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Los Angeles

Conceptions of Power in Late Medieval Castile:
From Possession to Exercise

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
Requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by
Robert John Iafolla

2021

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Conceptions of Power in Late Medieval Castile:
From Possession to Exercise

by

Robert John Iafolla

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Teofilo Ruiz, Chair

Within late medieval Castilian royal chronicle narratives, the ways in which rulers were shown disempowering subjects, and what it meant for them to do so, evolved significantly between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth century. Narratives of removals from power at royal hands were most often framed by depictions of judicial procedures. Yet what that justice looked like, and how rulers acted through it to separate person and power, changed a great deal during this period. Those changes were consequences of two key eras of innovation in judicial institutions and expressions of royal authority, one in the final decades of the fourteenth century, and another after 1420. Depictions of rulers stripping specific possessions as punishment for crimes gave way to rulers deploying their authority, justified in terms of their interests, to arrange limitations on the capacity of rivals to exercise power.

Using royal chronicle narratives as lenses in this way allows for a reinterpretation of two important late medieval political developments in Castile. They are the origins of new conceptions of political power among the nobility, as well as a strengthened and more proactive

form of royal authority. In those accounts, united by consistent judicial framing but adapting to the innovations noted above, each reinforced the other. The rise of a more active king, with firmly defined authority, raised the profile of the suspensions of the exercise of power he arranged. But, as the close connection between the two attests, royal authority did not advance in isolation. It did so alongside changes in how the power it confronted, mainly that possessed by subjects, was envisioned as well. By the middle of the fifteenth century, a much more robustly conceived royal authority, and its exercise, sat at the center of chronicle narratives, and political discourse more broadly, regarding removals from power. However, it did not gain that position simply by imposition over, or by driving out, either older views or the claims of other political players. To be effective, it was also redirected toward newly defined actions, freeing rulers from limitations older forms had imposed.

The dissertation of Robert John Iafolla is approved.

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2021

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Notes on Translation and Documentation

All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own. Though I leave spelling and grammar unaltered when rendering quotations in medieval Castilian in footnotes, I use modernized spellings for specific terms included in the body of the text. Some exceptions have been made for the sake of clarity. For example, the letter “u” sometimes was employed where a “b” or “v” would be expected today, and I have substituted the consonants for the vowel in those circumstances.

Personal and place names are left in Castilian, unless there is a common English alternative. For example, I refer to King Juan II, not John II, but I refer to King Philip II, of Spanish Armada fame, not Felipe. Moreover, I have left untranslated many terms, particularly those for offices and elements of legal procedure, since doing so helps to establish the shared terminology of disparate accounts. If no translation is provided in the body of the text, further explanation of these terms is located in footnotes following their first use.

Also, when citing from published chronicles, I have generally included years, when editions are organized by year, and chapter numbers, followed by the page numbers.

Acknowledgements

Shortly after I began my graduate studies at UCLA, I enrolled in the Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Seminar under the auspices of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. I developed a proposal for a research project based on the so-called *farsa de Avila*, a public effort to mark the attempted deposition of Castilian king Enrique IV in 1465 by divesting him of royal insignia. The path to this dissertation, though it certainly has wound quite a bit, ultimately began there.

Having reached the, or at least an, end to that path, I owe a debt of gratitude to many people for their support. Teo Ruiz had offered mentorship and, to be sure, much time throughout the process. I am also grateful to Jessica Goldberg for her comments, and the insights generously offered by John Dagenais, Peter Stacey and Kevin Terraciano from their own fields, which have made this a more well-rounded project. At UCLA, the staff of the History Department, the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and the Charles E. Young Research Library have provided invaluable assistance over the years. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their encouragement.

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Introduction

Power and its Loss in Late Medieval Castile

In the second quarter of the fourteenth century, Don Juan Manuel, a powerful nobleman related to Castile's royal family, composed several works reflecting on the problem of gaining and keeping power, ideally with honor, within his political and cultural world.¹ He was no stranger to that dilemma, having navigated a series of conflicts with King Alfonso XI.² Ultimately, he avoided a catastrophic downfall, although his more ambitious political projects were unfulfilled.³ Others, however, were less fortunate. Writing near the end of the century, royal chronicler Pedro López de Ayala depicted the final moments of Alfonso Fernández Coronel, a less exalted aristocrat who ran afoul of Alfonso XI's successor, King Pedro I. In the chronicler's telling, having already been condemned and stripped of his possessions, on his way to execution he was taunted by royal advisor Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque. Resigned, Alfonso Fernández replied "Don Juan Alfonso, this is Castile, which makes men and destroys them."⁴

¹ Hugo Bizzarri, "El concepto de ciencia política en Don Juan Manuel," *Revista de Literatura Medieval* 13, no. 1 (2001): 60; James Grabowska, *The Challenge to Spanish Nobility in the Fourteenth Century: The Struggle for Power in Don Juan Manuel's "Conde Lucanor,"* 1335 (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 103-132, 159-180; James Grabowska, "The Rhetoric of Power in Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor*," *South Central Review* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 59. The problem of keeping power, or more directly resources supporting it, was quite pressing, since noble possessions were unstable and often subject to loss. Simon Doubleday, *The Lara Family: Crown and Nobility in Medieval Spain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 96.

² Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, *Crónica del Rey Don Alfonso el oncenno*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953), ch. 175, pp. 286-87; ch. 188, pp. 293-94.

³ Braulio Vázquez Campos, *Los adelantados mayores de la frontera o Andalucía (siglos XIII-XIV)* (Sevilla: Diputación de Sevilla, 2006), 309-333.

⁴ "Don Juan Alfonso, esta es Castilla, que face los omes, é los gasta." Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica del rey Don Pedro*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66, (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953), 1353 ch. 1, p. 428. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, in his mid-fifteenth century *Generaciones y semblanzas*, echoed this sentiment when describing the fate of Diego Gómez de Sandoval, Count of Castrogeriz. Referring to the career of the twice-exiled nobleman he observed of Castile that "those who she makes great, she herself destroys." Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, ed. J. Domínguez Bordona (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1954), 88.

Alfonso Fernández also added, Ayala claimed, that it was not his destiny to avoid such an end. The notions of fortune and providence played an important role in late medieval Castilian literature. However, they did not obscure the more tangible reasons for the ways in which powerful figures met their ends. Ricardo Arias y Arias, *El*

Castile certainly played host to frequent and multi-layered political confrontations in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, often the immediate context for such falls from grace.⁵ Behind individual contests, however, longstanding historiographical traditions identify these centuries as crucial for the development of state-like political structures and the capacity of royal governments, in both institutional and ideological terms, throughout the western European kingdoms.⁶ As such, more than just individual lives, and personal prominence, were at stake in political disputes. The balance of power between different individuals and social or political groups, and even the nature and meaning of political power itself, were also in flux.⁷

In recent decades one popular approach to understanding these developments has been to study the ways in which a wide range of actors sought to gain, consolidate, and legitimize positions of power within late medieval polities. Calling upon a broad and sometimes contradictory base of law, theory and norms, important methods included legal maneuvering,

concepto del destino en la literatura medieval española (Madrid: Ínsula, 1970), 287; Juan de Dios Mendoza, *Fortuna y providencia en la literatura castellana del siglo XV* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1973), 35, 48.

⁵ Francisco Javier Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval en España. Baja Edad Media* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2011), 65. Also, not all conflicts were created equal. The way in which they were defined could have great impact on the methods with which they were conducted and the consequences that might be faced. Andy King, “‘War’, ‘Rebellion’ or ‘Perilous Times’? Political Taxonomy and the Conflict in England, 1321-2,” in *Ruling Fourteenth-Century England: Essays in Honour of Christopher Given-Wilson*, ed. Rémy Ambühl, James Bothwell, and Laura Tompkins (Rochester: Boydell Press, 2019), 121.

⁶ For the meaning of the western kingdoms in political terms, see Joseph Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18. For a traditional summary of such processes, see Salustiano de Dios, *El Consejo Real de Castilla* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1982), 1. For the timeframe, see Alan Deyermond, “La ideología del estado moderno en la literatura española del siglo xv,” in *Realidad e imágenes del poder: España a fines de la Edad Media*, ed. Adeline Rucquoi (Valladolid: Ámbito, 1988), 171; Henry Allen Myers and Herwig Wolfram, *Medieval Kingship* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982), 299-344.

Also, what is meant by “state” in this context is a complex question. Referring to Northern Italy, Giorgio Chittolini cast it as a forum for mediation and political organization more than an active force. Although that formulation does not fully work for Castile, it is useful. Joanna Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial in Late Medieval Italy: Reggio Emilia in the Visconti Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 11. See also Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, “El bien común en la sociedad medieval: Entre el tópico, la utopía y el pragmatismo,” in *Los agentes del Estado: Poderes públicos y dominación social en Aragón* (siglos XIV-XVI), ed. Mario Lafuente Gómez and Concepción Villanueva Morte (Madrid: Sílex, 2019), 45-54.

⁷ Political confrontations were not new or extraordinary. But the ways in which they were conducted, and the specific things at stake, were in flux. Alice Raw, “Margaret of Anjou and the Language of Praise and Censure,” in *The Fifteenth Century XVII: Finding Individuality*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), 82; John Watts, *The Making of Polities: Europe 1300-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6.

written propaganda, and concern with ritual, spectacle or display.⁸ Comparatively neglected as a lens to study late medieval politics and power, however, have been the ways in which actors sought to remove and de-legitimize the power of others.⁹

Moving into that gap, I focus on a subset of these efforts, specifically moves by Castilian monarchs to disempower troublesome subjects, as depicted in royal chronicle narratives from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁰ I employ a broad definition of removal from power, or deposition. It encompasses attempts at coerced removal of an individual from a position of political power, and in particular their separation from the resources supporting such a position.¹¹

⁸ And of course the use of force and political deal making. But my focus is on ways to establish legitimacy as well as obtain particular outcomes. For an overview of that historiographical trend, and its role in understanding the political developments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Rodrigo Barbosa Schiavinato, “Cronística medieval em Portugal: Fernão Lopes e o modelo de justiça régia,” *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos* 14 (2018): 298-9; Nicolas Offenstadt, “L’histoire politique de la fin du Moyen Âge. Quelques discussions,” *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l’enseignement supérieur public, 38^e congrès* (2007): 195.

For what constituted propaganda in a late medieval context, see Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 26-30; Craig Taylor, “War, Propaganda and Diplomacy in Fifteenth-Century France and England,” in *War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France*, ed. Christopher Allmand (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 70-73; Aengus Ward, “Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada: Auteur et acteur en Castille à la fin du XIII^e siècle,” *Cahiers d’études hispaniques médiévales* 26 (2003): 294.

⁹ They may be covered incidentally, in that asserting or defending a position often meant attacking others. Also, what exactly is meant by “politics” and “political,” and how late medieval actors would have understood those concepts, is a subject of discussion. Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, “El lenguaje de la politización en Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media: Ciudades, nobleza y realeza,” in *Discurso político y relaciones de poder: Ciudad, nobleza y monarquía en la Baja Edad Media*, ed. José Antonio Jara Fuente (Madrid: Dykinson, 2017), 5, 14-15; Offenstadt, “L’histoire politique,” 179; Kari Palonen, “Concepts and Debates: Rhetorical Perspectives on Conceptual Change,” in *Conceptual History in the European Space*, ed. Willibald Steinmetz, Michael Freedon, and Javier Fernández-Sebastián (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017), 96, 103.

¹⁰ Throughout, I am attentive to distinctions between power and authority. They are intertwined with one another, but not to the point of interchangeability. In general terms, I consider power as having mostly to do with capacity, and authority with legitimacy. Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola, and Tuija Ainonen, foreword to *Authorities in the Middle Ages: Influence Legitimacy and power in Medieval Society*, ed. Sini Kangas, Mia Korpiola, and Tuija Ainonen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), ix; Mollie M. Madden, “Symbols and Soldiers, English Royal Authority in Gascony,” in Kangas, Korpiola, and Ainonen, *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, 269-70; Willibald Steinmetz and Michael Freedon, introduction to Steinmetz and Freedon, *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 26. My subject is mostly authority, since chronicles offer depictions of how monarchs, or their supporters, attempted to de-legitimize opponents. As for practical consequences, chronicles refer to specific commands and their results. Generally, documentary evidence confirms that they, or something like them, were issued.

¹¹ Such as an office or other kind of jurisdiction, a title, property or material grant from the crown, positions of political influence, etc. Differences between these things are de-emphasized, though not ignored. Except in some specific circumstances, most notably the chapters on the depositions of masters of military orders, position refers to a person’s power base, not a specific post. On this approach, see Gareth Prosser, *‘Decayed Feudalism’ and ‘Royal Clienteles’: Royal Office and Magnate Service in the Fifteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 186-88.

Moreover, the accounts on which I focus involve depositions of people who, for the most part, can be defined as members of Castile's higher nobility.¹² Ultimately, the definition of deposition is situational more than typological, depending on the circumstances and personalities involved rather than any specific type of post or possession.¹³ My concern is with how losing, and thus having, power was conceived in these confrontations more than with the nature of any single position or resource.¹⁴

Regarding offices, although in theory rulers had broad discretionary authority in "hiring and firing," in practice dismissal was not that different from losing more material possessions. Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 80-82; José M. García Marín, *El oficio público en Castilla durante la baja Edad Media* (Alcalá de Henares: Instituto Nacional de Administración Pública, 1987), 344, 484; Rogelio Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno y la administración de los reinos de la corona de Castilla: 1230-1474* (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma, 1976), 98. Finally, deposition refers to attempts to remove a person from a position already held, not disputes over a position which nobody possessed securely.

¹² Martin Aurell, "The Western Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: A Survey of the Historiography and Some Prospects for New Research," in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 263-74. In Castile, like in much of the west, the nature and origins of nobility was a subject of debate in the later Middle Ages, over issues like lineage vs. service and military prowess vs. political savvy. Christopher Allmand and Maurice Keen, "History and the Literature of War: The *Boke of Noblesse* of William Worcester," in Allmand, *War, Government and Power*, 99-105; Noel Fallows, ed., *The Chivalric Vision of Alfonso De Cartagena: Study and Edition of the "Doctrinal de los caballeros"* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 1995), 11-16; Prosser, 'Decayed Feudalism', 176; Adeline Rucquoi, "Ser noble en España (siglos xiv-xvi)," in Adeline Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas: Estudios sobre la Península Ibérica medieval* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2006), 211-218, 223-27, 240.

As for less exalted figures, they appear in far fewer sources. Santiago González Sánchez, "La media y baja nobleza castellana durante la regencia de los tutores de Juan II de Castilla, 1407-1418," *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 45 (2018): 114. But even among the relatively high nobility, the specific status of the figures whose downfalls feature below varies. I am concerned not so much with the specific nature of their power base, but how their activities, and downfalls, overlapped with royal power and goals.

¹³ In fact, separation of person and power is best term. I use deposition, disempowerment, and removal for convenience. Not all accounts concern figures who were completely stripped of power or destroyed. In some examples the deposed loses a degree of power, perhaps prestige, but otherwise is unaffected. Other outcomes can be much more drastic, such as banishment from power centers or outright exile, imprisonment, and even execution. In fact, in line with a situational definition of deposition, stripping an opponent's power, in context, might be a more targeted effort, and lack of complete destruction or permanent loss was not necessarily a failure. But more important than the final fates of targets is how chroniclers depicted kings intervening legitimately to separate rivals from the power they needed to continue being a meaningful rival. Finally, sometimes both late medieval sources and, even more often, modern historians, refer to people being exiled. However, that term is usually best understood as a description of a de facto situation, though perhaps underpinned by a private agreement between particular parties, than a de jure punishment imposed by a judicial body. Aquilino Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición: La traición regia en León y Castilla* (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1971), 189.

¹⁴ Overall, there was no set type of aristocrat, and none depended on only one type of resource or post. Leaving aside the qualities of specific sources, in a general sense how kings dealt with rivals, and were depicted doing so, depended on who, and what, exactly it was they had to deal with.

Also, although there were important terminological changes during the period under consideration, conceptions of power are about more than changing definitions. Michael Freedon, "Conceptual History, Ideology

By studying royal chronicles like López de Ayala's, informed by normative sources like Juan Manuel's and by contemporary documents, significant evolutions in how rulers were shown disempowering subjects between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth century, and indeed in what it meant for them to do so, come into focus.¹⁵ In the broader context of existing work on late medieval politics and political cultures, this approach occupies a space between studies of ideas and institutionally focused projects. Rather than focusing on developments in institutional form and function, or on political ideas per se, it highlights their interaction in narratives based on concrete circumstances and reflecting debates over the interpretation of those circumstances.¹⁶ That reveals "applied" political discourses, in this case about power and its loss, which were not specifically theorized in contemporary sources or advanced directly in institutional documents.¹⁷

Specifically, narratives of removals from power at royal hands, across the period in question and in diverse chronicle accounts, were most often framed by depictions of judicial

and Language," in Steinmetz and Freedon, *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 120, 123; Palonen, "Concepts and Debates," 99; Steinmetz and Freedon, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 1-2. Ultimately, the scope of actions singled out as significant by chroniclers, as they described separations of person and power, underwent the more important change.

¹⁵ Castile's late medieval chronicles are well-used and indispensable sources, given the general paucity of archival material. For more on Castile's "source problem" and the careful use of chronicles both in light of it and on their own terms, see Lisa Di Crescenzo and Sally Fisher, "Exile and Imprisonment in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Parergon* 34, no. 2 (2017): 22; L. J. Andrew Villalon, "Wives, Mistresses, Lovers, and Daughters: The Fortunes of War for Royal Women in Late Fourteenth-Century Castile. Or: A Gender Limitation on Writing History from Chronicles," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 17 (2019): 103, 134-35, 138-9.

These late medieval works were far removed from the stereotype of a simple record of events which sticks to the term "chronicle." Many were serious historical, and literary, enterprises. Cecilia Devia, "Pedro I y Enrique II de Castilla: Construcción de un rey monstruoso y la legitimación de un usurpador en la Crónica del canciller Ayala," *Mirabilia: Electronic Journal of Antiquity, Middle & Modern Ages* 13 (2011): 62, <https://raco.cat/index.php/Mirabilia/article/view/283121>.

¹⁶ Iglesia Ferreiros takes a similar approach to the meanings of treason. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 13, 19. See also Adelaide Pereira Millán da Costa, "A cultura política em ação: Diálogos institucionais entre a coroa e os centros urbanos, em Portugal no século XIV," *En la España Medieval* 36 (2013): 15. In addition, the term narrative in the modern sense was not much used to describe medieval historical writing or storytelling. Ruth Evans and Ana Montero, "Medieval Narratives: Living On," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 31 (2015): 3.

¹⁷ That includes, but is not limited to, unwritten or informal "rules" that condition elite political action. Pereira Millán da Costa, "A cultura política em ação," 28; Offenstadt, "L'histoire politique," 184. For discussion of this approach, see Devia, "Pedro I y Enrique II," 64; Freedon, "Conceptual History, Ideology and Language," 125, 131; Chris Jones, "Perspectives from the Periphery: French Kings and their Chroniclers," *The Medieval Chronicle* 10 (2015): 71, 88.

procedures under royal auspices. Yet what that justice looked like, and how rulers acted through it to separate person and power, changed a great deal between the middle of the fourteenth century and the middle of the fifteenth.¹⁸ Those changes were consequences of two key eras of innovation, to which chroniclers responded. The first involved a series of institutional developments in the late fourteenth century, while the second encompassed novel legal and ideological claims advanced by monarchs and their officials, which accelerated in the 1420's.¹⁹ In particular, as chroniclers assimilated these changes into their narratives, both had a significant impact on the roles played by monarchs in separating person and power, a critical consideration in works primarily devoted to rulers and their activities. In short, depictions of rulers stripping specific possessions as punishment for crimes gave way to rulers deploying their authority, justified in terms of their interests, to arrange limitations on the capacity of rivals to act.²⁰

¹⁸ Differences between chronicles themselves must also be taken into account, but both major fifteenth-century chronicle traditions displayed similar concerns. Also, establishing legitimacy was significant in depicting, and executing, removals from power. Targets of royal wrath may be expected to have resisted or evaded it, but to make it effective kings had to mobilize the support of others, and most of that support had to come by means other than direct coercion. Kathleen B. Neal, *The Letters of Edward I: Political Communication in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2021), 10.

¹⁹ These will be discussed in depth below, but for a summary see Richard Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants in Castile: 1500-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), xxi; José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos del poder real en Castilla* (Madrid: Ediciones de la Universidad Complutense, 1988), 110, 116, 124-27, 137; Luis Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía: Entendimiento y rivalidad; El proceso de la construcción de la corona española* (Madrid, La Esfera, 2003), 55, 75, 80.

For more on the meanings of law in this context, beyond simply codified statutes, see Catherine L. Fisk and Robert W. Gordon, "Foreword: "Law As...;" Theory and Method in Legal History," *UC Irvine Law Review* 1, no. 3 (September 2011): 525, 535. For ideology, and intersections between law, institutions, and ideology, see Alfonso García-Gallo, *Manual de historia del derecho español* (Madrid: 1964), 1, 194; Robert W. Gordon, "Critical Legal Histories," *Stanford Law Review* 36, no. 57 (January 1984): 93.

²⁰ To be sure, kings and indeed all judges could, and did, often rule based on factors other than the strict letter of the law, to the extent that even existed in this period. Luis Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena, 1385-1456: Una biografía política en la Castilla del siglo XV* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 2002), 350. But the term interests refers to what was expedient in the service of their public duties as monarchs and, perhaps, to uphold their dignity. Private gain and vengeance definitely were outside this sphere. Anthony Black, *Political Thought in Europe: 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18, 24-26; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 147-51, Gaines Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 247, 253, 283, 301; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 41; Watts, *Polities*, 91.

The notion was related to, but more expansive than, older notions of "necessity" as a justification for extraordinary royal demands on subjects. Luis García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia de las instituciones españolas: De los orígenes al final de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1968), 428.

Within chronicle narratives, the institutional developments of the late fourteenth century distanced rulers from determinations of guilt and punishment which, in accounts from the middle of the century, they were shown making personally. In the aftermath of those innovations, rulers were still portrayed taking active roles, but their primary contributions were of a different character.²¹ Moreover, the consequences of earlier royal declarations had been the loss of formal possession of resources of power.²² In later accounts, the results of royal action were expressed in more ambiguous terms.

In fifteenth-century chronicles, the innovations of the 1420's provided a new language for justified royal intervention apart from judgement and punishment.²³ However, that intervention was associated with specific consequences, defined in temporary and contingent terms. It targeted not the formal possession of resources of power, but rather a person's capacity to benefit from them, assert authority connected to them or, in broader terms, their personal

²¹ Those new royal institutions were not, in theory, separate from the monarch. They operated on his delegated authority and often reflected, in institutional rather than personal terms, one or more of the qualities associated with kingship in general. Nonetheless, the assimilation of their functioning into chronicle narratives changed what the figure of the king personally did. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 197.

