofarrax took the maiden and put her out of reach in the place of Granada had her as a slave in insult to our Holy Catholic faith" (Galíndez de Carvajal, Lorenzo. "Crónica de Enrique IV", *Estudios sobre la "Crónica de Enrique IV" del Dr. Galíndez de Carvajal*, ed. Juan Torres Fontes. Murcia: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas-Instituto Jerónimo Zurita; Seminario de Historia de la Universidad de Murcia, 1946: 109-110).

10. For the practice of abduction, see especially Gauvard, Claude. "De grace especial", *Crime, État et société en France à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991: II, 573-612; Charageat, Martine. *Mariage, couple et justice en Aragon à la fin du Moyen Âge*. Paris: Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (PhD dissertation), 2001: 201-205; Joye, Sylvie. *La femme ravie: le mariage par rapt dans les sociétés occidentales du haut Moyen Âge (VI<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècle)*. Lille: Université Lille 3 Charles de Gaulle, 2006.



whom he was in love.<sup>11</sup> The parents returned home, alerted their neighbours with their screams and went to the palace to demand justice. The king heard the case, scolded the parents for their lack of responsibility. Annoyed by the intensity of their screams and their call for God's justice, he ordered them to be flogged in public. Some influential people reacted indignantly to the king's decision. They gave the king their views about his sense of justice, which annoyed Henry IV even more. He then left and the victim's parents were asked to go. The king's Muslim took shelter in the kingdom of Granada where he married the young Christian girl at the expense of her Catholic faith.

The event caused a double scandal: the abduction on the one hand, and the king's reaction to the parents' request on the other. The case was horrendous, not because of its nature but because it was committed by a Muslim. Thereby it is not the abduction that was at stake, but the transgression of a taboo and a legal prohibition. The argument did not appear in the other versions (B, C, D), which only mention the disgust of the victim for any contact with a Muslim man. Yet Alfonso de Palencia (A), famous as a misogynist, blames the young woman for her initial lightness. She was well aware of the codes of seduction, yet was flirting with the forbidden rules and fell for her guest. In fact, Palencia uses woman's frivolity to excuse the young girl for a corruption whose true core is the court. Its presence in Seville disturbed relations between the different communities and obliged Christian tradesmen to host Muslims in their home against a royal law that promoted segregation.

The presence of Muslims in the royal suite, however, was nothing new. Since the time of John II (1406-1454), Muslim knights had joined the court, and they became protected by the king, like any other young members of the nobility, partly due to the vassalage links between the kingdoms of Granada and Castile. As was the case under his father, Henry IV's court was a meeting place for the young princes and noblemen of Granada. It was also a refuge for them to escape the bloody persecutions provoked by the factional fights in the Nasrid kingdom.<sup>12</sup> The transgression

11. For the Moorish guard of John II and Henry IV, see López de Coca Castañer, José Enrique. "Caballeros moriscos al servicio de Juan II y Enrique IV, reyes de Castilla". *Meridies*, 3 (1996): 119-136; Echevarría Arsuaga, Ana. "Los Elches en la guardia de Juan II y Enrique IV". *IV Simposio Internacional de Mudejarismo. Actas. (Teruel 16-18 septiembre de 1993)*. Teruel: Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, 1995: 421-428; Echevarría Arsuaga, Ana. *Caballeros en la Frontera. La guardia morisca de los reyes de Castilla (1410-1467)*. Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2006.

12. See especially Firpo, Arturo. "Los reyes sexuales (ensayo sobre el discurso sexual durante el reinado de Enrique IV de Trastámara, 1454-1474). 1". *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 20 (1984): 217-227; Firpo, Arturo. "Los reyes sexuales (ensayo sobre el discurso sexual durante el reinado de Enrique IV de Trastámara, 1454-1474). 2". *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 21 (1985): 145-158; Tate, Robert B. "Políticas sexuales: de Enrique el Impotente a Isabel, maestra de engaños". *Actas del Primer Congreso Anglo-Hispano: Huelva y la Rábida, marzo 1992*, Ralph Penny, ed. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1994: 165-176. To extend perspectives about this, see also Miller, Dean A. "Royauté et ambiguïté sexuelle". *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 26/1 (1971): 639-652; Chiffolleau, Jacques. "Dire l'indicible. Remarques sur la catégorie du nefandum du XII<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle". *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 45/2 (1990): 289-324; Tomás y Valiente, Francisco. "El crimen y pecado contra natura". *Sexo barroco y otras transgresiones premodernas*. Madrid: Alianza Universidad, 1990: 33-55; Marcello, Luciano. "Società maschile e sodomia. Dal declino della "polis" al Principato". *Archivio storico italiano*, 150 (1992): 115-138; Azoulay, Vincent. "Xénophon, le roi et les eunuques". *Revue française d'histoire des idées politiques*, 11 (2000): 3-26.