²² There was an extensive discourse about property rights (*proprietas*) and the powers that went with them (*dominium*, among others), which was critical in theoretical discussions of political power. Carlos M. Martínez Ruiz, "Propiedad y poder en los comentarios al 'Segundo Libro de las Sentencias' de Buenaventura de Bagnoregio y Tomas de Aquino," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 74 (2007): 82; Alexander Lee, "Roman Law and Human Liberty: Marsilius of Padua on Property Rights," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 1 (January 2009): 24; Antoine Meissonnier, "Théorie et pratique du pouvoir royal: L'exemple du procès entre l'évêque de Mende et le roi de France (1269-1307)," *Revue historique* 674, no.2 (2015): 306; Xose Sánchez Sánchez, "Las formas del poder en la feudalidad tardía. Las tomas de posesión en el señorío de la iglesia de Santiago de Compostela durante el siglo XV: Dominio, gesto y significación," *Studia historica. Historia medieval* 37, no. 2 (2019): 134-37. But loss of what would today be called private property was not usually a major concern of chronicle narratives. The closest thing was administrative or jurisdictional lordship, *señorío*. Miguel-Angel Ladero Quesada, "Aristocratie et régime seigneurial dans l'Andalousie du XV^e siècle," *Annales* 38, no. 6 (1983): 1349-50.

²³ These were, in some ways, related to the institutional changes of the previous century. Indeed, their origins can be traced back to then, even if they were much more forcefully advanced after 1420. Nieto Soria argues that ideology is conservative in nature, slow to change in the wake of institutional developments. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 45.

liberty.²⁴ The kinds of actions rulers were described taking were not unprecedented, but the articulation of coherent, shared ways of depicting them as legitimate offered many new advantages to deposing monarchs. However, that process also shifted the scope of royal action to the exercise, rather than possession, of power.²⁵ Stripping possessions outright, though still a factor in many accounts, was no longer cast as a ruler's gateway to disempowering a subject, but rather the culmination of efforts to do so.

Questions and Implications

That evolution in chronicle narratives of the separation of person and power encompasses two distinct but related changes.²⁶ The first involves the justificatory and executive forces behind separations of person and power at royal hands, while the second involves what it meant to lose, and thus to have, political power.²⁷ Moreover, both the move away from interpreting losses of power as punishments for crimes, toward interventions to serve royal interests, and the shift away from depicting losses of power as losses of possession, toward the denial of a target's capacity to act, fall under the umbrella of late medieval "state" narratives.

²⁴ There was a very developed system for conceiving formal title and powers or other benefits separately. For example, office holders often delegated their duties to placeholders, for which there were formal provisions. Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, "Los burócratas como grupo de poder: Su influencia y participación en la vida urbana y en las luchas de bandos," in *El contrato político en la Corona de Castilla: Cultura y sociedad política entre los siglos X al XVI*, ed. François Foronda and Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado (Madrid: Dykinson, 2008), 393; Denis Menjot, "La ville et l'état moderne naissant: La monarchie et le Concejo de Murcie dans la Castille des Trastamares d' Henri II à Henri IV," in Rucquoi, *Realidad e imágenes del poder*, 117; Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno*, 139. On notions of office and officer in general during the late Middle Ages see Philippe Contamine, "Le Moyen Âge Occidental a-t-il connu des 'Serviteurs de l'État'?", in *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public, 29^e congrès: Les Serviteurs de l'État au Moyen Âge* (1999): 18.

²⁵ That is to say, royal interventions were directed principally against that within the narratives. I am not engaging in a more abstract discussion about the distinctions between power as potential and the specific techniques of its exercise. See introduction to Allmand, *War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France*, xiii.

²⁶ On unpacking such intertwined connections, see Freedden, "Conceptual History," 125; Steinmetz and Freedden, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 26.

²⁷ "Conception of power" is the broad term used to refer to the second shift. Nieto Soria refers to mental attitudes with political significance. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 22, 45.

Indeed, the articulation of conceptions of power in late medieval Castile favoring exercise over possession, though not a major focus of study, has not gone unnoticed. However, it is often interpreted as a result of the changing nature of the power bases of the nobility.²⁸ From the late fourteenth century onward, noble power came to depend overwhelmingly on sharing in the resources and jurisdiction of the crown.²⁹ That, an influential argument goes, caused nobles to envision and assert a political self-image which included a claimed right to participate in governing, or exercising power, in the realm.³⁰ At the same time, with power held on such terms,

²⁸ José Manuel Nieto Soria, “Corona e identidad política en Castilla,” in *Construir la identidad en la Edad Media*, ed. José Antonio Jara Fuente, Georges Martin, and Isabel Alfonso Antón (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2010), 187, 195, 206; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 139-42; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 27, 132. That was concurrent with the rise of a “new” nobility around the turn of the fourteenth century. José María Monsalvo Antón, *La baja Edad Media en los siglos XIV-XV: Política y cultura* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2000), 41; Salvador de Moxó, “De la nobleza vieja a la nobleza nueva. La transformación nobiliaria castellana en la Baja Edad Media,” in Salvador de Moxó, *Feudalismo, señorío y nobleza en la Castilla medieval* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2000), 359.

²⁹ And the rights of lords increased over people at the expense of royal power through, among other mechanisms, exercising jurisdiction and collecting taxes. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 56; José García de Cortázar, *La sociedad rural en la España medieval* (México: Siglo XXI, 1988), 229-233; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 518-20; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *El siglo XV en Castilla: Fuentes de renta y política fiscal* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 1982), 67; Watts, *Polities*, 93-94.

³⁰ As distinct from owning resources of power, and more similar to royal power. Adeline Rucquoi, “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos: Los fundamentos de la realeza en España,” *Relaciones. Estudios de Historia y Sociedad* 13, no. 51 (1992): 24-25. The core of the argument is that hereditary office holding and other forms of non-ownership based power conferred a sense of hereditary capacity, and right, to govern. María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, “Relaciones contractuales y propaganda de estatus: Unidad e amistanza entre los grandes del reino,” in *Du contrat d’alliance au contrat politique: Cultures et sociétés politiques dans la péninsule Ibérique à la fin du Moyen Âge*, ed. François Foronda and Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado (Toulouse: Maison de la Recherche, 2007), 30, 39; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 64. See also Barbosa Schiavinato, “Cronística medieval em Portugal,” 301; Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política’ en los discursos de la nobleza? Una categoría de análisis para el estudio de la politización de la nobleza castellana en el siglo XV,” *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval* 34 (2017), 29, 39-41, 45-46; González Sánchez, “La media y baja nobleza castellana,” 136-8; José Manuel Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara: El conflicto como representación,” in *El conflicto en escenas: La pugna política como representación en la Castilla bajomedieval*, ed. José Manuel Nieto Soria (Madrid: Sílex, 2010), 22-34; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 112-20.

The consolidation of the *Consejo* was involved as well. It acted with delegated royal power, so in controlling the *Consejo*, that is what was at stake. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 241.

rulers gained very good grounds to remove it from those who held “shares.”³¹ However, in chronicle narratives of depositions, other forces were at work promoting views of power as a matter of capacity to act, which were associated instead with the efforts of monarchs and their officials to assert authority. The institutional and ideological innovations that opened new paths to royal intervention also pointed it toward the exercise rather than the possession of power.³²

Moreover, the new roles for monarchs in depictions of separations of person and power placed them in the guise of a “governing” king.³³ This proactive figure, distinguished from older visions of monarchs as maintainers of the status quo, is associated with both a developing sense of the act of governing as opposed to reigning, as well as new expressions of royal authority.³⁴ But seen through the lens of chronicle narratives, not only the power with which rulers acted, but also the power they acted upon, was altered. With the power of targets cast as an ability to act,

³¹ Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, “Símbolos y ritos: Conflicto como representación,” in *La monarquía como conflicto en la corona castellano-leonesa (c.1230-1504)*, ed. José Manuel Nieto Soria (Madrid: Sílex, 2006), 489-546. These shares, in whatever form, were not accorded the same legal protections as private property, but like offices, in practice simply stripping them without explanation, usually accompanied with some form of procedure, was often not politically practical. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 734, 776.

And it was difficult to gain or maintain power without strong connections with the “center,” where such shares could be confirmed, protected, and perhaps expanded. Kathleen Daly, “‘Centre’, ‘Power’ and ‘Periphery’ in Late Medieval French Historiography: Some Reflections,” in Allmand, *War, Government and Power*, 142.

³² Within chronicle narratives, these trends were mutually reinforcing. An empowered “governing king,” and conceptions of power favoring exercise, went together. Well-established ideas about kingship and royal justice served as an anchor, while the specific ways in which those things combined to separate person and power changed greatly. Joseph Pesticau, “Le pouvoir de l’idéal et l’idéal du pouvoir,” *Philosophiques* 8, no. 2 (1981): 265.

³³ On that idea, see Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 332, 337; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 682, 695; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 128. Also important is the idea of a law-making king. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 92-93. And more active royal law-making and governance were also linked. Even if of limited effect, legislating maintained appearances of governing. José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar en la Corona de Castilla: El Ordenamiento Real de Medina del Campo de 1453* (Madrid: Dykinson, 2000), 120.

Throughout, I use the term king to refer to reigning monarchs generally, and all the monarchs who ruled during the period under consideration were males. But that is not to say that a queen regnant could not also take on this role, like Isabel I did just after this period.

³⁴ Salustiano de Dios, “El Estado Moderno, ¿un cadáver historiográfico?,” in Rucquoi, *Realidad e imágenes del poder*, 405-06. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 682, 695; Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 18-25; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 127-8. In some ways, this image is the counterpart to the “governing” noble. Defining a king’s role by function as much as title let other share in it, yet at the same time, made their basis for doing so, as far as legitimacy was concerned, more dependent on royal discretion. Relatedly, Trastámara rulers were often cast as conflict resolving judges, not punitive ones, highlighting the overlap of justice and governing. Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 45.

not possession of particular resources, narratives of depositions at royal hands turned into contests of relative capacity, and rights, to exercise power. Determinations regarding the formal possession of resources of power remained tied to procedures for dealing out judgement and punishment in response to crime. They had dominated earlier accounts, but in later narratives a newer way of defining contests for power gave active, governing kings, and sympathetic chroniclers, many more paths, as far as claiming legitimacy was concerned, to prevail.³⁵

Using royal chronicle narratives as lenses allows for a reinterpretation of both the origins of a new conception of power, and the strengthened authority of “governing” monarchs, in late medieval Castile.³⁶ In those accounts, united by consistent judicial framing but adapting to the innovations noted above, each reinforced the other.³⁷ The rise of an active, governing king raised the profile of the suspensions of exercise he arranged.³⁸ But the close connection of the two emphasizes that royal power and claims did not advance in isolation. They did so alongside changes in how the power they confronted, mainly that enjoyed by their subjects, was envisioned as well. By the middle of the fifteenth century, a much more robustly conceived royal authority, and its exercise, sat firmly at the center of chronicle accounts of removals from power and,

³⁵ Despite differences of opinion about exactly how, kings and their authority were conceived as unique. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 111; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 67; Watts, *Politics*, 95-97. Although Castilian kings did not enjoy sacral trappings akin to their French and English counterparts, that uniqueness had much to do with their special connection to God. Luís Fernández Gallardo, “La crónica real (ca. 1310-1490): Conflictividad y memoria colectiva,” in Nieto Soria, *El conflicto en escenas*, 285, 307; Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 25; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 53, 56; Teofilo Ruiz, “Unsacred Monarchy: The Kings of Castile in the Late Middle Ages,” in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

³⁶ On chronicles as lenses, see Daly, “‘Centre’, ‘Power’ and ‘Periphery,’” 124; Fernando Gómez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real: Transformaciones ideológicas en la ‘Crónica de tres reyes,’” in *La historia alfonsí: El modelo y sus destinos (siglos XIII-XV)*, ed. Georges Martin (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2017), 1; Bernard F. Reilly, “Bishop Lucas of Túy and the Latin Chronicle Tradition in Iberia,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 4 (2007): 782-85.

³⁷ That consistent framing is very important. It helped to unite the different chronicles, serving as a constant through which to measure how depictions of rulers separating person and power changed over time.

³⁸ But still in the context of narratives defined in judicial terms. The rise of claims to royal authority did not mean those actions could appear capricious. Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 42.

indeed, political discourse in general. However, it was not raised to that position simply by imposition over, or by driving out, either older views or the claims of other political players.³⁹ To be effective, it was also redirected toward newly defined actions, offering a new sense of what it meant to lose, and to have, power.

Timeframe

The word “crisis” has a prominent place in the political, economic and social historiography of late medieval Castile and, ultimately, the later Middle Ages in general.⁴⁰ For Castile in particular, the origins of “crisis” stretch back to the “Great Reconquest” of Andalucía in the thirteenth century, culminating in the capture of Seville in 1248.⁴¹ Its repercussions were widespread. But in a political sense, the incorporation of the new territories in the south contributed, in the long run, to a significant shake up in the internal distribution of power, favoring the higher nobility against the monarch and, essentially, everyone else.⁴²

³⁹ Indeed, subjects could use these ideas to their advantage and sometimes even promoted their spread. José Manuel Nieto Soria, “La nobleza y el ‘poderío real absoluto’ en la Castilla del siglo XV,” *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 25 (2002): 246. That is significant in understanding a Castilian “paradox” that the theoretical influence of the crown increased in an era characterized by the loss of resources to the nobility. Though strong in de jure terms, much practical control on local levels was placed into noble hands. Still, the terms on which that control was formally held and exercised flowed from that strong de jure position. Ertman, *Leviathan*, 35.

⁴⁰ Black, *Political Thought*, 137; Michael Freedman, “Crisis? How Is That a Crisis!? Reflections on an Overburdened Word,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 12, no. 2 (2017): 13, 16; García de Cortázar, *La sociedad rural*, 187; David Igual Luis, “Crisis? Qué crisis? El comercio internacional en los reinos hispánicos de la baja Edad Media,” *Edad Media: Revista de Historia* 8 (2007), 203-23; Richard W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 121, 170

⁴¹ Derek Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain* (London: Longman, 1978), 154-55; Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *The Gibraltar Crusade: Castile and the Battle for the Strait* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 52-53.

⁴² Work on this crisis is quite extensive. For some social and economic aspects, see Ladero Quesada, *El siglo XV en Castilla*, 54; Joseph F. O’Callaghan, “Paths to Ruin: The Economic and Financial Policies of Alfonso the Learned,” in *The Worlds of Alfonso the Learned and James the Conqueror: Intellect and Force in the Middle Ages*, ed. Robert I. Burns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 41-67; Teofilo Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity: Land and Town in Late Medieval Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 287-324. For a more general consideration see Teofilo Ruiz, *Spain’s Centuries of Crisis* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

Also, these years overlap with much reinterpreted and challenged, but still influential, late medieval “state building” narratives.⁴³ In Castile, those narratives tend to begin shortly after the conquest of Seville, during the reign of Alfonso X, and culminate with the political settlement of Isabel and Fernando, *los reyes católicos*, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.⁴⁴ Their joint reign, secure by the late 1470’s, is considered a turning point in Castilian history and a bridge between the medieval and early modern periods.⁴⁵ This settlement, and the battles preceding it, have been the subject of extensive study, and so has the contemporaneous consolidation of powerful noble houses which solidified their position, sometimes in competition, but ultimately in conjunction, with the crown.⁴⁶

The major removals analyzed, and the chronicle accounts which depict them, sit between those chronological bookends, spanning from the 1320’s to the 1450’s. I begin at the outset of King Alfonso XI’s adult rule in 1325, after which he reasserted royal authority following almost

⁴³ Literature on this subject is also, unsurprisingly, vast. Ertman, *Leviathan*, 1; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 494, 498, 535; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 5, 50; Watts, *Polities*, 27. Also, developments in historiography can be part of such narratives. Biörn Tjällén, “Political Thought and Political Myth in Late Medieval National Histories: Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo,” *The Medieval Chronicle* 8 (2013): 273.

⁴⁴ See John Edwards, *The Spain of the Catholic Monarchs: 1474-1520* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000). Or, they begin with Alfonso X’s great-grandson, Alfonso XI. Fernando Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio en Castilla: El reinado de Alfonso XI, 1312-1350* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2012). As for the culmination, see Deyermund, “La ideología del estado moderno,” 192; María Luisa López-Vidriero Abello, “Crónicas impresas y lectura de corte en la España del siglo XVI,” *Bibliofilia* 100, no. 2-3 (1998): 412; José María Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado en la castilla bajomedieval. Consideraciones sobre su problemática,” *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval* 4 (1986): 124-5; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 332, 359, 370-9; Adriana Vidotte, “A justiça e a produção do Direito em Castela no século XV,” *Estudos Ibero-Americanos* 37, no. 2 (2011): 337.

In the 1460’s and early 70’s, Castile faced a dispute over who would succeed Enrique IV, Isabel, his half-sister, or Juana, his daughter of suspect legitimacy. For a general treatment, see William D. Phillips, *Enrique IV and the Crisis of Fifteenth-Century Castile: 1425-1480* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America: 2014).

⁴⁵ For instance, Henry Kamen begins a general overview of early modern Spain in 1469, while Teofilo Ruiz ends an overview of late medieval Castile in 1474. Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469-1714: A Society of Conflict* (London: Longman, 1983); Ruiz, *Spain’s Centuries of Crisis*.

⁴⁶ Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado,” 102-3; Rucquoi, “Ser noble en España,” 243-44; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 22; Watts, *Polities*, 94. Some examples of noble studies are María Del Pilar Carceller Cerviño, *Beltrán de la Cueva, el último privado: Monarquía y nobleza a fines de la Edad Media* (Madrid: Sílex, 2011); Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Guzmán: La casa ducal de Medina Sidonia en Sevilla y su reino, 1282-1521* (Dykinson: Madrid, 2015); Nancy F. Marino, *Don Juan Pacheco: Wealth and Power in Late Medieval Spain* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006).

three decades of instability.⁴⁷ The period also encompasses the Castilian Civil War of 1366-1369, and its much longer antecedents, in which King Pedro I, Alfonso XI's successor, was overthrown by Enrique II, founder of the Trastámara dynasty. Enduring until the sixteenth century, the period of Trastámara rule is often treated as a distinct era, particularly in political history.⁴⁸ However, although the early Trastámara rulers were responsible for several innovations, their ascension did not make for a clean break with the past. As such, beginning this study before their arrival bridges an important historiographical divide. And at the same time, it also emphasizes the significance of those innovations for the ways in which chronicle narratives characterized the separation of person and power, which beginning in 1369 would miss.⁴⁹

The turn of the fifteenth century also means turning to the long and troubled reign of the fourth Trastámara ruler, King Juan II. By the mid 1420's these troubles had crystalized into a conflict between the king and "royal favorite" Álvaro de Luna, on one side, and the king's cousins, the *infantes* of Aragón, on the other.⁵⁰ That battle culminated in the 1440's, when a major *infantes* victory swept their party into power at court, but was soon followed by an equally sweeping reaction that expelled them and returned Álvaro de Luna to prominence.⁵¹ Thereafter, Álvaro de Luna's own downfall in 1453, and Juan II's death in 1454, serve as the second bookend.

⁴⁷ O'Callaghan, *The Gibraltar Crusade*, 187.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, O'Callaghan's general history. Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). An important reason for that is the attention given to the extensive propaganda efforts of their chronicler, Pedro López de Ayala. Having usurped the throne by force, establishing legitimacy was vital and this project heavily colors our view of the first decades of their rule. More generally, the first Trastámara, especially Juan I and Enrique III, oversaw institutional reforms which, if not so closely connected to the peculiar circumstances of their rise, were an important development.

⁴⁹ Some studies encompass the entire *baja Edad Media*, usually cast as the period after about 1250.

⁵⁰ They were the children of Fernando de Antequera, brother of Enrique III, who served as one of the regents during Juan's minority. They were also immensely powerful, holding large estates and important positions in Castile. In addition, they could fall back to the neighboring realms of Navarre and Aragón if they experienced difficulties in Castile.

⁵¹ Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 35.

His heir, Enrique IV, succeeded him. In the 1460's, Castile descended into conflict over the crown and the succession, which Enrique's half-sister Isabel eventually won.⁵² Given that Isabel's rise and rule fall, to a degree, in a different historiographical context than the earlier Trastámara, I end when her rise begins.⁵³ The first decade of Enrique's reign, however, has many continuities with the final years of Juan II.⁵⁴ But determining chronological scope is not just a matter of rulers and their reigns. The other factor at play is the chronicles whose narratives serve as the basis for this study.

Indeed, the first half of the fourteenth century saw, within Castilian historiography, the birth of the *crónica real*, or royal chronicle, genre itself.⁵⁵ In contrast to earlier universal history models, or works devoted to a region or royal lineage over long spans of time, a *crónica real*, most often composed in a court milieu, was distinguished by focusing on the reign and actions of

⁵² Jeremy Lawrance, "Representations of Violence in 15th-century Spanish Literature," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 86, no. 1 (2009): 95-96; Luís Suárez Fernández, *Enrique IV de Castilla: La difamación como arma política* (Barcelona: Editorial Ariel, 2001); Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 297.

⁵³ Thanks in part to the disruptions of the 1460's and 70's. Samuel A. Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence in Late Medieval Castile* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), 67-8. Though on the other hand, Isabel's own propaganda promoted an image of her rule as a return to order in the aftermath of chaos. Alan Deyermond, "Written by the Victors: Technique and Ideology in Official Historiography in Verse in Late-Medieval Spain," *The Medieval Chronicle* 6 (2009), 65.

⁵⁴ Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 271.

⁵⁵ For more on historiography and genres, and how they impact the reading of a text see Devia, "Pedro I y Enrique II," 60-62; Deyermond, "Written by the Victors," 60; Estelle Doudet, "L'histoire est une littérature médiévale," *Points de vue* 74 (2018): 157; Benoît Grévin, "Les mystères rhétoriques de l'État médiéval. L'écriture du pouvoir en Europe occidentale (XIIIe-XVe siècle)," *Annales* 63, no. 2 (2008): 271.

a single monarch.⁵⁶ Short accounts of the reigns of Alfonso X, Sancho IV and Fernando IV were composed at that time.⁵⁷ But this study begins with the mid-century *Crónica de Alfonso XI* by, most likely, courtier Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid.⁵⁸ Like extending the chronological scope of the project back into pre-Trastámara times, this pre-Trastámara chronicle provides important context before turning to the chronicles of Pedro I and the first rulers of the new dynasty.⁵⁹

The royal chronicles of Pedro I and the first three Trastámara rulers are the work of Pedro López de Ayala, the most well-known and highly regarded chronicler of late medieval Castile.⁶⁰ His late-century accounts were intimately connected with ongoing and evolving efforts to legitimize the new dynasty.⁶¹ However, his work is of sufficiently late date, most likely the

⁵⁶ On the genre itself, see Daly, "'Centre', 'Power' and 'Periphery,'" 124-25; Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Sobre los orígenes de la crónica real castellana," in *Actas del XIII Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*, ed. José Manuel Fradejas Rueda, Deborah Anne Dietrick, María Jesús Díez Garretas, and Demetrio Martín Sanz (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2009), 762-7; Fernández Gallardo, "La crónica real," 281-84; Fernando Gómez Redondo, "La crónica real: 'Exemplos' y sentencias," *Diablotoxto: Revista de crítica literaria* 3 (1996): 96; Purificación Martínez, "Dos reyes sabios: Alfonso X, Alfonso XI y la evolución de la crónica general a la crónica real," in *Propuestas teórico-metodológicas para el estudio de la literatura hispánica medieval*, ed. Walde Moheno (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003), 193-210; Taylor, "War, Propaganda and Diplomacy," 88-90; Sean Wilentz, introduction to Wilentz, *Rites of Power*, 10.

The break with previous works is an important theme, though even earlier models were ultimately organized around a succession of kings. Robert Folger, "A Genealogy of Castilian Historiography: From *Nomina Regum* to *Semblanzas*," *La coronica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 32, no. 4 (2004): 49-51, 59; Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 618-20; Reilly, "Bishop Lucas of Túy," 768, 772; Patricia Rochwert-Zuili, "D'Alphonse X à Alphonse XI: l'affirmation du pouvoir dans les prologues des œuvres castillanes aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 35 (2012): 47, 54. Also, in contrast to earlier works, the authors of later chronicles were usually not clerics, a trend not confined to Castile. Deyermond, "La ideología del estado moderno," 183-83; Chris Given-Wilson, "Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages: The English Evidence in Context," *The Medieval Chronicle* 5 (2008): 2; Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 62; Rucquoi, "De los reyes que no son taumaturgos," 40.

⁵⁷ Gómez Redondo, "De la crónica general," 25-33, 77. See also Carlos Alvar and José Manuel Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico de literatura medieval Española* (Barcelona: Castalia, 2002), 297-307.

⁵⁸ Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, *Crónica del Rey Don Alfonso el onveno*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953). He was a, though not the only, pioneer in this shift. Gómez Redondo, "De la crónica general," 73-74.

⁵⁹ There is also the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, a reworking of the *Crónica* dating to the 1370's. *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ed. Diego Catalán, 2 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1977).

⁶⁰ By contemporaries and modern historians alike. Josué Villa Prieto, "La escritura de la Historia en la Baja Edad Media: Deseo racional versus propaganda política. La mentalidad de los cronistas," *Historiografías, revista de historia y teoría* 10 (2015): 71.

⁶¹ Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica del rey Don Pedro*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66, (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953); Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica del rey Don Juan, primero de Castilla e de León*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 68 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953); Pedro

1390's, to register the impact of important institutional innovations in the final three decades of the century and, in particular, the 1380's.⁶² Nonetheless, there are significant similarities between them and the earlier work of Sánchez de Valladolid, which make those areas in which they do diverge stand out even more strongly.

Moving into the fifteenth century means moving into a new group of chronicles, with two major contemporary royal chronicle "traditions" dedicated to Juan II's reign.⁶³ The first, that of the *Crónica de Juan II*, extends across the entire period, from 1406 to 1454. A chronicle covering those forty-nine years was published in the early sixteenth century.⁶⁴ Its coverage of the

López de Ayala, *Crónica del rey Don Enrique, tercero de Castilla e de León*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 68 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953). Roderic Charles Diman, ed., *An Edition an Study of the Manuscripts of the Crónica del Rey don Juan el Primero by Pero López de Ayala* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1971); Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica del Rey Don Pedro y del Rey Don Enrique*, ed. Germán Orduna (Buenos Aires: SECRI, 1994); Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica de Enrique III*, ed. Constance L. Wilkins and Heanon M. Wilkins (Madison: The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1992).

On reworkings of royal chronicles, see also Isabelle Guyot-Bachy, "La *Chronique abrégée des rois de France et les Grandes Chroniques de France*," *The Medieval Chronicle* 8 (2013): 205.

There may also have been other accounts more sympathetic to Pedro. Certainly, some later authors suggested there were, and even claimed they were suppressed. However, no such contemporary account survives. Fernández Gallardo, "La crónica real," 301-02; Deyermond, "Written by the Victors," 59; David Nogales Rincón, "La **Corónica verdadera del rey don Pedro*: 'Prueba' y 'verdad' en torno a un fantasma historiográfico (ca. 1450-1580)," *E-Spania: Revue électronique d'études hispaniques médiévales* 34 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.32524>. There is a much shorter, and later, pro-Pedro account, called the *Relación de Gracia Dei*, but it is more a rebuttal of Ayala than an independent narrative. Beginning in the late fourteenth century, Pedro underwent a semi-rehabilitation, but Ayala's negative image endured. Gregorio de Andrés, "Relación de la vida del rey D. Pedro y su descendencia que es el linaje de los Castilla por Pedro Gracia Dei. Introducción y edición. (I)," *Cuadernos para Investigación de la Literatura Hispánica* 18 (1993): 233-252; Gregorio de Andrés, "Relación de la vida del rey D. Pedro y su descendencia que es el linaje de los Castilla por Pedro Gracia Dei (II). Texto. (Continuación)," *Cuadernos para Investigación de la Literatura Hispánica* 19 (1994): 207-250; *Historia del Rey Don Pedro el Justiciero, escrita por Pedro de Gracia Dei rey de armas de los Reyes Católicos y su cronista*. BNE Ms. 18391.

⁶² Procedural developments, longer in the making but just as important, will be discussed below as well. As for the dating of the chronicles, the most widely disseminated version of his work dates from the 1390's and, perhaps, even the first years of the fifteenth century. That is the version with which I work most closely, since it is in the best position to reflect the impact of late century developments. However, his career as a chronicler spanned decades, and earlier versions of his work, or more properly manuscripts based on it, also survive.

⁶³ It was also during this time that the formal office of royal chronicler first appeared, and there are indications that the work was becoming somewhat institutionalized. For instance, chronicler Álvaro García de Santa María claimed that his predecessor's papers were turned over to him when he got the job. Francisco Bautista, "La segunda parte de la *Crónica de Juan II*: Borradores y texto definitivo," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 37, no. 1 (2014): 116. That said, arguments about the "institutionalization" of chronicle writing under royal influence go back much farther. Folger, "A Genealogy of Castilian Historiography," 60; Villa Prieto, "La escritura de la Historia," 71.

⁶⁴ Its compiler, Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, attributed the combined text to mid-fifteenth century luminary Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, but that attribution is problematic. Álvaro García de Santa María, *Crónica de*

years 1406 to 1419, and then 1420 to 1434, is essentially an abridged form of surviving early to mid-fifteenth century *Crónicas*. The first part is certainly the work of courtier and diplomat Álvaro García de Santa María, while the second is also, but less certainly, attributed to him.⁶⁵ After 1434, however, the source material for the later *Crónica* is poorly understood.

The second tradition is that of the *Crónica del Halconero*. A chronicle of the same name covers the years 1422 to 1450, another product of the early to mid-fifteenth century. However, it is the work of two authors, with material until June 1441 the work of Pedro Carrillo de Huete, the *halconero*, or royal falconer, himself. After that, another author continued the work, often identified as Bishop Lope de Barrientos.⁶⁶ Alongside this account is the so-called *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero*, also attributed to Lope de Barrientos.⁶⁷ Its modern editor identified it as a reworking of the *Crónica del Halconero*.⁶⁸ That interpretation has since been questioned, although both narratives are quite similar and, for comparative purposes, share many priorities in common that distinguish them both from the *Crónica* tradition accounts.

As noted, the chronological scope of the chronicles, and the ability to date them, helps to define the limits of the project. In particular, accounts of events from 1420 to 1441, and especially 1422 to 1432, are prominent. Those years overlap with the most extensive, and most reliably dateable, early to mid-century chronicle coverage. Fortunately, they are well positioned to capture the influence of important new claims to royal authority advanced by court officials

Juan II, ed Juan de Mata Carriazo (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1982); *Crónica de Don Juan II*, ed. Antonio Paz y Meliá, Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España 99-100 (Madrid: 1891); Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, *Crónica del serenísimo príncipe Don Juan segundo rey deste nombre en Castilla y en León*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 68 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953).

⁶⁵ With subsequent alterations and interventions.

⁶⁶ Pedro Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del Halconero de Juan II*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007). And it also may be a source for some of the post-1434 coverage in the later *Crónica de Juan II*.

⁶⁷ Lope de Barrientos, *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo, Colección de crónicas españolas 9 (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946).

⁶⁸ Rafael Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," in Carrillo de Huete, *Crónica del Halconero*, xxi-xxxiii, xlv-lv; Juan de Mata Carriazo, "Estudio Preliminar," in Barrientos, *Refundición*, xxxiv-xlv, cxii-cxvi.

from the early 1420's onward, which had a major impact not only on conceptions of power, but political discourse more broadly.⁶⁹ And as for the decision to end at mid-century, going further would mean entering a new set of chronicles and, ultimately, the politics of the civil war and succession disputes of the 1460's and 70's.⁷⁰

Although linear state building narratives have been mostly left behind, late fifteenth century government was institutionally and ideologically different from that of the early fourteenth.⁷¹ The accounts studied in this chapter, and the events on which they are based, sit in the middle of that two century span. And in a particularly Castilian context, they overlap with, and betray the influence of, key developments in the late fourteenth century and after 1420. In their wake, chroniclers adapted, such that fifteenth-century accounts, of both traditions, articulated a distinctive sense of power and its loss that was not shared by their fourteenth-century predecessors.

Studying Power and Politics in Late Medieval “States”

The power of kings or nobles, and how those forces interacted in late medieval kingdoms, have certainly not lacked for attention. Indeed, studying accounts of depositions in Castile, and broader redefinitions of contests over power thus uncovered, points to a crucial tension within

⁶⁹ In 1419, King Juan II came of age after a long minority, setting in motion the circumstances of the advance. Many of these claims were formally, and somewhat symbolically, enshrined in 1445, after a royal victory over the *infantes* at the Battle of Olmedo. Asenjo González, “La representación del conflicto y las adhesiones urbanas a la política regia (1441),” in Nieto Soria, *El conflicto en escenas*, 107.

⁷⁰ Principally Alonso de Palencia's critical chronicle, and a more sympathetic treatment attributed to Diego Enríquez del Castillo. Alonso de Palencia, *Crónica de Enrique IV*, ed. Antonio Paz y Meliá, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 257-258, 267 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1975); *Crónica Anónima de Enrique IV de Castilla (1454-1474)*, ed. María Pilar Sánchez Parra, Crónica Castellana (Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1991). François Foronda, “Le prince, le palais et la ville: Ségovie ou le visage du tyran dans la Castille du XV^e siècle,” *Revue Historique* 305, no. 3 (2003): 522-23. Queen Isabel I was also very active in shaping historiography at her court. Villa Prieto, “La escritura de la Historia,” 75. She also likely had some influence over the materials that went in to Galíndez de Carvajal's *Crónica de Juan II*.

⁷¹ Watts, *Politics*, 3.

“state” narratives.⁷² Common political grand narratives of the western monarchies in the later Middle Ages identify the strengthening of the ideological and legal foundations of royal power, and the consolidation of central institutions.⁷³ At the same time, complicating that story, significant opposition to those efforts existed, informal and personal political arrangements had an enduring presence, and the powerful nobility enjoyed a robust, even strengthening, position.⁷⁴

The western kingdoms shared many similar political presuppositions, and wider cultural and intellectual trends influenced them all.⁷⁵ In particular, France and England’s political

⁷² One among several. Black, *Political Thought*, 156; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 2-3, 8-9.

⁷³ Anthony Black identifies the years 1250-1450 as “seminal” for such developments. Organizing and paying for warfare has been assigned an important role in this process. Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 117-18; Hillyar Zmura, *Monarchy, Aristocracy and the State in Europe 1300-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 17-18. For a summary uniting three narratives of crisis, disorder and state building in late medieval political history, see Watts, *Polities*, 13-33. Ertman, however, notes that there was considerable variety in how these states were structured. Ertman, *Leviathan*, 1-6.

As for the term state itself, its use within narratives exploring the origins of so-called modern states was a matter of some controversy. Black, *Political Thought*, 187; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 693; Menjot, “La ville et l’ état moderne naissant,” 116. More recently, the debate had shifted since discussions about the modernity of these political formations, however defined, is less emphasized.

⁷⁴ García de Cortázar, *La sociedad rural*, 239. See Gunner Lind on informal networks and personal considerations in how power is awarded, held and organized, Gunner Lind, “Great Friends and Small Friends: Clientelism and the Power Elite,” in *Power Elites and State Building*, ed. Wolfgang Reinhard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 123-148. See also Prosser, ‘*Decayed Feudalism*’, 177-8; María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, “Élites de poder, redes nobiliarias y monarquía en la Castilla de fines de la Edad Media,” *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 37, no. 2 (2007): 958; Graeme Small, “Centre and Periphery in Late Medieval France: Tournai, 1384–1477,” in Allmand, *War, Government and Power*, 155; Zmura, *Monarchy*, 3, 30; Hillyar Zmura, *State and Nobility in Early Modern Germany: Knightly Feud in Franconia 1440-1507* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42; Watts, *Polities*, 154.

Also, the practice of highly formal, and legalistic, oaths between private parties, or private parties and rulers, reached their height in this era. Isabel Beceiro Pita, “Parentesco y alianzas políticas en Castilla (Siglo XV),” in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *Du contrat d’alliance au contrat politique*, 9-10; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 738; José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis del estado moderno en Castilla (1369-1480)* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1993), 229; J. B. Owens, ‘*By My Absolute Royal Authority: Justice and the Castilian Commonwealth at the Beginning of the First Global Age* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 13; María Pilar Rabade Obrado, “Confederaciones, seguros y pleitos homenajes: El contexto documental del Seguro de Tordesillas,” in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *Du contrat d’alliance au contrat politique*, 71, 81. Relatedly, defining a deposition, as noted above, is also an exercise in defining context. That applied to fifteenth-century deposition case making as well. Steps were taken to legitimize or “legalize” specific situations using standardized forms, like oath-based pacts.

⁷⁵ In terms of law, political theory and theology, the Latin language, documentary forms and formulae, influential thinkers and works, etc. David Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200-1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (London: Longman, 1997); Isabel Beceiro Pita, “Argumentos ideológicos de la oposición nobiliaria bajo los Trastámaras,” *Cahiers d’études hispaniques médiévales* 25 (2002), 213; Francisco Bertelloni, “La teoría política medieval entre la tradición clásica y la modernidad,” in *El pensamiento político en la Edad Media*, ed. Pedro Roche Arnas (Madrid: Fundación Ramón Areces, 2010), 17-24; Paul Hyams, “Due Process versus the Maintenance of Order in European law: The Contribution of the *ius commune*,” in *The Moral World of the Law*, ed.

development has received much attention, and Castile shared much with both.⁷⁶ All three saw conflicts over influence within their robustly conceived crown institutions, and tensions between “traditional” rights and those claimed by the crown.⁷⁷

In a more strictly Castilian context, Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, among others, characterizes Trastámara politics as increasingly a royal-noble dialogue over power. Other players, especially towns, lost ground or were subsumed into the crown and nobility dichotomy.⁷⁸ In consequence, the crown and its institutions became more and more the central

Peter Cross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 63; Menjot, “La ville et l’état moderne,” 116; Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, “Political Idiots and Ignorant Clients: Vernacular Legal Language in Thirteenth-Century Iberian Culture,” *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* 2, no.1 (2013): 96, doi:10.1353/dph.2013.0002; Steinmetz and Freedon, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 19. The Church was a uniting force, in particular through canon law. For example, in promoting theories of office holding and distinctions between the holder, the office, and income that goes with it. James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995); G. R. Evans, *Law and Theology in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), 98-119, 175-189.

That said, in limiting my focus, though not view, to Castile, I am working within a common linguistic area. Though by no means was Castilian the only language spoken or written in Castile, it was the language of political action throughout the realm. Steinmetz and Freedon, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 8-12, 18.

⁷⁶ Indeed, in many ways more with England than France. Notably, strong royal power and central institutions, as well as conflicts for control of them. Chris Given Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: The Fourteenth Century Political Community* (New York: Routledge, 1987); Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado,” 128-33; Michael Prestwich, *Plantagenet England 1225-1360* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Anthony Tuck, *Crown and Nobility: England, 1272-1461*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 186-199, 260-276. More specifically, Watts develops this comparison, using English and Castilian contests for the throne in the 1400’s. Watts, *Polities*, 4-5. See also Jillian M. Bjerke, “A Castilian Agreement and Two English Briefs: Writing Revolt in Thirteenth-Century Castile and England,” *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 8, no. 1 (2016): 75-93. Perspectives from neighboring Portugal and, to a lesser extent, Aragón are also included.

⁷⁷ On key difference was the character of local government and its personnel. Simon Walker, “Civil War and Rebellion 1200-1500,” in *Political Culture in Medieval England*, ed. Michael J. Braddick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 260. Also, their late medieval historiographical traditions were very different. Though there is no shortage of English chronicles, there is no “official” royal historiography like that found in Castile. Given-Wilson, “Official and Semi-Official History,” 12. In much work in English until recently, and in some ways even still, north-western Europe is treated as a center, with Iberia, among other places, peripheral. However, Adeline Rucquoi advocates “centering” the south, as the most direct heirs to Roman legacies particularly important in law and political theory. Rucquoi, “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos,” 19.

⁷⁸ The subject of this dialog was political influence, but in more concrete terms involved the resources and rights of the Crown. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 19-21. For the effects of this dichotomy on the Church, see José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis*; Benjamin Thompson, “Prelates and Politics from Winchelsey to Warham,” in *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. Linda Clark and Christine Carpenter (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 69, 72, 88. For the distinctive place of town governments in Castile, see Menjot, “La Ville et l’état moderne,” 115; Ruiz, *Crisis and Continuity*, 185-91. For how towns and their elites were integrated into this system see Gerald E. Aylmer, “Centre and Locality: The Nature of Power Elites,” in Reinhard, *Power Elites and State Building*, 73; Robert Descimon, “Power Elites and the Prince: The State as Enterprise, in Reinhard, *Power Elites and State Building*, 109.

reference point of political life. But far from leading to unambiguous royal control, that change meant powerful subjects fought for greater influence over them.⁷⁹

In fact, much recent work emphasizes the limits of new royal claims, stressing that neither institutional nor ideological developments provided a trump card for any political actor, but became news tools in, and subjects of, contestation.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, by studying the interplay of institutions and ideas in the work of contemporary observers, I emphasize their roles as drivers of new understandings of power that could, and ultimately would, facilitate meaningful royal interventions and assertions of control.⁸¹

⁷⁹ For the endurance of opposing conceptions of power, placing it outside of the crown and its institutions, see Eduardo Fuentes Ganzo, "Pactismo, Cortes y hermandades en León y Castilla. Siglos XIII-XV," in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *El contrato político*, 415-454; María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, "Discurso aristocrático, resistencia y conflictividad en el siglo xv castellano," in *Coups d'état à la fin du Moyen Âge? Aux fondements du pouvoir politique en Europe occidentale*, ed. François Foronda, Jean-Philippe Genet and José Manuel Nieto Soria (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2005), 543-574.

Still, Angus Mackay, asserting a widely held view, insists that by the late fourteenth century political activity was focused in the court and the council, Angus Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire 1000-1500* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 143-158. For a general look at this process under the Trastámara, see Monsalvo Antón, "Poder político y aparatos de estado," 134, 143-44; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*. For an English comparison, see also W.M. Ormond, *Political Life in Medieval England: 1300-1450* (London: MacMillan, 1995), 35.

⁸⁰ Both in Castile and more broadly. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 111, 124-27; Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority'; Claire Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt in Medieval England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Watts, *Polities*, 275-279.

⁸¹ Though never without compromise. Royal power, acting through its institutions, became the key organizing principal of politics, but one of the most important things it "organized" was extensive noble economic, social, and political power. Carrasco Manchado, "¿Cultura política o cultura 'de la política'?" 44-5; Monsalvo Antón, "Poder político y aparatos de estado," 149-54; Offenstadt, "L'histoire politique," 197; Quintanilla Raso, "Élites de poder," 959. In general, the rise of conceptions of power as something exercised, and their displacement of possession-based views, is best understood as a consequence of institutional developments and ideological assertions which are favored in "strong states" narratives. That said, fifteenth-century chronicles also described much more idiosyncratic justifications for removals compared to their predecessors, and even the outcomes they justify were more "targeted," in line with those works which stress the importance of more personal networks and ad-hoc arrangements. The tensions between kings and nobles, and between institutions and more personal networks, need not be mutually exclusive. This is in some ways similar to the issue of formalized oaths and pacts raised above, in which the personal and "private," and the institutional and "public," coexisted.

Institutions and Political Culture

Focusing on the institutional side of “state” narratives, the institutionalization and proceduralization of political life is a major concern.⁸² Indeed, for many of the western kingdoms, a classic view identifies this period as the era of distinctive late medieval states, not modern yet not “feudal” either.⁸³ These days, this neat picture has been superseded, and “building” narratives in general are ageing, though still influential.⁸⁴ More recent work emphasizes how central power was contested on points of theory and law, and that its effectiveness waxed and waned.⁸⁵ These tensions do not completely overturn a picture of wider

⁸² Teofilo Ruiz, *From Heaven to Earth: The Reordering of Castilian Society, 1150-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Jaime Salazar y Acha, “La evolución de la Casa del Rey en el siglo XII,” in *Evolución y estructura de la Casa Real de Castilla*, ed. Andrés Gamba Gutiérrez and Felix Labrador Arroyo (Madrid: Polifemo, 2010), 1:67-80. See also, though his focus is earlier, R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

⁸³ On longstanding reservations about the utility of the idea of feudalism, see E.A.R. Brown, “The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe.” *The American Historical Review* 79, no. 4 (Oct., 1974): 1063-1088.

This period is cast as a time when political systems and ideologies that had been brewing for some time, often since the twelfth century, “matured.” Thomas Ertman identifies 1330-1450 as the key period, Ertman, *Leviathan*, 80. See also Bernard Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*, trans. Juliet Vale (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado,” 101-102; Offenstadt, “L'histoire politique,” 179-82; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*; Joseph R Strayer, “Philip the Fair – A Constitutional King,” in *Medieval Statecraft and the Perspectives of History*, ed. Thomas Bisson and John F. Benton (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971). The financial needs of war were crucial in both encouraging king-realm dialogue and growing administrative capacity. Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 10, 56. This is also the era of bastard or “state” feudalism. Watts, *Polities*, 27, 87. And, looking ahead to early modern politics, Ertman identifies what he calls patrimonial absolutism in embryo by the fifteenth century, combining public power and private exercise. Ertman, *Leviathan*, 3. One outlier is the Crown of Aragón, though even that union’s unique “constitution” became more institutionalized. Thomas Bisson, *The Medieval Crown of Aragón: A Short History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

A controversial factor is the enduring role played by ecclesiastical figures in the new states, and whether that was compatible, or not, with the sense of a modern, autonomous, state. José Manuel Nieto Soria, “La configuración eclesiástica de la realeza Trastámara en Castilla (1369-1474): Una perspectiva de análisis,” *En la España medieval* 13 (1990): 134-35, 139.

⁸⁴ Despite its limitations, the influence of this narrative into this century is summed up by Paulino Iradiel Murugarren, who notes that scholars still look to the birth of the state in war and propaganda in the later Middle Ages. Paulino Iradiel Murugarren, “La crisis bajomedieval, un tiempo de conflictos,” in *Conflictos sociales, políticos e intelectuales en la España de los siglos XIV y XV*, ed. José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2004), 13-48. John Watts discusses the work of Jean-Phillippe Genet on bastard feudalism and war as the “midwife” of the state. Watts, *Polities*, 27. See also Ormond, *Political Life*, 35-37, 57; Alan Harding, *Medieval Law and the Foundations of the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁸⁵ Recent works by J.B Owens on the ideological and legal advantages of the crown, Michael Crawford on the struggle for status recognition by central authorities, and María Asenjo González on the role of the towns, all

“state” roles and strengthened government capacity. But they do highlight that stories of a fairly progressive development of ideas and institutions do not reflect a more complex reality.⁸⁶

Normative sources and institutional records serve as the basis for many of these studies. But chronicle narratives of depositions also describe institutions, procedures and legal principles at work. Though not the best path to understand institutional operations, studying them does test their influence on the theory and practice of power.⁸⁷ Chroniclers adapted to specific institutional and ideological changes. And that adaptation underpinned new depictions of royal roles within

complicate certain aspects of this story. Both Crawford and Owens question state narratives and their validity with regard to understanding the politics of late medieval Castile, in practical if not ideological terms. Asenjo González questions the traditional view of politics on the realm-wide level as noble-royal affair, with other players forced to the sidelines. María Asenjo González, “La colaboración de las ciudades en la estabilidad política del reino (1250-1520),” in *Gobernar en tiempos de crisis: Las quiebras dinásticas en el ámbito hispánico (1250-1808)*, ed. José Manuel Nieto Soria and María López-Cordón Cortezo (Madrid: Sílex, 2008), 175-198; Michael J. Crawford, *The Fight for Status and Privilege in Late Medieval and Early Modern Castile, 1465-1598* (University Park: Penn State, 2014); J. B. Owens, ‘*By My Absolute Royal Authority*’.