was more a result of the king's attitude towards these men than of their presence alone. Already, in early May, near Cordoba some young noblemen became indignant about the king's inability to conduct war against Granada. The reason of these men, who plotted to overthrow the king, was the horrible crimes that Henry IV had committed since he was a child. Thus the Seville abduction contributed to fuelling the stereotype of the *nefandum*. However typical, the defamation by Palencia shows a tendency to make the tyrant's denunciation Islamic.<sup>13</sup>

Thereby the abduction led to the king, to the stereotype of the *nefandum*, to a real defamatory system, also mentioned in the *Crónica castellana* (B) and Galíndez de Carvajal's chronicle (D) "*enorme delito*" that Diego de Valera (C) tackles cautiously "*cosas muy estrañas y feas*" without questioning Palencia's stereotype. As a consequence of the abduction being noticed by the parents, the neighbours' gathering because of the screams, the tears and bereavement, the way to the palace became a compulsory step for seeking justice. The court was in Seville and any crime committed during the king's stay therefore came under his jurisdiction. The community knew that this was the only possible procedure of justice. The event created havoc in the community, publicly displayed by the noisy procession led by the victim's parents through the streets of Seville. This was when the abduction turned into a legal and political scandal. The story of the arrival of the parents and the group to the king varies from one version to another. According to Palencia (A) the encounter took place outside the palace; unexpectedly, as the king was going out. In the other versions of the episode (B, C, D) the parents seem to have taken been to the king for a hearing.

The fortuitous nature of the meeting with the king in Palencia's version was all but a surprise. A parallel has to be drawn between the king leaving Seville's *alcazar* and entering the city, or rather avoiding it. Indeed Henry IV, as a tyrant should, preferred not to submit himself to the rite of entry and entered directly, unseen, into his palace through a postern. The eschewal of the king provoked the surprise and discontent of a city that had not seen a king since the solemn entrance of Henry III in 1395. Thus, the king appearing just as the victim's parents were about to ask for justice gave them an opportunity to appeal directly to his authority. Consequently the royal audience was improvised: a king leaving; parents screaming and crying for compensation; a growing crowd outside the palace gates attending the justice

13. "*Andava por su rreyno muy poderoso, todos los suyos rricos, contentos y ganosos de su servijio; la justicia bien ministrada en su Consejo, donde se oya las cabsas de la corte y en la Chancellería, donde prendía los pleitos, tenía perladados presydesntes, letrados famosos de conçiencia, donde se descurría la verdad yor ninguna cosa se torçía la justia; para la puniçión de los malhechores avya prudentes alcaldes que executavan sus delitos*", "He travelled around his kingdom very powerful, all his rich, happy and keen to serve him: the justice well administered in his Council, where the things of court are heard and in the Chancellery, where they took the litigation, had pearled presidents, famous lawyers of conscience, where truth ruled and nothing twisted the justice; for the punishment of miscreants there were prudent mayors who executed their crimes" (*Crónica de Enrique IV de Diego Enríquez del Castillo*, ed. Aureliano Sánchez Martín. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1994: 164); and see the letters sent to the king's officers in Murcia between July and August 1455, in *Colección de Documentos para la Historia del Reino de Murcia. XVII. Documentos de Enrique IV*, ed. María Concepción Molina Grande. Murcia: Academia Alfonso X El Sabio, 1988: 44-45 (docs. n° 26, 28).