Consider also Claire Valente’s reinterpretation of the causes and meaning of revolt in late medieval England, and Aylmer’s take on how Portuguese historians have emphasized informal arrangements over centralized absolutism. Aylmer, “Centre and Locality,” 70; Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt*, 12-48. Finally, Zmura argues for a dual regime of “public” rule for the masses with private arrangements for elites. Zmura, *State and Nobility*, 89.

⁸⁶ This view is longstanding, in Castile strongly supported by Suárez Fernández. Also, in recent work, the issue of the “modernity” or not of late medieval politics has been downplayed. Dios, “El Estado Moderno, ¿un cadáver historiográfico?,” 393-95, 401-03; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, “El control de los recursos financieros y militares en las crisis sucesorias de la Corona de Castilla: 1282-1479,” in Nieto Soria and López-Cordón Cortezo, *Gobernar en tiempos de crisis*, 79-81; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, “La gestión de la hacienda regia en la Corona de Castilla,” *Mayurqa: Revista de Departamento de Ciències Històriques i Teoriade les Arts* 22, no. 1 (1989): 325-344; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, *Fiscalidad y poder real en Castilla: 1252-1369* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1993).

From a wider angle, John Watts notes how lords appropriated or copied the tools that had allowed rulers to assert their authority, while Descimon emphasizes that cooperation between rulers and others elites could be profitable for those others, offering an interpretation of the late medieval and early modern state as a form of “business.” Descimon, “Power Elites and the Prince,” 110-121; Watts, *Polities*, 93.

As for resistance, it was often focused on direct action in response to specific grievances, and did not include a serious ideological or institutional challenge to the “state” as defined in the state building narrative. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 171. More recently, this interpretation has been questioned, especially by considering revolt and violence not a failure of normal politics, but as a deliberate tool of politics. Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt*, 237-253; Watts, *Polities*, 275-279.

⁸⁷ This issue is a recurrent problem in studying these institutions. Anne Goldgar and Robert I. Frost, Introduction to *Institutional Culture in Early Modern Society*, ed. Anne Goldgar and Robert I. Frost (Leiden: Brill, 2004), xii; Cristina Jular Pérez-Alfaro, “Monarquía y gobierno territorial en la baja Edad Media: Oficiales mayores y menores del rey,” in *Monasterios, espacio y sociedad en la España cristiana medieval*, ed. José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2010), 75. However, archival sources, even without Castile’s relative lack of them, have their own limitations. Pereira Millán da Costa, “A cultura política em ação,” 18; Jesús R. Velasco, *Dead Voice: Law, Philosophy, and Fiction in the Iberian Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 51.

narratives of justice and, ultimately, the new views of power those accounts expressed.⁸⁸

Depositions were not just about who held a particular position, but could involve ideological or “constitutional” confrontation. Arguments about removals from power advanced claims about how its holders related to one another, and also about its nature and origin.

However, depositions and the grappling over power they entailed were not contested only in the institutional terms of “state” structures, but also within a wider world of political culture. Establishing institutions or advancing claims in royal documents was one thing, but how they became part of political practice and sensibilities was another.⁸⁹ Political culture has a broad meaning, encompassing both cultural understandings of politics and power, as well as the means and conventions by which political debate was conducted.⁹⁰ Though less given to linear

⁸⁸ A narrative of justice is not a record of a trial procedure, but rather one that shows or suggests that appropriate measures were carried out, important for establishing legitimacy. Massimo Meccarelli, “La dimension doctrinale du procès dans l’histoire de la justice criminelle: La leçon historiographique de Mario Sbriccoli,” *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés / Crime, History & Societies* 13, no. 1 (2009): 74.

⁸⁹ For example, the state can be considered a normative as much as institutional order. Hans Kelsen, “De l’Église et de l’État dans la Théorie de l’État de Dante,” *Po&sie* 120, no. 2 (2007): 378. See also Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado,” 101; Marcelo Pereira Lima, “O ‘direito’ de falar em pleitos: O gênero nos códigos jurídicos afonsinos,” *Revista Estudos Feministas* vol. 26, no. 3 (2018): 3; Watts, *Polities*, 36.

⁹⁰ According to Dale Hoak, political culture is explained as follows: “The difference between politics and political culture is essentially the difference between political action and the codes of conduct, formal and informal, governing those actions. Christine Carpenter, introduction to Clark and Carpenter, *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, 1-20. Peter Burke, meanwhile, includes in his formulation not just codes of conduct, but also the practices “through which political authority and aspirations are expressed, practices and debated.” Miri Rubin, “Religious Symbols and Political Culture in Fifteenth-Century England,” in Clark and Carpenter, *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, 97. See also Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política,’” 44; Philippe Contamine, “La royauté française à la fin du Moyen Âge. Modèles, pratiques et circonstances,” *Historische Zeitschrift. Beihefte* 40 (2006): 35; Pereira Millán da Costa, “A cultura política em ação,” 10-14; José Manuel Nieto Soria, “La parole: Un instrument de la lutte politique dans la Castille de la fin du Moyen Âge,” *Revue historique* 632, no. 4 (2004): 707; Watts, *Polities*, 129-30.

Anthony Black notes the presence of many discourses or “languages” of power in the later Middle Ages, not all of which are reconcilable with one another. In other words, multiple points of view are to be expected in any given case. Nieto Soria, identifies five instruments of political contestation in medieval castile, rhetoric, rituals, violence, pageantry in places of power, and pactism, at least three of which fall into this category. Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 18-22. Watts, meanwhile, points to what he calls the large bodies of interconnected terminology and reasoning that underpinned European politics. Watts, *Polities*, 36-38, 129-48.

approaches than institutional studies, this field has been another vital pathway for studying late medieval political transformations that tended to magnify centralized power.⁹¹

In particular, the ceremonialization of political life, especially with respect rulers, is an important subject.⁹² Honors, rituals and more sumptuous styles of living surrounded monarchs with an aura of power and prestige, and reiterated the uniqueness of their positions.⁹³ Yet at the same time, those developments were not a trump card either, as other actors also made use of similar tools for their own ends.⁹⁴

As for the means of political contestation, late medieval political actors of all stripes employed the written word, drawing from a “well of ideas” that underpinned political discourse.⁹⁵ The written word as a propagandistic device had a role in political culture throughout the west, and was particularly prominent in Trastámara Castile.⁹⁶ It was employed to promote certain interpretations of individual events, but also advanced viewpoints about power

⁹¹ Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política’,” 34; Rucquoi, “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos,” 9-10.

⁹² Ralph E. Giesly, “Models of Rulership in French Royal Ceremonial,” in Wiletnz, *Rites of Power*, 41-64; Offenstadt, “L’histoire politique,” 185-88; Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 3-5, 15, 24.

⁹³ Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, “La cámara de Juan II: Vida privada, ceremonia y lujo en la corte de Castilla a mediados del siglo XV,” in Gamba Gutiérrez and Labrador Arroyo, *Evolución y estructura de la Casa Real de Castilla*, 81-196; Rucquoi, “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos,” 15-16; Teofilo F. Ruiz, *A King Travels: Festive Traditions in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

⁹⁴ Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, “La ceremonia de obediencia regia: Un pacto estamental?,” in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *El contrato político*, 491-514; François Foronda, “S’emparer du roi. Un rituel d’integration politique dans la Castille trastamare,” in Foronda, Genet, and Nieto Soria, *Coups d’état à la fin du Moyen Âge?*, 213-330. Attention to such ceremonialization is a clear example of political-cultural processes transforming politics, and in particular rulers and their relationships with other power holders, beyond institutions and procedures. However, beyond the allure of the ceremonial, political culture also covers how common conventions, shared assumptions, and a general sense of what was the “done thing” were associated with royal centrality and the new understandings of power that went with it.

⁹⁵ The idea of a well or storehouse of ideas is common. Black, *Political Thought*, 5-13; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 42-43; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 40. True ideological conflicts were rare. Actors used what would serve them best in a given situation. However the contents of the “well” were not static.

⁹⁶ Barbosa Schiavinato, “Cronística medieval em Portugal,” 298; Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política’,” 30; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 107; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 27.

more generally.⁹⁷ For instance, the figure of a governing king, or conceptions of power as something exercised rather than possessed, may be influenced by institutional and legal developments, but were not directly part of them.⁹⁸ Rather, those ideas were articulated as political actors and observers, including chroniclers, drew from that well of ideas as they engaged in political contests.⁹⁹ Unsurprisingly then, works in this field, though making use of some documentary sources, tend also to pull in chronicles, other narratives, and a wide range of contemporary literature.¹⁰⁰

Overall, work on state building narratives, both institutionally and from a political-cultural perspective, provides a broad context in which to place accounts of depositions.¹⁰¹ However, focusing on chronicle narratives bridges a gap in how historians have approached this era. Chroniclers assimilated developments of the first type into expressions of a broader political culture.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ There are many studies of this aspect of political culture, often focused on royal and dynastic power. In particular, the Trastámara dynasty employed written propaganda as its primary means of justification, to a degree that set it apart. That focus is also related to the general lack of sacral trappings and other symbolism or ritual that surrounded other monarchies, especially the French. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 198. For its use in how the central government maintained its influence over local officials see Pérez-Alfaro, “Monarquía y gobierno territorial en la Baja Edad Media,” 395-427. For its use as a tool in late medieval town politics, see Asenjo González, “La representación del conflicto,” 875; For its use in a broader European context, see Nigel Saul, “Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship,” *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 875.

⁹⁸ Carpenter warns that straying too far from the messy world of politics and events turns political culture into simply culture, but notes on the other hand that this approach has been an important factor in re-igniting political history. Christine Carpenter, introduction to *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, 5-9.

⁹⁹ Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 18-25. Recall the idea of “applied” political discourses.

¹⁰⁰ Deyermond, “La ideología del estado moderno,” 172-3; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 315, 321-22.

¹⁰¹ Scholarship in this multifaceted field is also critical for understanding how to read deposition accounts and use them effectively as a lens to interrogate that power. They were themselves part of that culture, and shared in its literary conventions even as they reflected its institutions and ideologies. Teófilo Ruiz, “Fiestas, torneos y símbolos de realeza en la Castilla del siglo XV: Las fiestas de Valladolid de 1428,” in Rucquoi, *Realidad e imágenes del poder*, 257.

¹⁰² Because chronicles represented, and were products of, political debates. Moreover, Leonardo Funes stresses connections between the “juridical and the narrative” in Castilian chronicles. Leonardo Funes, “Historiografía nobiliaria castellana del periodo post-alfonsí: Un objeto en debate,” *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 43, no. 1 (Fall 2014): 9-10. That is to say, works of this genre are often concerned with making the juridical and institutional case for royal actions they describe. And that

Depositions as Lenses

Depositions were not only a matter of casting aside an inconvenient holder of power. Deposers, and those sympathetic to them, endeavored to de-legitimize a target's possession or exercise of it, and to embed their attempts within a framework of legality and legitimacy according to the expectations of contemporaries.¹⁰³ In so doing, they used both institutional and symbolic means, invoking legal and ideological claims, to assert their own authority even as they disempowered another. However, removals from power have not been a common lens through which to approach late medieval polities and politics in comparison to studies that work with its bestowal, assertion, or defense.¹⁰⁴ But that is not to say depositions have been ignored, either as subjects of study or as tools through which to interrogate power relationships, royal power, or conceptions of power itself.

First, several studies deal with the removals of prominent figures, like popes, emperors, and kings.¹⁰⁵ But such studies are often about the relationship of these "sovereign" powers with one another rather than what it meant to lose, and have, power in a broader sense. Some, however, come closer to that issue through considering how subjects might deal with an

common framing of deposition accounts is important, facilitating comparisons among chronicles. And more broadly, institutional changes may explain, in part, why the court and the royal authority centered there became so important in late medieval political struggles. But related ideas, like how leading nobles developed and advanced a sense that they had a right to participate in ruling the realm, went beyond that. They were not, on the whole, advanced in works dedicated to doing so, but through arguments advanced in concrete struggles. Chronicles, for their part, reflected those arguments, even if they did not usually sympathize with them, showing a wider recognition of the changing terms in which these battles were conducted.

¹⁰³ García-Gallo, stressing the connections between those two things, notes the persuasive language of legal codes. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 285. See also Fisk and Gordon, "Foreword: "Law As...," 527, 530. And in a general sense, many actors were familiar with basic legal ideas. Watts, *Polities*, 153.

¹⁰⁴ Kangas, Korpiola, and Ainonen, foreword to *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, xi.

¹⁰⁵ Or cases where the relationship between lay and ecclesiastical power was at issue. Silke Schwandt, "Virtus as a Political Concept in the Middle Ages," *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 10, no. 2 (2015): 75. By the late Middle Ages, tensions between the "international" church and the church as part of the individual kingdoms, and between clergy as churchmen and subjects, were intensifying. Richard Kay, "Martin IV and the Bishop of Bayeux," *Speculum* 40, no. 3 (1965): 460-83. Kay discusses both the Bayeux case and the later case of the Bishop of Pamiers, where popes and kings of France clashed over who could discipline and remove bishops and, critically, dispose of the property and rights attached to the position.

unsuitable ruler. An example is Edward Peters' *The Shadow King*, which explores the concept of the unfit or tyrannical ruler across a broad sweep of the Middle Ages. It traces debates regarding what could be done about such a ruler, including disagreements over how, by whom, and even whether a bad ruler may be deposed.¹⁰⁶ Regarding Castile specifically, José Manuel Nieto Soria identifies a reconsideration of the figure of the tyrant, and of what may be done about one, in the aftermath of the Trastámara takeover. Both Peters and Nieto Soria note mixed opinions about what subjects might do about bad rulers.¹⁰⁷ But overall, at stake was whether bad or illegitimate rulers were punishments to be endured or problems to be solved. In these studies, particular actions or complaints against tyrants, and the political thought behind them, had broader implications with respect to the origins and structure of power. It was not just about the power possessed by rulers, but the power possessed by their subjects as well.

Another body of work uses depositions to study the functioning of, or contestation over, the institutional and ideological apparatus at the center of "state" narratives. By looking at their roles in cases of deposition, these studies explore how political institutions and theories intertwined to deploy royal authority against subjects. One of the most prominent Castile focused examples is Nicholas Round's study of the removal, and eventual execution, of Álvaro de Luna in 1453.¹⁰⁸ Round examines how the institutional, legal, and ideological claims of the crown were deployed, both in a technical sense and in the realm of broader propaganda. In his view, they systematically unmade and delegitimized his power, while thwarting any attempts at

¹⁰⁶ Edward Peters, *The Shadow King: Rex Inutilis in Medieval Law and Literature 751-1327* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 1-105. See also Edward Peters, "Rex Inutilis: Sancho II of Portugal and Thirteenth Century Deposition Theory," in *Limits of Thought and Power in Medieval Europe*, Variorum 721 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 255-305.

¹⁰⁷ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 183-196. For a view emphasizing the ideological limitations placed by sacral monarchy on the removal of a king, see Guenee, *States and Rulers*, 86-90. This work is written from a French perspective, however.

¹⁰⁸ Nicholas Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Alvaro de Luna* (London: Tamesis, 1986), 91-99.

resistance. Round calls the incident a Castilian episode in the building of the modern state.¹⁰⁹ He argues that the deployment of the institutional and ideological might of the crown against Álvaro de Luna, and his inability to effectively combat it with argument, betrayed an enormous ideological advantage in favor of the crown, and whoever could claim to act for it.¹¹⁰

Outside Castile, works on the fourteenth-century depositions of English kings Edward II and Richard II, often considered together as “parliamentary” depositions, offer another example of this approach.¹¹¹ For instance, Claire Valente argues that they were “constitutional” events in which law, theory and power were contested, not just applied, and uncertainties about how power could be removed laid open. She also insists that to consider the events in terms of whether they were legal or properly conducted misses the point, because there was no clear law on the subject.¹¹² In both cases deponents sought to make their actions “legal enough” by offering multiple bases of legality and legitimacy, which is also a useful framework for understanding many Castilian deposition incidents.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ That framing speaks to an important concern in mid-to-late twentieth century works, though the search for the “origins of the modern state,” certainly in the later Middle Ages, has faded in prominence.

¹¹⁰ García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 177. However, as I will discuss in chapter ten, dealing with him required not only applying royal power, but also redefining his own in a way that made him more subject to it. Round also emphasizes the concern with correct procedure on the part of the parties involved. Observing the proper forms was not just for show, but an important part of political action. This approach has not been much applied in conjunction with other Castilian depositions, but instances of institutions in action, or action within institutions, have served as lenses through which to consider similar questions both about the functioning of those institutions and the exercise of power within them. They sometimes offer very different conclusions than Round about state power and its role. Most, however, study the exercise of power, or cases of competing claims, not outright removals.

¹¹¹ Caroline Barron, “The Deposition of Richard II,” in *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth Century England*, ed. John Taylor and Wendy Childs (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1990), 132-49; Natalie Fryde, *The Tyranny and Fall of Edward II, 1321-1326* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Within this label, however, there were several issues at stake, including who was considered to be responsible for the deposition, what act or acts really made it happen, and on what legal and moral basis did the act rest. Both also deal with the possibilities, and difficulties, of using royal chronicles as sources.

¹¹² G.E. Caspary, “The Deposition of Richard II and Canon Law,” in *Proceedings of the Second International Conference of Medieval Canon Law*, ed. S. Kuttner and J.J. Ryan (Vatican City: S. Congregatio de seminariis et studiorum universitatibus, 1965), 189-201.

¹¹³ Claire Valente, “The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II,” *The English Historical Review* 113 (Sept. 1998): 852-881.

Another way in which depositions have been used as lenses is situated in the field of political culture. For example, the ways in which political cases for particular depositions were made in text or ceremonially, focusing on propaganda and symbolism rather than institutional action, are frequent subjects of study.¹¹⁴ In Castile, the removal of Pedro I inspired much work on written propaganda and its use to de-legitimize the deposed, while also asserting the position of the deponents.¹¹⁵ In particular, a plethora of studies address how Trastámara propagandists like Pedro López de Ayala created an image of Pedro as a tyrant and unfit ruler.¹¹⁶

Moreover, some studies also deal with changing depictions of depositions beyond the sphere of kingship. For example, Óscar Villarroel González examines the ceremonial aspects of deposition in Castilian chronicles. He demonstrates a general increase over time in the role of ceremony within them, a development he places within larger ceremonializing trends, and posits the development of ritual conventions by the early fifteenth century.¹¹⁷ On a more theoretical level, he also suggests that the ceremonialization of deposition reflects a greater concern with marking deposition explicitly, separate from the replacement of an incumbent by another.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Which is not to say the two were entirely separate.

¹¹⁵ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 42-43, 107.

¹¹⁶ López de Ayala was much more than merely a Trastámara propagandist, but it is an important element of his chronicles.

The subject of the tyrant was much discussed in medieval political thought. Ideas about tyranny relative to this case are discussed in Black, *Political Thought*, 149; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 27; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 152. According to Black however, declaring someone a tyrant was about "winning hearts and minds," not a clear cut question of theory or law. Nieto Soria notes two approaches to doing so, a moral approach depicting the tyrant as a sinner, and a legal one focusing on more earthly abuses. José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Más que palabras. Los instrumentos de la lucha política en la Castilla bajomedieval," in Iglesia Duarte, *Conflictos sociales, políticos e intelectuales*, 165-204.

¹¹⁷ Similarly, Angus Mackay discusses the meaning of a specific deposition ceremony in his study of the "Farce of Avila," in which an effigy of Enrique IV was divested of royal insignia and his half-brother proclaimed king in his stead. Angus Mackay, "Ritual and Propaganda in Castile," *Past & Present* 107 (May, 1985): 3-43. This article also initiated a debate with Kristen Sorenson Zapalac, but it was mainly about how the farce displayed notions about succession, not removal of power itself. Angus Mackay, "A Rejoinder," *Past & Present* 113 (November 1986): 197-208; Kristin Sorenson Zapalac, "Debate: Ritual and Propaganda in Late Medieval Castile," *Past & Present* 113 (November 1986): 185-196.

¹¹⁸ Óscar Villarroel González, "Las deposiciones y sus ritos en la Castilla bajomedieval (siglos XIII-XV): La escenificación de la ruptura," in Nieto Soria, *El conflicto en escenas*, 211-246.

Overall, whether studied as incidents in their own right or to serve as lenses, depositions have been used to examine power from several angles. I follow in those footsteps, but neither my work nor conclusions are limited to a particular type of position, or particular methods of expressing loss of power. Rather, working with contextualized chronicle narratives, I analyze how the power of deponents and deposed was conceived, and reconceived, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in a mutually reinforcing way.¹¹⁹ Power, either the authority to strip it or the capacity lost, was not defined in isolation. The ways in which power was acted upon by a deponent in part depended on how the deponent's authority was understood, while the effectiveness of a deponent's authority depended on how its target's power was defined. Studying depositions at royal hands brings these two sides together, as royal authority confronted the power of subjects.

Sources and their Use

Returning to the royal chronicles introduced above, accounts of separation of person and power, in the fourteenth century and first half of the fifteenth, serve as the basis for this study. Products of a court milieu and broadly contemporary to the events they describe, these narratives expressed evolving discourses of power in response to developments in the institutional and ideological realms.¹²⁰ Chronicles of this type, focused on kings and their doings, are a specific

¹¹⁹ And with implications for late medieval politics in general.

¹²⁰ Members of the court were also a key audience. Blas Medina Ávila, "Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto (reflejo de una idea jurídico-política)," *Anuario jurídico y económico escorialense* 41 (2008): 812. See also Given-Wilson, "Official and Semi-Official History," 5; Richard L. Kagan, *Clio & the Crown: The Politics of History in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 1-15; Georges Martin, "Le pouvoir historiographique (L'historien, le roi, le royaume. Le tournant alphonsin)," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 11 (1997): 123-24; Bretton Rodriguez, *Narratives of Power: Royal History and the Language of Legitimacy in Medieval Castile* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press), 206-8.

These chronicles also saw extensive use by later historians, such as in Francisco de Rades y Andrada's *Crónica de las Tres Órdenes*, about the military orders, which will be introduced in chapter seven. Other contemporary commentators, like Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, were quite familiar with them, although he was critical of those of the early fifteenth century. Also, authors such as Juan Manuel advocated chronicle reading as an important part of the education of young nobles, though he did not refer to *crónicas reales* specifically. Villa Prieto, "La escritura de la historia," 67.

genre. There are other contemporary narratives that describe the same period, and often the same events.¹²¹ However, I have focused on *crónicas reales* because of their own focus on court politics, their association with that world more broadly, and, in the fifteenth century in particular, their receptiveness to ideological efforts originating at court.¹²²

There are few sources which approach conceptions of power in an abstract sense, so the most promising path has been to work from sources originating in or recounting individual removals.¹²³ In general terms, my approach to using chronicle accounts of depositions as lenses to interrogate power is one of “cases in context.”¹²⁴ More specifically, deposition narratives are broken down into three main elements for analysis. Those include a justification of why it is right that a deposition should happen, the executive measures that put it into practice, and how

¹²¹ On the one hand, *crónicas generales* dealing with a much wider scope of history than a *crónica real* continued to be written. On the other, dedicated *crónicas particulares*, devoted to notable non-royal figures, appeared in the fifteenth century. Ward, “Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada,” 285. And in addition, *sumas* of longer accounts of all types were also composed. One major theme in fifteenth-century chronicle writing, mainly of the *general* and *suma* varieties, was “Gothicism,” an effort to connect Castile and its rulers to the post-Roman, and pre-Islamic, Visigothic kingdom in Iberia. Villa Prieto, “La escritura de la historia,” 83.

¹²² Several manuscripts of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* survive, while Ayala’s are preserved in even larger numbers. The fifteenth-century accounts of Juan II’s reign, however, have a far fewer manuscripts, and it is not clear how widely circulated they were. This is sometimes attributed to the frequent political upheavals of the time, meaning that no definitive version or versions could be established. Luís Fernández Gallardo, “El discurso directo en la crónica real castellana del siglo XV,” *Talia Dixit: revista interdisciplinar de retórica e historiografía* 9 (2014): 99, 134. Still, despite continuing problems, Enrique IV’s chronicles, especially the Castilian translation and adaption of Alfonso de Palencia’s Latin chronicle, also have many manuscript copies. To be sure, royal chronicles were not the most popular historical genre, going by the number of manuscripts of *sumas* or more general accounts. But the fourteenth century royal chronicles, and those of Enrique IV, hold their own in terms of manuscripts. However, Alfonso XI’s chronicle deals with the last great battles of the so-called *reconquista*, at least with royal involvement, until the 1430’s. Ayala’s, meanwhile, were heavily promoted by the Trastámara. Likewise, Alfonso de Palencia’s chronicle of Enrique IV was a major tool in the battles over the succession that consumed the last half of his reign and, indeed, endured beyond it. The dedicated chronicles of Juan II, in comparison, had little in the way of glory and less of the legitimizing urgency possessed by their counterparts. But for whatever reason, the fifteenth-century royal chronicles studied below do not appear to have been as widely disseminated as their predecessors. Gómez Redondo, “La crónica real,” 95-96; López-Vidriero Abello, “Crónicas impresas y lectura de corte,” 434-40.

¹²³ The specific expression of these ideas depended on context, both in terms of the historical situation and the perspectives of the narratives in which they are described. An analogous approach is described in Valente, “The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II,” 852-881.

¹²⁴ Case here can have an ambiguous meaning. On the one hand, it refers to the series of events relating to a particular downfall that a chronicle describes. At the same time though, each chronicle description is also a representation, which is read in the context of the genre and the particular account. Purificación Martínez, “La *Crónica* y la *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*: Dos versiones ideológicas del reinado de Alfonso XI,” *Hispanic Research Journal* 1, no. 1 (2000): 44.

the resulting losses and consequences for the target were defined. Since all three worked together, they are analyzed together as much as possible, rather than as three discrete themes. In addition, given that the accounts are from royal chronicles, the timing and nature of royal involvement, and its consequences, are singled out as particularly significant. And finally, nearly all the accounts studied are framed by royal justice and its procedures, which is an important point of continuity across the period in question and also between different chronicles.

The authorship of the particular chronicles, their perspectives and characteristics, and challenges in interpreting them, will be addressed as they become relevant.¹²⁵ Regarding the texts themselves, the mid-fourteenth century *Crónica de Alfonso XI* has a complicated history but, ultimately, is fairly well established.¹²⁶ Pedro López de Ayala's chronicles are even more securely established, although their long process of composition means that, for his accounts of Pedro I, Enrique II and, to an extent, Juan I, two distinct traditions exist, the *primitiva* and the *vulgar*, of which the second is much more significant.¹²⁷ His work on Juan I largely shares the same manuscript tradition as his work on the intertwined political lives of the previous two

¹²⁵ In doing so, I consider the author or likely author as a historical figure, along with how the author positions themselves in the text. Jaume Aurell, "La chronique de Jacques I^{er}, une fiction autobiographique: Auteur, auctorialité et autorité au Moyen Âge," *Annales* 63, no. 2 (2008): 303, 307, 314-15; Purificación Martínez, "La historia como vehículo político: La figura real en la *Crónica de Alfonso XI*," *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie III, Historia medieval* 13 (2000): 216.

¹²⁶ The chapter and page citations below are from the commonly available but quite dated edition in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, supplemented by Diego Catalán's more recent joint edition of the *Crónica* and *Gran Crónica*. The modern editions of the chronicle are based on a late fourteenth century manuscript held in the Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, Manuscritos, Y.II.10, the oldest surviving. For basic general information about this and other key chronicles, consult Brill's online *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, edited by Graeme Dunphy and Cristian Bratu. <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopedia-of-the-medieval-chronicle>. As for the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, a reformulation from several decades later, it is very similar to the earlier text. However, specific departures from it are important for analyzing López de Ayala's work. Important manuscripts are BNE Ms. 1015 and, at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Espagnol, 329. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 278-84, 878-895.

¹²⁷ Michel García, "Una nueva versión de la *Crónica de Enrique III*, de Ayala," *Romance Philology* 58, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 227; Bretton Rodríguez, *Narratives of Power*, 202-06, 208-09. I cite from the common but old edition published in the *Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles*. According to Germán Orduna, responsible for a more modern edition, there are in fact two traditions of the *vulgar*. Important sources for modern editions are RAH, Manuscritos, 9/4764 and 9/4765.

rulers, while the unfinished *Crónica de Enrique III* is firmly late century, or perhaps even very early fifteenth century.¹²⁸

As for the accounts of the fifteenth century, Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal's *Crónica de Juan II*, from the early sixteenth century, offers a "complete" account of Juan's reign, but it is a composite work.¹²⁹ The first part, which extends from 1406 through 1419 and does not feature heavily in this study, is by Álvaro García de Santa María. The second part, covering 1420 to 1434 and of less certain authorship, survives in two principal manuscripts.¹³⁰ Overall, the sixteenth century *Crónica*, although not a simple reproduction of these early to mid-fifteenth century accounts, does follow them closely. But the source material of the third part, dealing with events after 1434, is not clear. For that reason, engagement with incidents from those years is limited. Turning to the other fifteenth-century tradition, that of the *Crónica del Halconero*, for the *Crónica del Halconero* itself, the most important manuscript contains Pedro Carrillo de Huete's text between 1422 and June 1441.¹³¹ Thereafter another author, likely Lope de Barrientos, continued the account.¹³² For the *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero*, also likely the work of Lope de Barrientos, the surviving manuscript runs until 1439.¹³³

To be sure, focusing on this genre, these particular chronicles, and narratives of this type offers specific views of the separation of person and power, and conceptions of power itself. But

¹²⁸ For both, chapter and page numbers in citations come from the *Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles* version. See also García, "Una nueva versión," 227.

¹²⁹ The accounts on which it is based appear to have been favored by the *reyes católicos*. Fernando Gómez Redondo, "Discurso y elocución en la Crónica de Juan II (1406-1434)," *Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales* 27 (2004): 248; López-Vidriero Abello, "Crónicas impresas y lectura de corte," 428.

¹³⁰ Those are the original, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, Manuscritos, X.II.2, and a copy, BNE Ms. 1618. There is no modern edition, so I cite from that in the *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, based on the BNE.

¹³¹ The most important manuscript is BNE Ms. 9445.

¹³² I cite from Juan de Mata Carriazo's modern edition.

¹³³ Based on Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, Manuscritos, X.II.13. The edition cited is by Juan de Mata Carriazo as well.

legal codes, works on political theory, and literary depictions of depositions connect their insights into contemporary political discourses and terminology more broadly. Moreover, those other sources help with reading and interpreting the chronicles.¹³⁴

Like with the chronicles themselves, particular sources will be introduced as they appear. But in general terms, in the legal sphere the great normative tradition of Alfonso X's *Siete Partidas*, partially codified in 1348, is vitally important.¹³⁵ It remained influential throughout the period in question and, indeed, beyond it.¹³⁶ Alongside that tradition is the more "applied" lawmaking of the *Cortes* and, later, of monarchs and their advisors.¹³⁷ In general, enduring legal traditions unify the period under consideration.¹³⁸ But in the fifteenth century, claims related to royal authority, pioneered in royal documentary practice, disrupted that continuity.¹³⁹ The insights of these sources are important for understating chronicle accounts as narratives of justice and the terminology they use, particularly with regard to the nature of the losses of power they describe.¹⁴⁰

As for works on politics, political theory, and literary sources, often the lines between them are blurred. Some important works very directly deal with political theory in a systematic

¹³⁴ Through, among other things, providing insight into textual tropes. Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis*, 190.

¹³⁵ And underneath that, the impact of Roman law and the *derecho común*. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 80, 87-90, 266, 394.

¹³⁶ *Las Siete Partidas*, ed. José Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal (Madrid: Editorial Reus, 2004). The author of the mid-fifteenth century *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, Alonso de Cartagena, considered the 1348 codification of the *Partidas* as the most authoritative source of Castilian law in his day. That was not necessarily true with respect to courtroom procedure, but its normative influence was certainly great.

¹³⁷ García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 93, 284. Records of *Cortes* proceedings have been published, and so have some acts of royal law-making, though in a less systematic way.

¹³⁸ That is not to say they were internally unified. Owens, discussing a protracted legal case beginning in the 1440's, notes how its principal parties advanced clashing interpretive schemes of the events, calling on different bases of law which were, nonetheless, both "in force." Owens, *'By my Absolute Royal Authority'*, 144.

¹³⁹ Though they were later more formally promulgated. The most important, though not only, formulation was advanced in the aftermath of the 1445 battle of Olmedo, which ended in the victory of Juan II and Álvaro de Luna over the *infantes* of Aragón.

¹⁴⁰ Steven Wilf, "Law/Text/Past," *UC Irvine Law Review* 1, no. 3 (2011): 547-550.

way.¹⁴¹ These compositions, often drawing heavily on Greek and Roman models, date mainly from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But their ideas influenced, or at least were shared by, contemporary chroniclers.¹⁴² Also, works in more traditional literary forms engage in commentary on politics and draw on political theories and, at times, border on it themselves.¹⁴³ These compositions were more prominent in the fourteenth century, though they appear throughout the period under consideration.¹⁴⁴ Both kinds of sources provide conceptual and rhetorical context for understanding how chroniclers framed and depicted losses of power.¹⁴⁵

Finally, some narrative and literary sources which comment directly on specific circumstances or people, especially those whose deposition accounts are analyzed, are also referenced throughout. These sources are more eclectic, and are not used in a systematic way. Instead, they contextualize the chronicle presentations of individual figures and representations of judicial processes.¹⁴⁶

Besides this base of normative sources, documentary evidence from across the period in question also serves to contextualize chronicle accounts, provides links with royal messaging in relation to these cases, and ties narratives of justice in with contemporary practice and

¹⁴¹ Among the most important contemporary authors were Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo and Francesc Eiximenis, who in turn depended heavily on Aquinas and Aristotle. Diego de Valera, whose working life overlapped with the end of the period in question, is also significant. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 645-7.

¹⁴² On thinking about influences, see Palonen, "Concepts and Debates," 97.

¹⁴³ For example, Nieto Soria identifies a knightly view of royal power which found expression not in legal sources or works on political theory, but in literature. Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 27. See also Blas Medina Ávila, "Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto," 814-15; Raw, "Margaret of Anjou," 83. Also, many prominent fifteenth-century writers were courtiers with an education in the law, which influenced their work. Luís Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política: A propósito de un fragmento inédito de Alonso de Cartagena," *En la España medieval* 16 (1993): 120.

¹⁴⁴ Don Juan Manuel's work and Ayala's own *Rimado de palacio* stand out among them.

¹⁴⁵ Beceiro Pita, "Argumentos ideológicos de la oposición nobiliaria," 214; Carlos Heusch, "Traductions et pouvoir d'Alphonse X à Alphonse XI: l'exemple de la fiction littéraire," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 33 (2010): 87.

¹⁴⁶ An example is the *Cancionero de Baena*, a collection of poems by courtiers and, often, about people and events at court, from the time of Enrique III and the early years of Juan II. Juan Alfonso de Baena, *Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena*, ed. Brian Dutton and Joaquín González Cuenca (Madrid: Visor Libros, 1993).

terminology.¹⁴⁷ Most of these documents originated at court or within royal institutions.¹⁴⁸ Of key importance are public letters, sent to inform, and persuade, about ongoing events while also often issuing commands.¹⁴⁹ In the simplest sense, such communications serve as a mirror for chronicle narratives, offering another record of events and chronology.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, in some instances comparing them with chronicle accounts highlights ways in which they carefully and deliberately conveyed particular messages.¹⁵¹ Finally, royal documents were a key means for advancing new claims of royal authority in the fifteenth century, making them vital for understanding the nature and use of those new claims.¹⁵²

Beginning with published documents, for much of early to mid-fourteenth century, surviving royal documents are very limited. However, from the late fourteenth century onward, the situation improves. In particular, a published collection of documents from the city archives

¹⁴⁷ Amélia Aguiar Andrade, *A construção medieval do território* (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 2001), 64-65. They were highly formulaic, and chanceries across Europe shared many common techniques and terms. Neal, *The Letters of Edward I*, 2-5, 33-34, 39, 44. Castile's (and León's) royal chancery, an earlier adopter of the vernacular, was somewhat of an outlier in that respect. Filemón Arribas Arranz, "Los registros de Cancillería de Castilla," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 162 (1968): 171-200; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "Origin and Development of Archival Record Keeping in the Crown of Castile-León," in *Discovery in the Archives of Spain and Portugal: Quincentenary Essays, 1492-1992*, ed. Lawrence McCrank (New York: Haworth Press, 1992), 3-18. Some fourteenth and fifteenth-century examples of "formularios" for document creators are preserved in the BNE. BNE Ms. 10003; BNE Ms. 6711. The guides focus on "everyday" acts of Castile's *escribanos públicos*, not royal letters.

¹⁴⁸ Besides royal documents, fifteenth-century messages and agreements between members of the nobility are also consulted.

¹⁴⁹ Neal, *The Letters of Edward I*, 75; Nieto Soria, "La parole: un instrument de la lutte politique," 717-18; Isabel Ostolaza Elizondo, *Administración y documentación pública castellana-leonesa durante el reinado de Sancho IV-Alfonso XI (1282-1350): Organismos, atribuciones, tipología documental* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense De Madrid, 1991).

The archives of the high courts and *Consejo* do not, for the most part, exist for this period. Documents such as these note the initiation and conclusion of judicial proceedings but do not directly spring from them. A major exception is the survival of a portion of the records of the defense of Ruy López Dávalos, constable of Castile, from his 1423 *proceso*. Yolanda Guerrero Navarrete, ed., *Proceso y sentencia contra Ruy López Dávalos, condestable de Castilla* (Jaén: Instituto de Estudios Giennenses, 1982).

¹⁵⁰ That is not to say the documents necessarily offer a more objective record. Rodríguez-Velasco, "Political Idiots and Ignorant Clients," 25, 90-92.

¹⁵¹ Although chroniclers also often made use of them, so the two are not completely separate worlds and the comparison is complicated. Given-Wilson, "Official and Semi-Official History," 1-4; Nogales Rincón, "La **Corónica verdadera del rey don Pedro*," 35-40.

¹⁵² Black, *Political Thought*, 4-5; Grévin, "Les mystères rhétoriques de l'État medieval," 273-75, 296-98; Neal, *The Letters of Edward I*, 80; Rodríguez-Velasco, "Political Idiots and Ignorant Clients," 88.

of Murcia provides a consistent companion to the chronicle accounts, especially news-bearing and case-making letters associated with major political upheavals.¹⁵³ The city of Murcia itself is a good choice for this kind of comparison. Royal chronicles were composed in a court milieu, close to kings and the factions that sought to influence or even control them. Murcia was firmly on the periphery, separated from the political and economic centers of Castile by rough and sparsely populated terrain.¹⁵⁴ Dealing with its leaders required a delicate and diplomatic touch, and city received messages about most major political shakeups involving rulers and their courts, and related removals from power, from the late fourteenth century onward. These public messages also shared much with chronicle accounts, helping draw connections between the ideas they expressed and Castilian political culture more broadly.

Additionally, another large published collection which sees extensive use gathers together a wealth of documents from institutions in the region of León.¹⁵⁵ The majority of them have to do with property and jurisdiction, which were frequently matters of legal dispute. As such, they provide an ample base of comparison for interpreting chronicle use of legal terminology and descriptions of practice.

As for unpublished sources, the Archivo Histórico Nacional and the Archivo Histórico Nacional – Sección Nobleza are of particular significance. The *ordenes militares* section of the

¹⁵³ The volumes cited contain royal documents. However, they also reference cases made by opponents in order to refute them. Published by the Real Academia Alfonso X el Sabio beginning in the 1980's. For their importance, see Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, "La Casa de Juan I de Castilla: Aspectos domésticos y ámbitos privados de la realeza castellana a finales del siglo XIV (ca. 1370-1390)," *En la España medieval* 34 (2011): 135; J. B. Owens, "El Largo Pleito Entre Toledo y el Conde de Belalcázar. La Investigación Histórica en el Archivo Municipal de Toledo y la Aplicación de Concepto de 'Poderío Real Absoluto'," *Archivo Secreto* 3 (2006): 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ángel Luís Molina Molina, "Proyección mediterránea del Reino de Murcia en la Edad Media," *Miscelánea medieval murciana* 17 (1992): 61. Before the Trastámara, the monarchy had major presence in Andalucía. After their accession, the political center of the realm moved north to the *meseta* and adjacent territories. Menjot, "La ville et l'état moderne," 116-17, 126; Juan Torres Fontes, "Evolución del Concejo de Murcia en la Edad Media," *Murgetana* 71 (1987): 6-9.

¹⁵⁵ *Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa*, published by the Centro de Estudios y Investigación San Isidoro since 1969. Individual volumes will be cited below.

AHN contains records stemming from depositions of the masters of Castile's military orders. Including both royal and ecclesiastical documents, they play an especially important role, unsurprisingly, when considering accounts of royal involvement with removals of the masters of those orders from their posts. Most important among them are the Uclés and San Marcos collections for the Order of Santiago, and the Calatrava collection for the Order of Calatrava. Uclés and Calatrava were the headquarters of their respective orders, while San Marcos was an important regional center for the Order of Santiago, and their archives contain documentation relating to political struggles in which masters were involved.¹⁵⁶

Also, the Sección Nobleza, especially the Duques de Osuna and Duques de Frías collections, contains documents regarding a wider range of political struggles in the fifteenth century.¹⁵⁷ Most important are those that relate to agreements between and among nobles and monarchs, to the seizure and redistribution of possessions and other resources of power, and also royal commands in the midst of ongoing controversies.¹⁵⁸ Finally, the digitized archive of the *Real Chancillería de Valladolid*, like the León collection, holds records that help to contextualize the judicial procedures and other legal measures described in chronicles. In particular, it contains examples of judicial sentences and documents related to arbitration, which plays an important role in some accounts.

Chapter Plan

This project is divided into eleven chapters, grouped into five sections. In the first section, consisting of two chapters, I work with accounts about, and from, the fourteenth century.

¹⁵⁶ The *Órdenes Militares* section is divided based on the particular order center from which documents came. Most have to do with local economic and administrative matters.

¹⁵⁷ Both hold an atypically large amount of documents from the fifteenth century.

¹⁵⁸ The archive at Simancas, though the contents are mostly of early modern provenance, contain some digitized documents relating to specific incidents whose accounts are analyzed below which are also referenced.

In the first chapter, depositions of nobles in the early to mid-fourteenth century are examined.¹⁵⁹ These losses of power were closely connected to determinations of personal guilt and resulting punishment, handed down by a directly involved monarch. Moreover, those losses were presented in binary terms, conceived as outright losses of the possession of specific resources.

In the second chapter, I consider how tight connections between guilt, punishment and loss unraveled in narratives from the end of the century, under the influence of important judicial reforms. Royal roles shifted away from personally judging and punishing and toward giving commands in anticipation of such decisions, with less clearly defined consequences.¹⁶⁰ As a result, gaps opened between the prospect of judgement and punishment and the practical losses of power endured by targets, which occurred by royal command and were characterized in terms other than permanent loss of possession. Nonetheless, the language of crime and punishment continued to dominate the narratives, while the threat of a permanent loss, determined by a formal judgment, continued to hang over them.

The second section consists of four chapters, and moves into the first half of the fifteenth century. In chapter three, I introduce accounts of four major aristocratic removals in the 1420's and 1430's, in the two major chronicle traditions for the reign of Juan II. I also establish them as narratives in a "judicial register," which still reflect late fourteenth century innovations. Doing so emphasizes an important link with earlier chronicles, vital for following how changing depictions of justice, and royal roles in it, served as the basis for further shifts in representations of power, and its loss at royal hands, in the fifteenth century.

¹⁵⁹ Working with Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid's *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and Pedro López de Ayala's *Crónica de Pedro I*. Although generally datable to the closing decades of the fourteenth century, the complex history of Ayala's composition softens the divide somewhat.

¹⁶⁰ In this chapter I work primarily with Ayala's work on Juan I and Enrique III, more fully products of the late fourteenth century.

In the fourth chapter, I examine how these narratives expressed new ways of authorizing and justifying removals of nobles from power. They depended on the deployment of royal authority, the use of which was justified in terms of royal interests, rather than punishment mandated in response to the guilt of the target for a crime. This force behind separations of person and power owed much to novel expressions of royal authority advanced at court from the 1420's onward. Within chronicle narratives, they filled in the "gaps" opened by fourteenth-century judicial reforms, and gave rulers a new and distinct basis for confronting subjects.

The work of chapter five builds from where chapter four leaves off. That new basis for separating person and power at royal hands led to distinctive consequences as well. Royal interventions on those terms authorized temporary and contingent suspensions of a rival's capacity to act or to benefit from their possessions, described with a vocabulary that distinguished them from permanent losses of those possessions. As such, fifteenth-century chronicles, of both traditions, put forward a coherent conception of power as something exercised rather than possessed.

However, the articulation of new conceptions of power and its loss did not mean that older views, based on guilt, punishment and loss of possession, disappeared. As I explore in chapter six, the two existed alongside, but distinct from, one another. Still, the new views did displace the old ones. In the fourteenth-century chronicles, determinations of guilt and punishment were the key means by which kings opened up the resources of their rivals to legitimate intervention. In fifteenth-century accounts, rulers did so mainly by other means and on other terms. Permanent losses mediated by judicial sentences were primarily significant for those who later received the resources thus taken.¹⁶¹ The new ideas, using royal authority to target the

¹⁶¹ i.e, when redistributed. This would happen anyway, but victory for kings meant victory for their supporters as well, who wanted rewards.

exercise of power, were a distinct register that let rulers intervene quickly, yet still legitimately, against the power of their subjects.