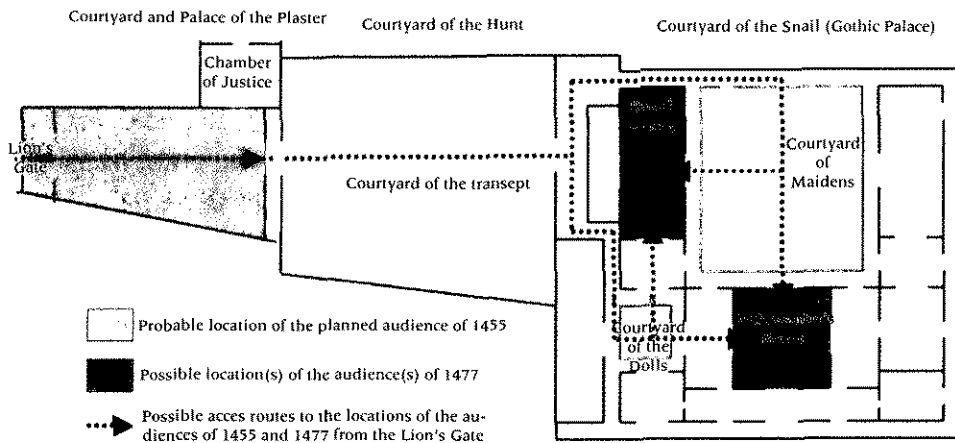
of a king which they were only just discovering. The other historians confirm to differing degrees the deliberate strategy of a king avoiding the city, but not the fortuitous access to the king described by Palencia.

In the other versions (B, C, D) the parents and the crowd went to the palace and asked the king for justice. The latter listened to the argument "*querella*" which the victims explain with solemnity "*gravemente*" (B, D) or bitterness "*agramente*" (C). Thus in these versions the meeting was not improvised: the king held a speech assisted by those who would subsequently make the parents leave (A, B, C, D), but who were then there to help him do his duty of listening. The arrival of the counts (A, B, C, D), only mentioned in the different versions at the time of the sentence, was consequently hardly believable. The noblemen surrounded the king from the start, as did those auxiliaries of justice whom Enrique asked to call an executioner to carry out his sentence in front of an open and solemn audience. From then onwards, the infamous charge of the Palencia version appears reinforced. In this version the unexpected appearance of the king explains how Enrique IV did away with the laws surrounding public audiences. By depicting this supposedly casual encounter with an angry public waiting to accost him, Palencia manages to create the image of a bad king, a tyrant hidden in his *alcazar*, surrounded by palace cronies. In doing so, Palencia counters the contradictory account of Diego Enríquez del Castillo, who depicts a just king; the letters sent by Henry from Seville to his officers in other cities to ensure that his justice is done confirm this image.<sup>14</sup>

We should therefore not underestimate the strength of his legal standing. Evidence taken from the other accounts suggests a formal public audience, probably the one which took place on Fridays, at which the king, surrounded by his council, sat in direct judgement of his subjects. Other clues, such as those relating to trial location, would tend to confirm this hypothesis. But according to Palencia, the audience occurred spontaneously, as the king was leaving his palace, presumably near one of the doors. The other versions confirm that the encounter took place outdoors, but that the king returned to his palace on the advice of his courtiers. However, in these versions the balance between "indoors" and "outdoors" remains contradictory to the account of Palencia. Diego de Valera mentions that the parents reached the king "*y llegados al rey*" (D). Quite possibly they were admitted into the *alcazar* in Seville, a space situated within the palace walls, but outside the palace itself, a transitional space that could be considered either exterior and public or interior and private.

---

14. Scheme published in Foronda, François. "Las audiencias públicas de la reina Isabel...": 133-171



MOVEMENT FROM THE PLACE OF THE AUDIENCE WITHIN THE SEVILLE PALACE (1455-1477)<sup>15</sup>

Of course, the architecture of the Sevillian *alcázar* is probably rather more complicated than these accounts would suggest, but the chronicles do seem to indicate that it was not until the middle of the fourteenth century that the works begun by Peter the Cruel led to the use of such a space for formal audiences.<sup>16</sup> The spatial function of the court of Montería was to give access inside the palatial structure to the king's chamber —his private apartments. But it was not until the time of the Catholic Kings that public audiences take place in this patio, which by then served as an open-air court of justice, and which dominated the monumental façade of the Mudéjar palace built by Peter I. It is thus very unlikely that the formal audience towards which the victim's parents were heading could have happened in such a space, which was after all designed to sublimate the image of a just king.

It is almost certain, therefore, that the monumental door that leads to the king's private apartments was where the king was standing when the crying parents arrived to complain about the abduction of their daughter by a member of his Muslim guard. The gestures, screams and cries of the plaintiffs (A, B, C, D) which are included in all four accounts not only express their pain, but also serve to demand justice, as would be expected of a judicial process that was usually initiated orally. In such a context, the presentation of the complaint "*querella*" (B, C, D) whose aim was to obtain

15. About the Alcázar of Seville, see especially Cómez, Rafael. "El Alcázar de Sevilla al fin de la Edad Media". *Les palais dans la ville. Espaces urbains et lieux de la puissance publique dans la Méditerranée médiévale*, Patrick Boucheron, Jacques Chiffolleau, eds. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2004: 313-324; Tabales Rodríguez, Miguel Ángel. *El alcázar de Sevilla. Primeros estudios sobre estratigrafía y evolución constructiva*. Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía Consejería, 2003; Tabales Rodríguez, Miguel Ángel. "Investigaciones arqueológicas en la portada de la Montería", Miguel Ángel Castillo Oreja, coord. *Apuntes del alcázar de Sevilla*, 7 (2006): 7-39. See also the communications in *Los alcázares reales. Vigencia de los modelos tradicionales en la arquitectura áulica cristiana*. Madrid: Antonio Machado Libros, 2001.