Moving on, the third section includes two chapters, in which I analyze royal chronicle narratives of removals of the masters of Castile's military-religious orders. They each test the explanations for, and the scope of, changing conceptions of power in late medieval chronicles, and Castilian political discourse more broadly. The masterships were distinctive posts which were not, in theory, directly granted or revoked by royal authority. But accounts of removals from these stably defined posts underwent similar changes, in response to similar developments, to those laid out in section two. In fourteenth-century chronicle narratives, discussed in chapter seven, rulers were shown working through procedures distinct to the military orders to arrange the depositions of their masters. Also, their removals were defined as the formal revocation of the office. However, as explored in chapter eight, in fifteenth-century chronicle accounts, invocations of royal authority and interests bypassed the rules and traditions governing the possession of the masterships. Moreover, they did so by targeting a master's capacity to exercise the powers of the post, and benefit from its attached resources, rather than outright removal.

The fourth section, consisting of chapters nine and ten, is a platform for another test. In it, I deal with the series of "cases" made against Álvaro de Luna, King Juan II's influential *privado*, or royal favorite, by aristocratic rivals from the 1420's to the 1440's. In chapter nine I discuss how, in the 1420's, his rivals cast him as an overly influential advisor who ruled by controlling access to the king and his court. But by the late 1430's, covered in chapter ten, they had shifted their case to accuse him of usurping, and exercising, royal power. They also cast Álvaro de Luna as someone who ought to be subjected to corrective royal authority, and even justice. That betrays the influence of new ways of conceiving power and its loss, in that these non-royal actors

employed a similar understanding for their own ends, namely that royal authority should intervene to undo the *privado*'s illegitimate exercise of power.¹⁶² And most importantly, the rivals adapted their anti-Luna case to access the possibilities enjoyed by royal deponents, deploying their authority in the service of what was cast as their best interest. Their adaptation is an example of how royal authority and institutions advanced as the central reference points of political life, even if not always in the service of rulers and their allies.

Finally, the fifth section consists of a single chapter, in which I scrutinize contemporary debates over controversial depositions. The terms in which these controversies were conducted, particularly in the fifteenth century, testify to the centrality of royal authority, acting in its own interests, as a premier force behind the separation of person and power, defined in terms of capacity to act over possession.¹⁶³ Even critical observers of specific royal interventions tended to accept the essential legitimacy of royal authority acting alongside, but distinct from, processes of justice. They differed mainly over whether the “true” motives of a particular royal move really corresponded with royal interests, and whether a discrepancy between “real” and stated motives would harm royal dignity in the eyes of the realm. In chronicle narratives of power and its loss, the guilt of the figures losing power became less important, replaced by the assertion of a king’s authority and his needs. And that became the center of these broader debates as well. Although motives may be questioned, even critics accepted an expansive interpretation of what, theoretically, rulers could do to intervene in the capacity of their subjects to exercise power.

¹⁶² This is certainly not the only instance in which that occurred. Owens argues that middle and lower ranking aristocrats, far more than the *grandes* involved here, often looked to royal authority as a protection for their own possessions. Owens, ‘*By my Absolute Royal Authority*’, 32.

¹⁶³ The existence and central role of monarchy was hardly questioned, but its extent and purposes were. Black, *Political Thought*, 136; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 14.

PART ONE

Chapter One

Royal Justice and Loss of Power on the Eve of the Trastámara Era

Confrontations between monarchs and political rivals among the nobility enjoy a prominent place in fourteenth-century Castilian royal chronicles.¹ However, targets of that stature, and capacity to resist, were not easily disempowered. As such, efforts to do so were attended by careful case-making and political maneuvering.² When depicting such confrontations, contemporary chroniclers portrayed rulers, sometimes in consultation with their supporters, deploying the forms and procedures of royal justice to depose their rivals.³ Indeed, for fourteenth-century chroniclers, the presence or absence of those procedures was a crucial criterion for presenting particular removals as legitimate or, in their absence, not.⁴

¹ A major part of noble self-conception was an expectation of playing political roles, including as advisors to monarchs. Luciana De Stefano, "La sociedad estamental en las obras de Don Juan Manuel," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 16, no. 3 (July-December 1962): 329-354.

² Although the accounts studied in this chapter focus on the actions of the deponents, they were not acting against passive targets. Quintanilla Raso, "Discurso aristocrático, resistencia y conflictividad," 543-574. Indeed, Valente discusses revolt as a part of politics, not a breakdown. Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt*, 237-253. Also, García-Gallo, in his study of Castilian law and legal systems, acknowledges that law bent to politics. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 650. See also Quentin Verreycken, "The power to pardon in late medieval and early modern Europe: New perspectives in the history of crime and criminal justice," *History Compass* 17, no.6 (2019): 5.

³ As noted in the introduction, power is broadly defined, including both resources that support power and freedom of action. Resources could be held on different terms. Vázquez Campos, *Los adelantados mayores de la frontera*, 379; Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 56; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 56. For instance, Don Juan Manuel's early fourteenth-century *Libro de los estados* differentiates royal vassals tied to the king via land and those tied via money. Don Juan Manuel, *El libro de los estados*, ed. Ian R. MacPherson and Robert Brian Tate (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 1991), 86, 257. For this and the rest of his works, see Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 718-25.

⁴ Removals could be successful without these forms, and even the very powerful were shown losing power, or life, without them. But their absence was often a source of criticism so seeking legitimacy, not just effectiveness, was important. Neal, *The Letters of Edward I*, 9-10; Susan Reynolds, "Secular Power an Authority in the Middle Ages," in *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Rees Davies*, ed. Huw Pryce and John Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11-12.

The opening decades of the fourteenth century in Castile were, on the whole, politically turbulent.⁵ After 1325 however, King Alfonso XI, with a combination of force and diplomacy, was able to reassert royal authority and suppress, at least for a time, internal conflict. With the benefit of hindsight, those years also encompassed the practical beginning of important long term trends that led to major changes in Castile's normative, procedural and, eventually, institutional legal regimes.⁶ But contemporary chronicle narratives owed more to longstanding models of royal justice when they portrayed it at work mediating the separation of person and power. Accounts by chroniclers writing in the early and mid-fourteenth century, and also later authors depicting removals from that time, turn on a monarch directly issuing sentences mandating the loss of the possessions, and often the lives, of targeted rivals.⁷ That manner of framing judicial proceedings was consistent with prevailing notions of royal roles and, in particular, images of rulers as judges who reacted directly to disputes and upheavals that disturbed their realms.⁸

⁵ To be sure, it often is easier to find turbulent than peaceful years in late medieval Castilian political history. However, two long royal minorities and a dispute over the legitimate succession to the throne helped contribute to the particular turbulence of these decades. In 1282, Sancho, son of Alfonso X, tried to usurp power from his father and, after the latter's death in 1284, became king himself. The children of Sancho's elder brother, who had predeceased him, were the rival claimants. Sancho died in 1294, and his young son, Fernando IV came to the throne. For much of his reign his mother, María de Molina, ruled as regent, and Fernando died after only a few years of adult rule making his own very young son, Alfonso XI, king. Freedman, "Crisis? How Is That a Crisis!?" 18.

⁶ Building on the legacy of Alfonso X and the reception of the *derecho común*. Antonella Liuzzo Scorpo, "La idea del poder en la Península Ibérica en la Edad Media: Perspectivas universales y particulares en la *General Estoria* y la *Estoria de España*," *Studia historica. Historia medieval* 29 (2011): 24; Liuzzo Scorpo, Antonella. "The King as Subject, Master and Model of Authority: The Case of Alfonso X of Castile," in *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, ed. Lynette G. Mitchell and C. P. Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 269-284. That said, they were not uncontested. Deyermond, "La ideología del estado moderno," 718-25.

⁷ The important law code *Las Siete Partidas* identifies multiple types of ownership, including property that could be passed to heirs, control over a certain property for life, and castles or lands held from the king. Alfonso X, *Las Siete Partidas*, *partida* 3, *título* 28, *ley* 1. (Subsequent citations from the *Partidas* will be abbreviated according to the following model: *p.3, t.28, l.1*). Both were at stake in the removals depicted in chronicle narratives. See also Alonso de Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, ed. José María Vina Liste (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1995), 253. Though the *Doctrinal* is a product of the first half of the fifteenth century, it is based heavily on thirteenth and fourteenth-century law codes and *Cortes* legislation.

⁸ J. B. Owens, "El largo pleito," 20. And defining contests in those terms provided rulers, or those writing about them sympathetically, with powerful tools for justifying their actions. King, "'War', 'Rebellion' or 'Perilous Times'?" 124-26.

As a result, the falls from power that these procedures mediated were closely intertwined with findings of personal guilt, for actions defined as crimes, and the imposition of punishments for them.⁹ That association gave rise to a distinctive view of power and its loss which is shared by multiple chronicles. The punishment and disempowerment of targets were authorized in a single moment, and legitimized as a reaction to the misdeeds of the disgraced.¹⁰ In addition, these accounts overwhelmingly identify losses of possessions, which were defined as definitive and permanent, as the most significant material consequences faced by the targets of royal wrath.¹¹ Overall, loss of power meant, in addition to punishments directed against the body, losing possession of resources supporting positions of prominence. And for rulers, the disempowerment of a subject should be justified as a punishment handed down in reaction to crimes committed by their target.

But this method of representing power and its loss, in terms both of how person and power were separated, and how those separations were defined, imposed rather narrow limits on what rulers could legitimately do to disempower prominent subjects. When compared with chronicles from later in the century, and especially from the next, these accounts endow rulers

⁹ Office received the least focus in deposition narratives. And indeed, high office was more often a result of power and influence, not an initial source of it. José María Monsalvo Antón, *Historia de la España medieval* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2014), 41. Also, though royal offices were in theory revocable at will, in practice there were expectations that there should be a reason, and sometimes even a formal sentence. Pérez-Bustamante offers incompetence and treason as the most common reasons offered for removal, Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno*, 147. See also Ertman, *Leviathan*, 81; Manuel Torres Aguilar, “Sobre el control de los oficiales públicos en la Castilla bajomedieval y moderna: La larga pervivencia del Derecho romano,” *Revista de administración pública* 128 (1992): 178-9; Watts, *Politics*, 238-244, 250-54. On the grant and loss of office in general see García Marín, *El oficio público*, 325-337, 344-346.

¹⁰ That is not to say such framing would always work in tarring an opponent. For example, defending honor might supersede strict legality. Juan Harari, “La función de los consejos en el ‘Poema de Alfonso Onceno’: Fortalecimiento del poder regio y ejercicio de la justicia,” *Filología* 51 (2019): 57.

¹¹ That is also consistent with studies of contemporary political contests, which highlight the central importance of land and other forms of “hard power” as the foundations of noble prominence. Also, possession and power were very closely, and complexly, linked. Bernardo Bayona Aznar, “Las expresiones del poder en el vocabulario de Marsilio de Padua,” *Archivos* 16 (2006): 8-13; Gérard Giordanengo, “Du droit civil au pouvoir royal: Un renversement (XII^e-XV^e Siècle),” *Politiques et Management Public* 5, no. 1 (1987): 18. For noble power bases, see Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 67.

with fewer justificatory and executive tools, and paths of action, than their later successors. That is important to establish before demonstrating, in subsequent chapters, how and why new options for royal intervention were articulated, and their impact on conceptions of power and its loss more broadly.

Finally, the early to mid-fourteenth century chronicles, or accounts of events at that time, predate the advent of the Trastámara dynasty in the 1360's. That bridges an important historiographical divide in studies of Castilian politics and political culture, and within the broad context of the "state" narratives discussed in the introduction.¹² It also bridges two chronicle traditions separated by several decades. In accounts that share a common genre and conventions, changing depictions of judicial procedures drove new understandings of power and its loss from the late fourteenth century onward.

Sources and Approaches

The principal royal chronicle accounts of the fourteenth century are the mid-century *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, most likely by court official Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, and Pedro López de Ayala's chronicles of the reigns of King Pedro I and each of the first three Trastámara rulers, dating to the 1390's.¹³ As royal chronicles, a genre that emerged in the early fourteenth century, they are the work of courtiers and focus on the reigns and activities of individual rulers.¹⁴ Accounts from the first two are the subject of analysis below, while Ayala's work on the first three Trastámara monarchs anchors the next chapter. In particular, analyses of three

¹² And also the mostly more recent counter-narratives.

¹³ Pedro ruled from 1350 to 1369. In that year he was defeated and killed by his half-brother, who became King Enrique II, the first Trastámara. Ayala first served Pedro, but by 1369 was firmly in the Trastámara camp. I also reference the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, a reworking of the *Crónica* dating to the 1370's.

¹⁴ Fernández Gallardo, "La crónica real," 281-322; Folger, "A Genealogy of Castilian Historiography," 60; Funes, "Historiografía nobiliaria," 7-8; Covadonga Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica: Análisis de la Crónica de Pedro I de Castilla* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2010), 124.

narratives of removals from power, two from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and one from Ayala's *Crónica de Pedro I*, form the basis of this discussion. They have been singled out because each is particularly prominent within its respective chronicles, though alongside them other removal accounts from those sources are analyzed, more briefly, to help place the major examples in context.

But these narratives must also be interpreted in terms of the political ideas, institutions and judicial procedures of fourteenth-century Castile. Therefore, they are read alongside contemporary works dealing with political thought or containing narratives of judicial processes, and Pedro López de Ayala's are considered alongside his treatment of justice and power in other compositions.¹⁵ Also, although these narratives are certainly not "trial records," neither the author of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* nor López de Ayala simply presented stereotyped images of kings doing justice.¹⁶ Both varied their accounts in ways that suggest attention to, and concern for, the specific circumstances of the individual incidents they recounted.¹⁷ Therefore, where

¹⁵ These include Don Juan Manuel's *Libro de los estados* and also *El conde Lucanor*. Juan Manuel, *El conde Lucanor*, ed. Alfonso Sotelo (Madrid: Cátedra, 1984). Another key work of his is: Juan Manuel, *Libro del caballero et del escudero*, in *Cinco Tratados*, ed. Reinaldo Ayerbe-Chaux (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1989). The early fourteenth-century *Libro del caballero Zifar*, a popular caballeresque narrative, is instructive as well. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, ed. Joaquín González Muela (Madrid: Castalia, 2003). It was an influential piece of early fourteenth-century literature, and remained popular into the fifteenth century. It is often analyzed as a "royalist" text, a product of the same milieu in which the historiographical legacy of Alfonso X gave way to the *crónicas reales* of the later middle ages. Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 773-77; Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 44; Heusch, "Traductions et pouvoir," 94-95; Rochwert-Zuili, "D'Alphonse X à Alphonse XI," 57.

For López de Ayala, his *Rimado de palacio* is important. Pedro López de Ayala, *Rimado de palacio*, ed. Hugo Bizzarri (Madrid, Real Academia Española, 2012). On this work, see, Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 875-8. For his influences, and influences on fourteenth-century literature and historiography, see Ángel Gómez Moreno, *España y la Italia de los humanistas* (Madrid: Gredos, 1994); Ignacio Navarrete, *Huérfanos de Petrarca: Poesía y teoría en la España renacentista* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1997); Germán Orduna, *El arte narrativo y poético del Canciller Ayala* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1998), 15-34; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 165. More generally, see A.D. Deyermond, *A Literary History of Spain: The Middle Ages* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971).

¹⁶ On approaching chronicle accounts of such situations, see Arias Guillén, *Guerra y fortalecimiento del poder regio*, 47-54; Hugo Bizzarri, "Estudio," in Pedro López de Ayala, *Rimado de palacio*, edited by Hugo Bizzarri (Madrid, Real Academia Española, 2012), 348.

¹⁷ Leonardo Funes describes a deep connection "between the juridical and the narrative." Funes, "Historiografía nobiliaria," 9-10. See also Barbosa Schiavinato, "Cronística medieval em Portugal," 304; Daniela

possible, the contents of legal codes and documentary evidence relating to particular incidents are employed.¹⁸ They serve both to contextualize the terminology the chroniclers used, and also as a basis for comparison through which to evaluate the versions of events they presented.¹⁹

Royal Justice in Royal Chronicles: The Mid-Fourteenth Century

In late medieval Castilian political thought, the *rey justiciero* was one of the principal guises of monarchs.²⁰ Stern but fair, the ruler was responsible for maintaining peace in the realm, punishing the wicked, and making sure that everyone got what they deserved according to their status.²¹ This duty was not just an administrative responsibility. The image of the king-judge was an active one, with the ruler, in state, dispensing justice personally.²²

Buccomino, "Between Law and Literature: Violations of Legal Rule in the *Decameron*," in *History of Law and Other Humanities: Views of the legal world across the time*, ed. Virginia Amorosi and Valerio Massimo Minale (Madrid: Dykinson, 2019), 350; Rodríguez-Velasco, "Political Idiots and Ignorant Clients," 88-9. On relationships between text and event, especially in accounts of the public aspects of justice, see Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 10.

¹⁸ Records from judicial processes generally do not survive. These documents are mainly public royal letters regarding the proceedings. On the purposes and nature of such communications see Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 198; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 28.

¹⁹ When considered in terms of their perspectives on the figures they depict. That is not to say the documents, mostly royal, would necessarily be more "truthful."

²⁰ Barbosa Schiavinato, "Cronística medieval em Portugal," 304-5; Harari, "La función de los consejeros," 56; Menjot, "La ville et l'état moderne naissant," 119; Adriana Vidotte, "A justiça e a produção do Direito em Castela no século XV," 60.

²¹ Justice was a royal right and responsibility. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 93, 695; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 136. The roles of maintaining justice and leadership in war were critical in legitimizing Castilian kingship. Georges Martin, "Les juges de Castille. Mentalités et discours historique dans l'Espagne médiévale," *Annexes des Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 6 (1992): 13; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile and León 1188-1350* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 79-81; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 14; Reilly, "Bishop Lucas of Túy and the Latin Chronicle Tradition in Iberia," 775.

In contemporary works, Juan Manuel emphasized the king's duty to maintain the realm in justice and peace. Juan Manuel, *El conde Lucanor*, 72; *Libro de los estados*, 173. That consisted of giving each person their due according to what they deserve or the "errors" into which they fall, including penalties carried out against their bodies, goods, and honor. *Libro de los estados*, 281. Also, influential late fourteenth-century friar, royal advisor and political theorist Francesc Eiximenis cast, not uncommonly, the upholders of justice the top level of society. Francesc Eiximenis, *Lo regiment de la cosa pública: En el Dotzè del Crestià*, ed. Albert Hauf (Madrid: Centro de Lingüística Aplicada ANTENA, 2009), 93, 109. See also Jean-Pierre Barraqué, "Les idées politiques de Francesc Eiximenis," *Le Moyen Âge* 114, no. 3-4 (2008): 531, 537; Carmen Cortés Pacheco, "El tirano y la tiranía en el pensamiento político pactista de Francesc Eiximenis," in Roche Arnas, *El pensamiento político*, 379.

²² In *El Conde Lucanor*, for instance, Juan Manuel depicted a king promising personally to "carry out very great justice" against men who had falsely accused one of his advisors. *El conde Lucanor*, 186. See also Joaquín

The legal basis on which this figure was to make such determinations, however, was less clearly defined and, perhaps unsurprisingly, less clearly depicted in chronicle accounts. Castilian law consisted of overlapping codes and customs, and on the whole, chroniclers did not prioritize specifying particular laws which targets supposedly broke.²³ Still, they certainly utilized specific terminology implying criminal behavior, guilt, and legal punishment, and both chroniclers called upon principles enshrined in normative law codes.²⁴ In both the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and in Ayala's later *Crónica de Pedro I*, kings executing judicial responsibilities personally, in a variety of circumstances, were a recurring image.²⁵ In narratives where justice and politics were closely

Jimeno Casaldueiro, *La imagen del monarca en la Castilla del siglo XIV: Pedro el Cruel, Enrique II y Juan I* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1972), 19-44; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 151-2.

²³ Even after legal reforms such as the 1348 *Ordenamiento de Alcalá*. It established an order of precedence for laws in court cases, and Alfonso X's *Siete Partidas* were promulgated as a supplementary code. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1861), 541-543. See also García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 103; Watts, *Politics*, 40. But in any case kings, and indeed all judges, had great discretion, and were not bound to punish breaches of particular laws in set ways or even to identify specific statutes transgressed. Barbosa Schiavinato, "Cronística medieval em Portugal," 306; Buccomino, "Between Law and Literature," 361; Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 8; María Fernanda Nussbaum, "La imagen jurídica del rey en la Crónica de Fernando IV," in *Estudios de literatura medieval: 25 años de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*, ed. Antonia Martínez Pérez and Ana Luisa Baquero Escudero (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2012), 644; Conor McCarthy, *Outlaws and Spies: Legal Exclusion in Law and Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 36; Rodríguez-Velasco, "Political Idiots and Ignorant Clients," 102.

²⁴ The *Fuero Real*, another legal work of Alfonso X, called law the "mistress of *derecho* and justice." Azucena Palacios Alcaine, ed., *Alfonso X el Sabio: Fuero Real* (Barcelona: PPU, 1991), 12. Indeed, the normative influence of codes like the *Fuero Real* and *Siete Partidas* was very great. Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, "La urgente presencia de *Las Siete Partidas*," *La coronica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures and Cultures* 38, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 99-135. They also influenced legal terminology. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 284.

²⁵ Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 623; Faustino Martínez Martínez, "Ecos cronísticos del rey-juez medieval, Cuadernos de historia del derecho," *Extra 2* (2010): 303-05. Kings had to perform this role functionally, but also in the more "theatrical" sense of performance. See Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 6.

To do so effectively, kings also ought to be wise and prudent. Alfonso X stressed that idea, and it endured beyond him. Erica Janin, "Mentiras y engaños en la corte del rey: Un acercamiento a la figura del rey necio y los consejeros engañadores en la corte de Alfonso XI a través del *Libro del conde Lucanor*," *Letras* 78 (2018): 99-100.

intertwined, presenting rulers in this capacity had a great role to play in legitimizing royal suppression of noble rivals and the stripping away of the resources supporting their power.²⁶

The *Crónica de Alfonso XI*

The first narratives to be considered are drawn from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*.²⁷ Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid, its likely author, was a prominent figure at court, and his coverage of the late 1320's and 1330's focuses on the young King Alfonso's confrontation with powerful bands of nobles. These often included Don Juan Manuel, the king's powerful relative, and a noted author, who was lord of a vast swathe of territory in southeastern Castile.²⁸ The chronicle is

²⁶ Olivier Matteoni, "Les procès politiques du règne de Louis XI," *Histoire de la justice* 27, no.1 (2017): 11-23; Meissonnier, "Théorie et pratique du pouvoir royal," 307; Owens, "El largo pleito," 20; Massimo Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 55-7.

Beyond chronicles, the *Libro de caballero Zifar* criticizes "tyrannical" kings who took the property of subjects and executed them without trial. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 79. Also, Juan Manuel insisted that a lord could not take back what he had given to a vassal unless "all understand" that it was taken with *derecho*, such as in response to a crime. Lords should not be killed or have their personal possessions stripped away without trial. *Libro de los estados*, 259-261. And material losses were also cast as losses of power and status. In *El conde Lucanor*, he conceived power, honor and riches distinctly. *El conde Lucanor*, 439. In the *Libro de los estados*, meanwhile, he explained the term *ricohombre*, a high ranking noble, by saying that *rico*, meaning rich, came first because *riqueza* was, in itself, honor. *Libro de los estados*, 267. For him, "hard" power and honor were important, but he suggested a complex relationship between person, power and status, leaving much room for pulling them apart.

²⁷ The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* dates to the mid-fourteenth century. Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 614-18. For general information, see Diego Catalán, "La *Gran Crónica* y la historiografía en prosa y en verso sobre Alfonso XI," in Catalán, *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, 1:15-19; Diego Catalán, *La tradición manuscrita en la "Crónica de Alfonso XI"* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1974), 16-21, 178-80, 183-86, 404-405; Gómez Redondo, "De la crónica general a la real," 48; Cayetano Rosell, introduction to *Crónicas de los Reyes de Castilla*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66, vii. It had a major influence on later historiography of the era. Filipe Alves Moreira, "A *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344* e a literatura historiográfica sobre Afonso XI," *e-Spania. Revue interdisciplinaire d'études hispaniques médiévales et modernes* 25, (2016): 3-4, <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-spania.25888>.

²⁸ On Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid as a courtier, see "La función de los consejos," 56; Linehan, *History and the Historians*, 624-6. For problems with Sánchez de Valladolid's authorship, see Fernández Gallardo, "Sobre los orígenes de la crónica real castellana," 773-74.

Fortunes in that political contest swung back and forth. In 1328 a very young Alfonso had been forced to give in to Juan Manuel's demands. Alfonso later turned the tables on him and forced him into exile in 1336, before they finally reconciled in 1340. Juan Manuel, an author, also composed many works regarding the politics of his day and how to navigate them. Janin, "Mentiras y engaños," 93. On his power base, see Juan Francisco Jiménez Alcázar, "Tierra, propiedad y paisaje agrario en la frontera de Granada el núcleo medieval de Coy (Lorca, Murcia)," *Anales de la Universidad de Alicante: Historia medieval* 10 (1994-5): 172-3.

reliably supportive of Alfonso's efforts and methods, and frequently portrays its subject punishing those who had offended him by means of active royal justice.²⁹

In the *Crónica's* portrayal of the 1329 execution and trial of Álvar Núñez Osorio and the 1334 arrest and execution of Juan Alfonso de Haro, Alfonso's judgement in response to his target's alleged crimes led not only to their punishment but, in the broader context of both narratives, also justified their undoing as political rivals.³⁰ These penalties included the targets' deaths, but they also left their possessions open to royal seizure.³¹ However, these confrontations were not cast as simple incidents of crime and punishment.³² While grounded in fourteenth-century notions of royal justice, the narratives depict Alfonso drawing from a "well" of common political ideas and practices to undo targets who were not just malefactors, but also significant political actors.³³

But before moving on to the accounts of those two incidents, an example of more direct "crime-and-punishment" justice, without emphasis on losses of possessions, reinforces that the

²⁹ Deyermond, "La ideología del estado moderno," 174; Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 99; Gerald L. Gingras, "Sánchez's *Tres Corónicas*: An Alfonsine Legacy?," *Romance Quarterly* 33 (1986): 67-82; Gerald L. Gingras, "The Medieval Castilian Historiographical Tradition: From Alfonso X to López de Ayala," *Romance Languages Annual* 2 (1990): 419-25; Martínez, "La historia como vehículo político," 215; Valdalis Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 122. For his reign, see José Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal, *Alfonso XI: 1312-1350* (Palencia: Diputación Provincial, 1995).

³⁰ There are many accounts of royal justice confronting the disobedient, but these two incidents stand out. Both targets also, according to the chronicle, betrayed the king's trust, and their downfalls thus served as a warning and example. Gómez Redondo, "La crónica real: 'Exemplos' y sentencias," 100.

³¹ Indeed, law codes distinguished between punishment for *cuerpos*, bodies, and *bienes*, goods. See capítulo 47 of the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá. Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:525. That conception appears beyond codes and chronicles as well. In *El conde Lucanor*, a royal advisor warned the king that his potential abdication would leave both the *cuerpos* and *faziendas*, here meaning something like patrimonies, of his heir and wife in danger. Juan Manuel, *El conde Lucanor*, 72. More directly related to justice, in the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala noted that judges who erred deserved to be punished in their *cuerpos* and *bienes*, echoing laws in both the *Partidas* and the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá*. López de Ayala, *Rimado de palacio*, 75.

³² They played key roles in delivering a pro-Alfonso and pro-royal authority message. Gómez Redondo, "La crónica real: 'Exemplos' y sentencias," 108-110.

³³ Nieto Soria employs the notion of rhetorical and ideological "building blocks." Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 18-25. See also Nieto Soria, "Más que palabras," 165-204; Pestieau, "Le pouvoir de l'idéal et l'idéal du pouvoir," 259, 262-63. Chronicle accounts present a view of what Wilentz calls paradigms, the rules that form and limit social actions. Here, that means expectations about justice and its forms. Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 17.

losses described in them should be understood to follow from judicial procedures punishing offenses against the king. In 1334, Alfonso XI condemned Gómez Gutierrez de Sandoval and Gutier Díaz de Sandoval for treason.³⁴ They were not of the high status enjoyed by either Álvar Núñez or Juan Alfonso, but they had served Juan Núñez de Lara, another important nobleman with whom the king was in conflict.

According to the *Crónica*, they had left his service and pledged to follow King Alfonso instead, but broke that promise and rejoined Juan Núñez, who the king had besieged in the town of Lerma. When he learned of this, Alfonso first consulted all the *fijosdalgo* who were with him.³⁵ They advised that since the two men had left his service after pledging to follow him, and even worse proceeded to fight against him, “they had fallen into a state of treason.”³⁶ Afterward, Alfonso offered, despite their *yerro*, to leave aside his *derecho* and ignore the *grand mal* into which they had “fallen” if they repented.³⁷ But they did not, so he ordered that a raised platform called an *estrado* be set up, which the chronicle describes as customary, and “gave sentence against Gómez Gutierrez et Gutier Díaz, in which he named them traitors.”³⁸ Later, Juan Núñez settled with the king and received forgiveness for himself and Lerma’s defenders. However, the *Crónica* notes that the Sandovals fled Castile for neighboring Aragón, since the king refused to pardon their treason, for which they had been specifically condemned.³⁹

Not all trials depicted in chronicles can be read as depositions. But although no possessions were at stake, the *Crónica*’s depiction of judicial procedures in this instance has

³⁴ *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 159, pp. 276-77.

³⁵ *Hidalgos*, meaning “sons of something,” which referred to men of status.

³⁶ “et que pues le avian dexado, et se fueron meter en la villa en ayuda de aquellos que eran enemigos del rey, et dende le tiraron saetas et piedras, cayeron en caso de traycion.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 159, p. 276.

³⁷ “error,” “right,” and “great evil.” *Yerro*, in particular, had legal connotations.

³⁸ “Et el rey por esto mandó poner un estrado cubierto de paños prietos en que se asentó, segun ques es costumbre, et dió sentencia contra estos Gomez Gutierrez et Gutier Diaz, en que los dio por traydores.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 159, p. 276.

³⁹ *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 172, pp. 292-83.

much in common with the way it portrays such procedures in the accounts studied below. In the wider context of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, its presentation of the depositions of Álvar Núñez Osorio and Juan Alfonso de Haro certainly involves, and indeed turns on, forms of trial in which determinations of guilt by the king, in response to crime, led to punishment.⁴⁰

The Falls of Álvar Núñez Osorio and Juan Alfonso de Haro

With that in mind, in 1329, a few years after Alfonso XI reached his majority, Álvar Núñez Osorio was killed and deprived of his possessions at royal hands. Though from a distinguished background, he had risen even higher as an advisor to the young king. Soon afterward however, Alfonso dismissed him in response to noble and urban discontent.⁴¹ The jilted courtier turned instead to Juan Manuel, leading to a clash between Alfonso and his former advisor.⁴² The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* describes that break, and its account of Osorio's downfall begins soon after, when he refused Alfonso's order to surrender the fortresses he held in his name.⁴³ In response, the king's counselors advised him to arrange the count's death, in order to avoid the cost of seizing the castles by force. Soon after, he ordered a *caballero* named Ramiro

⁴⁰ On the other hand, Juan Núñez de Lara was able to settle as, indeed, was Juan Manuel. He was forced into exile in 1336, but finally reconciled in 1340 after a period of rapprochement. To achieve that, Juan Manuel was forced to give up some possessions as surety for good behavior in 1337, but he came back from exile and eventually received a firmer pardon. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 175, pp. 286-87; ch. 188, p. 293-94.

⁴¹ Though the chronicler added that the new royal advisors, behind the counsel they offered the king, also feared Núñez Osorio's return to court. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 123, p. 218.

⁴² There is a further piece of backstory to this situation. Alfonso assumed personal rule at the age of fourteen after a long regency. A powerful member of the Haro family, Juan *el Tuerto*, had resisted this step. In 1326, Álvar Núñez Osorio had hatched a plot to lure him into a trap by false promises of a pardon and then execute him. Although Alfonso had been in on the plot at the time, Osorio's role would come back to bite him when, after his fall from power, his enemies blamed him alone for it and used it to turn Alfonso further against him. That, however, is background information supplied by the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. It did not feature in the "formal" case it depicts Alfonso making against him.

⁴³ The *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, by Alonso de Cartagena, discusses laws regarding the possession of castles at length, and the general right of monarchs to award, revoke, and demand entry to them. Alfonso demanding them forced him to choose whether to resist or submit. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 187. María Concepción Castrillo Llamas, "La tenencia de fortalezas en la Corona de Castilla durante la Baja Edad Media (relaciones de poder entre monarquía, nobleza y ciudades) Siglos XIII-XV," (Tesis Doctoral, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1997), 958-65, 966-973, 1161-62; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 211, 214-16.

Flores de Guzmán to find and kill the count, which he did at the town of Belver.⁴⁴ With Álvaro Núñez out of the way, Alfonso recovered the castles, the chronicle suggests, with ease.⁴⁵

Although Alfonso had achieved the immediate objective identified in the chronicle, securing the castles under his control, in its telling, the king was not finished with Don Álvaro Núñez. After hearing the news of his demise, Alfonso ordered his body brought before him at Tordehumos, near Valladolid. Seated on an *estrado*, he “confronted” the count.⁴⁶ From this judicial perch, the king recounted how he had raised Osorio to great estate and power, and had greatly trusted him. In return, Alfonso accused, he had committed “many acts of ingratitude” and “great wickedness” against him, to the point that he demanded back what he had given. Yet, the count had refused to submit to that demand. Alfonso determined that “for this he had fallen into a state of treason, and he had judged him a traitor.” As befitted a traitor, he ordered his body burned and his goods seized, an action which the chronicle insists was “according to what the laws demand.”⁴⁷ Afterwards, this judgement having been given, the king ordered his “treasure” brought to Valladolid and put the seizure of his possessions in motion.⁴⁸ The chronicle also adds

⁴⁴ Belver de los Montes, near Zamora.

⁴⁵ *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, chs. 124-126, pp. 219-220.

⁴⁶ *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 126, pp. 219-220. An *estrado* referred, among other things, to a judge’s bench. Cañas Gálvez, “La cámara de Juan II,” 110.

⁴⁷ “et el Rey asentóse en su estrado, et contó como feciera grand fianza en aquel conde Alvar Nuñez...et él que le feciera muchos desconocimientos et grand maldad, señaladamente que le enviára pedir sus castillos que tenia dél por omenage, et que ge los non quisiera dar...et por esto que cayera en caso de traycion, et que lo juzgaba por traydor. Et mandólo quemar, et que todos sus bienes fuesen del su realengo, segun que es ordenado por los derechos.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 126, pp. 219-220.

For treatment of that penalty in law, see capítulo 78 of the *Ordenamiento in Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:556-59, and also John G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 1-14; Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 161. Alonso de Cartagena also noted that the punishment for a traitor was death and loss of goods. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 220.

Of course, chronicle accounts of speech, especially direct speech, need to be worked with carefully. But, I focus here on how it works within the narrative more than on how closely, if at all, the words reported reflect a real speech or conversation. Pierre Courroux, “What Types of Sources Did Medieval Chroniclers Use to Narrate Battles? (England and France, Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries),” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 18 (2020): 125-6.

⁴⁸ “Et el juicio dado.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 126, pp. 219-220.

that Flores de Guzmán later received the town and castle of Belver, which had belonged to Álvaro Núñez.

The next account, the arrest and execution of Juan Alfonso de Haro in 1334, unfolds rather differently, and the consequences Haro faced, though still connected to a royal sentence, were not as closely connected to a specific crime. Juan Alfonso de Haro, Lord of Los Cameros, was part of a prominent aristocratic family. According to the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, King Alfonso had given him a subsidy in order to secure his support in an ongoing war against the Emirate of Granada, Castile's neighbor to the south.⁴⁹ But he failed to contribute, and even took advantage of the king's distraction to rob his lands and dependents. At the same time, he exchanged letters with other royal enemies, including Juan Manuel. In those communications, he allegedly urged them to take similar action.⁵⁰ The messages were intercepted however, and when Alfonso learned that the lord of Los Cameros "had committed such a great crime" against him, the chronicle reports he "was greatly aggrieved" and determined to act.⁵¹

According to the chronicle's ongoing narrative, the king caught Juan Alfonso by surprise in the small town of Agoncillo, near Logroño, and ordered his detention. Alfonso then had the captive brought before him, and informed him of his "querella," or complaint, against him, and enumerated his supposed transgressions.⁵² Specifically, he listed attacks on royal lands, abuse of the royal subsidy, and conspiracy with other malcontents. He also showed the disgraced noble the letters supposedly proving his guilt. After this confrontation, the chronicle laconically notes

⁴⁹ *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 135, p. 263. The main branch of the family held the important lordship of Vizcaya.

⁵⁰ This confrontation occurred in the context of the king's battle with a powerful faction of aristocrats, including his relative Don Juan Manuel, which spanned much of the 1320's and 30's.

⁵¹ "Et el rey, desde que vió estas cartas, ovo ende muy gran pesar: ca tovo, que pues don Joan Alfonso le avia fecho tan grand yerro." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 135, p. 263.

⁵² Querella is a legal term. Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 55.

that the king “then ordered that he be killed.”⁵³ Haro had no direct heirs, but in the aftermath the lordship of Los Cameros remained in the family.⁵⁴ As for the rest of his holdings, the king “took them for himself, because he found that according to law he could take them,” due to the harm that Juan Alfonso did to him by robbing his lands and accepting his money under false pretenses.⁵⁵

The King as Judge: Narratives of Justice in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*

Each of these accounts presents the downfall of a powerful figure as a consequence of royal justice, carried out in response to actions defined as crimes, and the imposition of penalties prescribed by law.⁵⁶ With respect to Álvaro Núñez Osorio, that sense is quite explicit, as the king, on an *estrado*, explained his reasons for condemning the count and characterized them in criminal terms.⁵⁷ Then, he personally determined guilt and issued a treason sentence against the already dead Osorio, and specified the penalty his defeated rival must suffer in accordance, the chronicler insists, with the laws.⁵⁸ But when describing Juan Alfonso de Haro’s downfall, the

⁵³ “et mandó llamar á don Joan Alfonso á él, et dixole la querella que dél avia...et otrosí mostróle las cartas que él enviaba...et mandóle luego matar.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 135, p. 263.

⁵⁴ Alejandro Morín, “Los castigos hereditarios en el corpus Alfonsino y la ficción de unidad personal padres/hijos,” *Bulletin du centre d’études médiévales d’Auxerre* 2 (2009): 2. The Lordship of Los Cameros was located in the region of La Rioja, and in 1337, Juan Alfonso’s widow, Teresa, sold her rights in Daroca de Rioja, pointing to the family’s continuing presence in the region for at least some time after his demise. ARCV Pergaminos, car. 205, n. 9.

⁵⁵ “et las otras villas, et logares, et castiellos tomólos todos para sí, porque falló por derecho que los podia tomar, lo uno por los robos et tomas que avia fecho en la tierra, lo otro porque quando el Rey fué tomar á Olvera...aqueel Don Juan Alfonso tomó los libramientos et los dineros del Rey para le ir servir, et non fué allá.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 135, p. 263.

⁵⁶ In this study I, like the chronicler, focus on the royal “side” of the story. That is not to say however that targets were portrayed as motiveless obstacles awaiting royal punishment. John O. Ward, “‘Chronicle’ and ‘History’: The Medieval Origins of Postmodern Historiographical Practice?,” *Parergon* 14, no. 2 (January 1997): 116-17.

⁵⁷ For instance, the *Ordenamiento* of Alcalá stipulated the *penas*, or penalties, that those who “fell” into *yerros* while in office deserved, offering the same sense of falling into a state that deserved punishment. See also *p.7, t.1, l.8-13*. The usage extends beyond laws and chronicles. In the *Libro del caballero Zifar*, for example, when debating the fate of a rebellious count, an offended king observed that nobody should serve one whom they know had “fallen into treason.” *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 209.

⁵⁸ In a judicial context, sentence (*sentencia*) meant the finding of a tribunal. *p.3, t.22, l.1*. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 284. The term used in the chronicle, *fallar*, meaning to rule or find in the judicial sense, reflects usage in contemporary documents. See, for example, a finding against a corrupt *merino*, a territorial official, in

Crónica offers a more ambiguous sense of justice. Judicial trappings were less evident, and the king's decision was not described as a sentence.⁵⁹ Yet Alfonso still confronted Haro with his reasons, which were defined in terms used to refer to criminal behavior, such as *males*, *daños* and *desconocimientos*.⁶⁰ And, in the aftermath of his death, the seizure and disposition of his property was described as occurring within legal limits.⁶¹ Taken together, these terms suggest a “register of justice” is at work in these narratives.⁶²

Beyond terminology however, given that both accounts come from a royal chronicle, the roles King Alfonso played are of particular importance.⁶³ In each, a confrontation between him and the accused took center stage, and his principal role in each was to make a judgement and prescribe punishment, in response to charges that he enumerated. Though he may have consulted others beforehand, in making that judgement he acted alone.⁶⁴

1330. José Antonio Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental del Archivo Municipal de León*, Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 70 (León: Centro de Estudios y Investigación San Isidoro, 1998), doc. 89, 128.

As for “accordance with the law,” the term used was *derecho*, which according to García-Gallo was more associated with customary law than learned law. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 57. However, codes like the *Partidas* did not insist on distinctions. *p.7, t.2, l.1*.

⁵⁹ The description Juan Alfonso's actions fits with *Partidas* provisions about crimes that kings could deal with summarily. *p.7, t.1, l.8*. Also, the complaint against him was called a *querrela*, a term used for legal complaints that led to a sentence by a judge. See, for example, Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 139, 191.

⁶⁰ Given their repeated use in the context of describing the deeds of the deposed before their sentence, their meaning becomes clear. There are in fact many terms employed to describe crimes in sources, which may have both specific legal and more general meanings. *Mal*, *daño* and *desconocimiento*, as well as *yerro* were common terms, and remained so into the fifteenth century. This terminology, and other words like “err,” is spread throughout the *Partidas* and codes influenced by it. *p.2, t.13; p.7, t.15; p.7, t.31, l.3*.

⁶¹ The rules of the Order of the Band, a chivalric order founded by Alfonso XI, stipulated that if a knight did something that deserved death, the king must “rule on what he should do according to *derecho*.” Like with the chronicle's description of Juan Alfonso de Haro's fate, that envisioned placing the king's ruling within limits permitted by law. José Luis Villacañas Berlanga, ed., *Libro de la Orden de la Banda* (Murcia: Biblioteca Saavedra Fajardo, 2005), 10.

⁶² Especially criminal justice. The *Partidas*, for instance, cast criminal cases as ones that involved punishments of death or injury. *p.3, t.22, l.25*.

⁶³ Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 26-29.

⁶⁴ However, the importance of these figures, and the circumstances of their falls, may account for the degree of attention given to process and justification. For comparison, the chronicle also describes a rougher example of royal justice against a less prominent figure in 1332. In the midst of the conflict in which Juan Manuel and Juan Núñez de Lara had conspired, King Alfonso arrived in the city of Córdoba, seeking help. According to the *Crónica*, a man named Día Sánchez de Jaén was also there, who had repeatedly conspired with Granada and also had, back in Alfonso's minority, been responsible for murders in the city of Jaén. As a result, the king ordered that he be killed and his body was then thrown into the Guadalquivir River. Unlike the other examples, this account is

For instance, in the narrative of Álvaro Núñez Osorio's downfall, although the chronicle insists that the king consulted his advisors, ordered his rival's death, and seized his castles before the "trial," that posthumous judgement received the most detailed treatment.⁶⁵ Indeed, despite their major consequences, it provides no description of the setting or manner in which those earlier commands were made.⁶⁶ Certainly, in legal terms, kings were endowed with, and often claimed, broad discretion to recover or reassign fortresses in their realms.⁶⁷ However, the *Crónica* presents the trial as having been about much more than a dispute over castles, but rather as a broader condemnation. His refusal to surrender his castles was one justification for his treason sentence, but the king also condemned him for disloyal ingratitude.⁶⁸ To legitimize his actions, the king turned to justice, of the "royal" variety sketched out above, to establish a basis for Álvaro Núñez's death, which had already happened at royal orders, and also his ongoing dispossession.⁶⁹

not cast as a trial. The chronicle explains why the king acted, but does not put the explanation in his own mouth in a confrontation with Sánchez. Nonetheless, his determination is the key moment, although, in this case, other consequences beyond his execution were not noted. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 128, pp. 258-259.

⁶⁵ In the *Partidas*, posthumous trial and punishment were permitted for treason. *p.7, t.2, l.3*. See also Osvaldo Cavallar and Julius Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence in Medieval Italy: Texts and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 319.

⁶⁶ Which is very different from López de Ayala's treatment of similar orders in his narratives of late-century removals, analyzed in the next chapter.

⁶⁷ The *Doctrinal de los caballeros* discusses the possession of castles at length, including the general right of monarchs to award, and revoke, that possession. Reasons for revocation included garrisoning them too heavily or using them as a base to commit crimes. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 184-185; *p.2, t.13 l.22*. See also capítulo 71 of the *Ordenamiento* of Alcalá in *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:546-48. In the *Libro de caballero Zifar*, one passage describes a king who tried to get an accused traitor to order his men to surrender his castles to the monarch, well before it described his sentence and condemnation. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 208.

⁶⁸ The issues of gratitude and loyalty were closely linked. Gratitude should secure loyalty, and exacerbated the shame of disloyalty. In the *Libro de los estados*, Juan Manuel, echoing the *Partidas*, wrote that royal advisors should be well rewarded by the king, and then they would owe him love and loyalty. *Libro de los estados*, 93. On the other hand, in the *Libro del caballero Zifar*, a king, when rejecting a pardon request from a rebellious count, emphasized that the count had received much from the king before describing how he broke his oath, which is similar to how the *Crónica* describes Alfonso's confrontation with Núñez Osorio. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 212.

⁶⁹ In royal chronicles, proceedings against traitors were often described in ceremonial terms. If performances and rituals are considered as transformative, those proceedings also "made" someone a traitor. Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 21.