16. Villapalos Salas, Gustavo. *Los recursos contra los actos de gobierno en la baja edad media: su evolución histórica en el reino castellano (1252-1504)*. Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Administrativos, 1976.



compensation for a crime committed by a member of the king's staff, was conducted by means of a gracious protocol. Palencia appears to indicate this when he stresses that the parents of the victim had come to see the king to beseech him for his favour "*subventionis*" (A). The circumstances surrounding the abduction in Seville and its judicial consequences have therefore to be considered within the wider context of the gracious manner in which such appeals had come to be conducted since the beginning of the thirteenth century.

But the gestures and screams should be considered within the terms of rules governing the resort to mercy. Such rules were designed to impose humility, reverence and parsimony, all of which served to reduce the duration of the audience and conveyed the need for a measured and considered argument. Furthermore, the laws of the kingdom demanded that in cases where the demand for compensation concerned a wrong that fell within royal responsibility such a call was made gradually. So as not to undermine the honour of the king, mercy should first be sought in secret, then in front of two or three members of the court, and finally, if previous calls were rejected, by full judicial means. Thus, the eruption of the victim's parents in the court of Montería can be seen as doubly inappropriate. If their screams and cries were enough to alert a large number of people, then their call for mercy from the king was compromised. Through this infraction of the rules, the parents broadcasted their pain and thereby dishonoured the king.

Far from alleviating things, the irritation shown by the king inflamed the situation and provoked even louder screams and cries, and directed demands for justice (A) or cries to God (B, C, D). At this point the judicial process collapsed and the king's wrath, *furibundus* (A), or *tan grande enojo* (B, C, D), led him to call for his auxiliaries and demand that they whip the parents publicly. The first stage of the ceremonial process having collapsed, the people of Seville were now treated to a display in which the regulated dispensation of orderly justice was transformed into a spectacle of screaming, crying and anger. The wrath of the king and the punishment he ordered seemed unintelligible. By heckling the king in such a manner and not giving him a chance to pass judgement, the victim's parents not only inconvenienced and infringed his order, they also offended him. To interrupt the king while he was speaking was a dishonour that required an appropriate punishment.

But the punishment he chose, even if justified and comprehensible under the circumstances, seemed inordinately harsh. The intervention of the noblemen of the court (A, B, C, D) alerted the king to the political consequences of his actions. To whip parents whose daughter has been abducted by a Muslim of the royal guard was not sensible. While Palencia talks of the expulsion of the parents and the conversion to Islam of the victim, who by now was married to her abductor and a mother (A), the other versions add an image of an angry king who took refuge in his apartments following the intervention of the noblemen (B, C, D). However the event was concluded, the various chroniclers concur in their articulation of the discontent of the victims and of the community, and the increasing unease of the courtly noblemen. Having isolated himself from these voices of disquiet and surrounded only by a retinue "*satellites*" (A), "*los que cerca del [rey] estaban*" (B, C,

D), whose presence undermined the court, the king remained silent, incapable of hearing the protests of the masses or rejecting them.

The story of the abduction in Seville not only demonstrates the mechanism of defamation, it also indicates the culture and dialogue that took place between a government and its subjects, the attainder and the disappointment, and it depicts those rare occasions when the people could get close to their king, see and talk to him. The public audience was primarily a publicity device, which, when it all went wrong, turned against its creator and forced him to lock himself away from public sight. Thanks to Palencia, the court of Montería in Seville, designed by Peter the Cruel to amplify the image of a just king, now represented the refuge of an incarcerated tyrant, railing uselessly against his nobility, who were just beginning to realise the power they could wield. The collapse of order in Seville was essentially due to the failure of the king to silence his critics, not only the plaintiffs but also the chroniclers, those masters of public opinion and propaganda, of exhibition and dissimulation. Ultimately, the various accounts of these events stress how much of written history comes down to stragecraft.