As for Juan Alfonso de Haro, taken by surprise, the chronicle reports no “pre-sentence” actions. However, it describes his supposed misdeeds in criminal terms as well, and insists the disposition of his property, placed after the confrontation between him and Alfonso, was decided “by law.” Still, although this sympathetic chronicle casts that confrontation as a kind of hearing, even in its telling it was conducted in relative secrecy.⁷⁰ Later chroniclers, including López de Ayala, singled out this execution for criticism due, in large part, to a lack of formal or open judicial procedure.⁷¹ As this disagreement suggests, employing judicial forms to legitimize royal actions was a deliberate choice, for rulers and for their chroniclers. In doing so, they called upon an acknowledged royal responsibility, to judge and to punish the guilty, to justify and characterize royal moves against political rivals. But at the same time, the chronicle also presents the target’s disempowerment in terms that correspond with such punishments, losing their lives and possessions as prescribed by law. That close connection limited the scope of legitimate royal action in disempowering rivals.

Losing Power as a Consequence of Royal Justice

Turning to the consequences of royal justice in these deposition narratives, after reporting the target’s condemnation and death, each ends by discussing the disposition of their

⁷⁰ The account of Juan Alfonso de Haro’s fall has parallels with accounts of royal justice in the *Libro del caballero Zifar*. In one episode, in which a king condemned a rebellious count for treason, the king personally confronted him, explained the royal case, and then ordered his execution after taking counsel with his court. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 213-213. Later, a different ruler confronted a defeated rebel in a similar fashion. Brought imprisoned before the king, with no mention of consultations, he ordered the rebel’s beheading. The story explains that such was the *pena*, or penalty, he merited. In this example, the condemnation was not for treason explicitly, and indeed was a response to actions described in a way similar to Juan Alfonso’s ongoing troublemaking in the chronicle. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 422-23. But neither fictional example discusses loss of possessions.

⁷¹ Cristina Moya García, ed., *Edición y Estudio de la Valeriana: Crónica Abreviada de España de Mosén Diego de Valera* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2009), 301. On the other hand, the *Gran Crónica*, in defending it, stresses the procedural elements and consultation surrounding his fall. *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 157, 2:88-89.

property in the wake of the king's decision.⁷² Regarding the first account, the chronicle reports the king's recovery of some of Álvaro Núñez Osorio's castles after his death but before the "trial." In principle, those who held fortresses from the king were obliged to surrender them when required, so in that sense it described a king acting well within his rights.⁷³ However, the sentence also opened up his possessions beyond just the castles to seizure and, significantly, redistribution to new holders. Indeed, although Álvaro Núñez had been killed before the "trial" even took place, his dispossession was still in progress, and the chronicle describes the bestowal of Belver upon his killer as a reward only after the sentence condemning him for treason.⁷⁴

As for the chronicle's account of Juan Alfonso de Haro's fall, it stresses that King Alfonso seized his possessions in accordance with the law, as a result of the misdeeds he described to him before ordering his execution. In contrast to the fate of Osorio's possessions, whether this seizure was to be understood as a direct result of Juan Alfonso's sentence, or a separate question that arose after his death, is somewhat unclear.⁷⁵ In particular, the *Crónica's* characterization of King Alfonso's basis for his determination is not simply that Juan Alfonso de Haro was guilty of a crime, but that his criminal activities had caused the king harm for which he was entitled to compensation.⁷⁶ Ultimately however, the rulings about his possessions fell firmly after his implied condemnation and undoubted death.

⁷² In contrast to its treatment of the Sandovals. With them, no specific penalty was mentioned, though the chronicle reports that in 1334 both were specifically excluded from a royal pardon and fled the realm. They however were not leading figures, so their disempowerment, as opposed to punishment, may not have been as significant.

⁷³ Or at least, in a manner for which it would be easy to make a case to that effect.

⁷⁴ His killer received the town and castle of Belver. The town, at least, was not part of the initial problem. This decision came after the king's *juicio*, or judgement, which, in the *Partidas*, also sets the *pena*. p.7, t.31, l.9. The *Crónica* also placed the burning of his remains after his formal condemnation as a traitor. From another perspective, the *Libro del caballero Zifar* depicts two royal "trials." In the first, a count condemned as a traitor was executed and then burned. In the second, without such a specific sentence, the rebel was only beheaded. *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 212-213, 423. The *Partidas* stipulated burning as a possible punishment for treason. p.7, t.31, l.6.

⁷⁵ P.R. Cavill, "Heresy, Law and the State: Forfeiture in Late Medieval and Early Modern England," *The English Historical Review* 129, no. 537 (April 2014): 273-74, 278.

⁷⁶ The *Doctrinal de los Caballeros* deals with the punishment of those who committed robberies and other harmful acts within the realm. It specifies that their moveable goods, and if that did not suffice their real property,

In each account, responding to criminal actions on the part of the target, the king made a finding according to *derecho*.⁷⁷ Though the laws or legal principles invoked were different, as a result, at least some of both men's property was seized.⁷⁸ These post-sentence losses proceeded directly from the judicial action of the king, centered on the moment of his sentencing or decision making, which determined both the personal fates of the targets, namely their deaths, and the seizure of their resources of power.⁷⁹ Moreover, both accounts are concise and presented in the same or adjacent chapters.⁸⁰ Both kinds of proximity create a close connection between the king's description of the target's guilt for actions described in criminal terms, his sentence or decision, personal punishment, and the target's loss of their possessions.

As such, disempowerment and personal punishment, together, followed the establishment of responsibility for crimes by what the chronicle presents as at least plausibly judicial means.⁸¹ Determined royal deponents could, in practice, take many measures to undermine the position of

could be seized and sold to pay recompense. These actions fall under the umbrella of the crime of *asonada*, described in similar terms to the actions attributed to Juan Alfonso de Haro, a crime for which the king should receive a share of the fines imposed. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 195-199. See also capítulo 74 of the *Ordenamiento* in *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:552-53. The penalty for treason imposed on Núñez Osorio's possessions, then, contrasts with the more deliberative one imposed on Juan Alfonso de Haro for his less damning crime. Beyond the chronicle, records from a less serious 1352 case against the *adelantado* of León indicate he was *emplazado*, meaning judicially summoned, to hear a sentence issued against him, in which seizure of his goods was authorized to repay the city of León for damages. Though not a criminal matter, it helps to put the treatment of Juan Alfonso's property, at least, in context. Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 177, 248-250.

⁷⁷ Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 75-76.

⁷⁸ That difference shows that the *Crónica* does not just present a stereotyped image of a *rey justiciero* at work. In its telling, Juan Alfonso de Haro was not judged a traitor while Álvaro Núñez Osorio was, and the way in which it describes their condemnations is consistent with that. The latter suffered loss of goods according to the laws of treason, while the former's indistinct conviction led to a more ambiguous disposition of his property.

⁷⁹ A *sentencia definitiva* terminated controversy, releasing the defendant or holding him liable. A *sentencia interlocutoria* ruled on something connected to the case before a judgement on the principal issue. p.3, t.22, l.2.

⁸⁰ Which, as we will see, was not the case from the late fourteenth century onward.

⁸¹ The *Partidas* describe penalties arising from a final sentence as *daños* that someone received according to their own fault, for which they should blame themselves. p.7, t.24, l.22. An exemplum from *El conde Lucanor* uses such terms to describe the count's fears about his eternal fate. Worried about his *yerros*, Count Lucanor feared he would be *fallado* by God, *por derecho*, worthy of going to hell. Juan Manuel, *El conde Lucanor*, 94-95.

their opponents.⁸² But the royal interventions of most concern to the chronicler, in terms of his depiction of associated justifications and procedures, were those in which Alfonso issued a definitive judgement. The consequences of that sentencing are thus key for understanding how he interpreted the loss of power in these situations. Justice, turning on a single moment of royal decision, mediated both dispossession and personal punishment for crimes. Attached as they were to the personal fate of the accused, which in these cases was death, these losses were, necessarily, enduring. But even leaving that aside, by describing losses of the resources of power in terms of punishment mandated by a definitive royal sentence, the *Crónica* presents them in very stark terms.⁸³ Legitimate possession of resources gave way at once to outright loss, followed by subsequent redistribution to others, as a result of royal justice.

Pedro López de Ayala and Pedro I

The mid-century *Crónica de Alfonso XI* offers a particular vision of royal justice mediating the separation of person and power. Moreover, the manner in which it represents that justice, and its consequences, also plays a large role in determining how power and its loss are conceived within it. But, although grounded in widespread contemporary conceptions of royal justice, its vision is still only one viewpoint, approached through particular situations. However, parallels between its depictions, and the later work of Pedro López de Ayala, show that this

⁸² Seizures and detentions appeared at other times in the narratives. Some of these involved the use of judicial authority to detain people and sequester property pending trial. But they were not associated with justifications or process of their own in which the king was a major participant

⁸³ Records of a legal clash between the city of León and the local church authorities over jurisdiction are illustrative. Though not criminal like the proceedings covered above, in 1339 litigants asked “merced” of Alfonso, a term implying the king should employ his authority on their behalf, that he order the other party to accept their interpretation. That apparently failed, since in 1342 they petitioned again, this time asking the king to hand down a more forceful *sentencia*. Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 125, 173; doc. 129, 178.

broad vision of early to mid-fourteenth century justice and loss of power was not idiosyncratic to one chronicler.

Pedro López de Ayala chronicled nearly half a century of Castilian history.⁸⁴ Although he began his career in the service of King Pedro I, he later joined the king's half-brother Enrique de Trastámara, who overthrew Pedro and became king himself in 1369.⁸⁵ In addition to chronicling Pedro and Enrique's struggle, he also authored accounts of the reigns of Enrique's son and, partially, his grandson.⁸⁶ Compiled at the end of the fourteenth century, his chronicles justified the Trastámara rebellion and the founding of a new dynasty.⁸⁷ In part, they achieved that goal by casting Pedro as a cruel tyrant who disregarded the rights of his subjects.⁸⁸ But within the *Crónica de Pedro I*, Pedro's turn to tyranny does not begin until 1355, when political confrontations with Enrique escalated.⁸⁹ In fact, in his account of the first few years of Pedro's

⁸⁴ And was rewarded for it, among other services, as a confirmation of the *mercedes*, grants made by royal authority, bestowed upon him by Enrique II attests. RAH Manuscritos, 9/285, f. 245-246.

⁸⁵ Like Sánchez de Valladolid, he was a courtier. Though well-educated, he was not a *letrado* in social terms. First in Pedro's service, he later supported the Trastámara. Barbosa Schiavinato, "Cronística medieval em Portugal," 311; Clara Estow, *La legitimización de lo ilegítimo: López de Ayala y la historiografía medieval* (Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 2006), 9, 17-22; Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política," 124-25; Rodríguez, *Narratives of Power*, 161-89; Julio Valdeón, *Pedro I El Cruel y Enrique de Trastámara* (Madrid: Santillana, 2002).

His chronicles date from the final decades of the fourteenth century. Germán Orduna and José Luis Moure, "Estudio Preliminar," in López de Ayala, *Crónica del Rey Don Pedro y del Rey Don Enrique*, v-x, xxi-xxv, xlix-lxi; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 152-53; Diman, *An Edition an Study*, xxvi-xxvii.

⁸⁶ Devia, "Pedro I y Enrique II," 66; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 149-152. Though traditionally divided, Orduna views the chronicles of Pedro and Enrique II as one work. Orduna and Moure, "Estudio Preliminar," lv-lxi.

⁸⁷ Bizzarri, "Estudio," 341-349; Carlos Estepa Díez, "Rebelión y rey legítimo en las luchas entre Pedro I y Enrique II," in *Lucha política: Condena y legitimación en la España medieval*, ed. Isabel Alfonso Antón, Julio Escalona, and Georges Martin (Lyon: ENS Editions, 2004), 43-61; Estow, *La legitimización de lo ilegítimo*, 48-51; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 25, 61.

⁸⁸ César González Mínguez, *Poder real y poder nobiliar en la Corona de Castilla, 1252-1369* (Bilbao: Universidad Del País Vasco, 2012), 171-191; Jean-Pierre Jardin, "La difícil llegada al poder de los Trastámara y su representación en las sumas de crónicas Castellanas del siglo XV: Del silencio a la subversión," in Nieto Soria and López-Cordón Cortezo, *Gobernar en tiempos de crisis*, 269-286; Bretton Rodríguez, "Pero López de Ayala and the politics of rewriting the past," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 7, no. 2 (2015): 266-282; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 167-178.

⁸⁹ Enrique de Trastámara was involved in a 1354 coup to force Pedro's "favorites" out of court. Thereafter, war consumed Pedro's reign, during which Ayala reports many executions, imprisonments and exiles without process. *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 chs. 27-36, pp. 451-459. See also Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 76; Estow, *La legitimización de lo ilegítimo*, 28; Paulino García Toraño, *El Rey Don Pedro El Cruel y su mundo* (Madrid: Marcial

reign, Ayala depicted royal justice mediating the loss of power in confrontations with noble rivals in a very similar way to the earlier *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. And relatedly, those depictions advanced a similar conception of power and its loss.

Alfonso Fernández Coronel

Ayala's account of the 1351-1352 downfall of Alfonso Fernández Coronel offers a prime example of that adherence, in these pre-tyranny circumstances at least, to shared conventions. According to the *Crónica de Pedro I*, Alfonso Fernández had gained prominence near the end of Alfonso XI's reign. He received even further honors from the new king, who ascended to the throne in 1350, but Ayala reported that he soon fell afoul of Pedro's close advisor, Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque. In 1351, aware of Juan Alfonso's opposition and fearing for his safety, Coronel declined to attend a *Cortes* called by the king and began preparing for conflict.⁹⁰ Pedro responded quickly to this potential challenge. After "taking counsel" about the situation, early the next year he marched on Coronel's base at Aguilar.⁹¹

In the *Crónica*'s telling, once there, Pedro issued a formal command, a *requirimiento*, for Alfonso Fernández to allow him inside the walls. But, citing his fear of Alburquerque, he did

Pons, 1996); Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 73, 75-76. Others place the turn around 1360. Devia, "Pedro I y Enrique II," 76.

⁹⁰ *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1351 ch. 21, p. 423. A call to court was a potential trap. Obeying could lead to arrest, yet disobedience could be used as excuse to move against a rival. Janin, "Mentiras y engaños," 96; José Manuel Nieto Soria, "De la ira regia al poderío real absoluto: Monarquía y miedo político en la corona castellano-leonesa," in *Poder política, terror social*, ed. Flocel Sabaté (Lleida: Pagès, 2013), 245-264.

This was recognized in contemporary literature. For instance, in the mid-fourteenth century *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, a call to court when at odds with the ruler or his advisors was something to be feared. The *Mocedades* is an epic poem focused on the youth of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, *El Cid. Las Mocedades de Rodrigo*, ed. Juan Victorio (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1982), 445. See also Alvar and Lucia Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 864-6. This possibility is also hinted at in the *Partidas*. A law guaranteeing the safety of those coming to a court includes those who claimed enemies were present there. *p.2, t.16, l.4.*

That is one way in which royal authority worked alongside specific judicial procedures. It can be considered a manifestation of "obliging authority." Madden, "Symbols and Soldiers," 269.

⁹¹ Aguilar de la Frontera, near Córdoba.

not.⁹² Then, the king's men tried to force entry into Aguilar, but failed. As they did so however, they had carried a royal banner, which was torn by projectiles in the fighting.⁹³ At this point, the narrative leaves that confrontation, and turns to ongoing attempts by Coronel's allies to broker a settlement, the terms of which would require him to turn his castles over to the king and go into exile.⁹⁴ They urged him to accept, warning that though a deal might be available at that moment, if he refused the king intended to "pass sentence against him and against all his goods."⁹⁵ However, the defiant and frightened noble still refused to back down.

After describing the failure of negotiations, the chronicle reports that the men sent to force entry had returned from their mission. Once Pedro saw the damage to his standard, there is a sudden shift in the dynamics of the confrontation. He immediately, and publicly, passed sentence against Alfonso Fernández and ordered his possessions confiscated. After his declaration, he later awarded them to new holders.⁹⁶ But personal punishment had to wait, since Pedro was called away, though the chronicle does report the king's subsequent seizure of some

⁹² "É ellos fueron, é requirieron á don Alfonso Ferrandez que acogiese al Rey: é él dixo é respondió... que veia allí á Don Juan Alfonso...del qual él se temia mucho, é que por esto no le osaba acoger." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1352 chs. 1-2, p. 425.

⁹³ "Los caballeros que levaban el pendon del Rey, despues que sopieron la respuesta que diera Don Alfonso Ferrandez...llegaron á la puerta de la villa de Aguilar con omes de armas que allí estaban, é pelearon en las barreras, llegando el pendon del Rey á la puerta de la dicha villa." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1352 chs. 1-2, p. 425.

⁹⁴ "algunos amigos de Don Alfonso Ferrandez dixeronle que non avia buen seso en se alzar contra el Rey su Señor...que fuese cierto que si luego non acogiese al Rey, ó non catase alguna buena pleytesía con él, que el Rey entendia pasar de sentencia contra él é contra sus bienes." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1352 chs. 1-2, p. 425.

Formal sentences of exile do not often appear in chronicles or outside them. Alfonso de Cartagena viewed it as outdated, and cited this era as the last time in which many were exiled. Plenty of nobles ended up *desterrado*, but in a de-facto sense. For instance, two of the figures whose deposition narratives are analyzed in the next chapter fled to avoid justice. In the *Partidas*, only the king or a senior official could formally sentence to exile. *p.7, t.31, l.10*. See also James Bothwell, "Internal Exiles: Exclusion from the Fourteenth-Century English Court and Kingdom," in *Absentee Authority across Medieval Europe*, ed. Frédérique Lachaud and Michael Penman (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 142; Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 260; Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 189; Fernanda Nussbaum, "La imagen jurídica del rey," 646.

⁹⁵ According to Ayala, they also held out the prospect of being able to reconcile with Pedro at a later time if he took this course. As noted, Juan Manuel was able to reach a similar accommodation with Alfonso XI.

⁹⁶ "É el Rey luego ese día, desque...vió su pendon roto de las piedras, pasó contra Don Alfonso Ferrandez, é confiscó todos sus bienes, é partiólos segund adelante dirémos." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1352 chs. 1-2, p. 425.

of Coronel's possessions.⁹⁷ However, Ayala returned to this affair, saying that Pedro came back to Aguilar, securing its surrender in February of 1353. After his arrival, Alfonso Fernández was brought before the king, but Pedro did not deign to speak to him, and the king's *alguaciles* put him to death.⁹⁸

Continuity: Power and its Loss in Pedro López de Ayala's Narrative of Justice

In this concise narrative, in response to Alfonso Fernández Coronel's disobedience and claimed disrespect, Pedro issued a sentence followed by personal punishment and the formal seizure of goods. In that respect, Ayala's treatment of this incident has much in common with the *Crónica de Alfonso XI's* visions of similar situations. That said, Ayala devoted more attention to the overall course of the disputes between Coronel and the king than his predecessor had in similar situations. In fact, even as his account approaches the moment of his downfall, by describing ongoing negotiations it reflects the fact that judicial procedures were not the only, or even the most common, way to address such conflicts. But even so, their presence still loomed large.⁹⁹ Ayala suggested through the warnings of Coronel's friends that submission to a formal sentence, against both him personally and his goods, should be considered a possibility even before the banner incident.

⁹⁷ *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1352 ch. 3, pp. 425-426.

⁹⁸ "É estando asi llegó el Rey, é vió á Don Alfonso Ferrandez, pero no le fabló: é Don Alfonso Ferrandez non veia al Rey. É estonce alli fué entregado á los Alguaciles del Rey: é luego allí mataron á Don Alfonso Ferrandez Coronel." An *alguacil* was an officer responsible for executing judicial decisions, best translated into English as "bailiff." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1353 ch. 1, p. 428.

⁹⁹ There was much tension, and overlap, between rule by law and institutions and rule by negotiation with the powerful. Settlements were common even in cases of open conflict, and whether or not judicial procedures had been initiated. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 19, 114, 171; Meccarelli, "La dimension doctrinale," 79-80; Nieto Soria, "La parole: un instrument de la lutte politique," 720; Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 13; Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 13. In his introduction to *The Consumption of Justice*, Daniel Lord Smail reviews an extensive historiography on the initiation of legal action being used to encourage or coerce a settlement. The kind of legal actions he is concerned with are different, in terms of the status of the parties involved in particular, from those in the accounts I focus on here, but they can serve that function. Bringing legal proceedings to "completion" was not necessary for them to work. Daniel Lord Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264-1423* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 1-28.

But Ayala did not depict Pedro himself saying or doing anything to make this intention apparent.¹⁰⁰ Instead, his direct role, as far as the process of royal justice was concerned, began after the failure of the talks. In an abrupt transition, the pivotal moment that turned the situation from one of dispute and negotiation to confiscation and eventual execution was the king passing sentence, a decision he made personally and without consultation. In contrast to the accounts from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, there was no face-to-face confrontation at that moment, and the king offered no specific list of “charges” characterized by terms suggesting crimes.¹⁰¹ In this respect Ayala’s account of this incident shows less concern than his predecessor had, in similar situations, for establishing Coronel’s responsibility for specific, criminally defined actions.

But even if not specifically linked to Pedro’s sentence, the narrative does include several actions which can be construed as justifying such a response.¹⁰² For one thing, the confrontation itself began after Alfonso Fernández’s defiance of Pedro’s *requirimiento*.¹⁰³ Ignoring a royal summons could be a punishable offence, as could refusing to let the king into Aguilar itself.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ In the fifteenth-century accounts, calls to justice, and royal participation in them, can be attended by many procedural or justificatory elements. The acts of *emplazamiento* and *requirimiento* were the most significant. *Emplazamientos* are summonses for someone to appear at a set place and time in response to charges. p.7, t.1, l.14. For an example of Pedro invoking such powers explicitly see Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 153, 215. *Requirimientos* could reinforce that call if ignored.

¹⁰¹ Some of that may simply reflect the situation, in that Fernández Coronel was still behind Aguilar’s walls. However, the Sandoval brothers were behind Lerma’s walls when condemned by Alfonso XI, and the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* still depicted the king enumerating the reasons in a solemn setting before passing sentence. Ayala also depicted kings making similar displays in other contexts, even in the absence of the target.

¹⁰² When a person *emplazado* did not appear, they could be found guilty. p.7, t.1, l.17. Ayala did not say that Fernández Coronel had been *emplazado* outright. But he, like Núñez Osorio and the Sandovals, had defied some form of call. Not all summonses were *emplazamientos*, but absence from the trial did not preclude condemnation.

¹⁰³ *Requirimiento* is a term used for several kinds of command. Here, it was attached specifically to the king’s command to let him into Aguilar. They were products of diverse judicial actions, either a command to do, not do, or cease doing something. Gregoria Caveró Domínguez, *Colección documental de la Catedral de Astorga*, vol. 3, Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 79 (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación San Isidoro, 1999), 33.

¹⁰⁴ Even with previous crimes on the part of Alfonso Fernández described, defiance of such commands set in motion the direct action in this narrative. That can be interpreted as the result of a call to justice being ignored. But, these commands also could be cast as a ploy to get him into Pedro’s power. Indeed, fear of coming to an enemy dominated court was often put forward as an excuse for refusal by those summoned. Ayala directly accused some Castilian kings of abusing these calls. Preparing fortresses for war could be construed as criminal as well. p.7, t.2, l.1. Contemporary literature deals with this dilemma. In *El conde Lucanor*, one exemplum discusses the risks of

More directly, Ayala placed Pedro's "turn" from negotiation to sentence immediately after he saw his tattered banner, insults to which were condemned in legal codes as well.¹⁰⁵

Both the prelude to the confrontation at Aguilar and the time that elapsed between the sentence and Coronel's surrender mean that the account of this incident, in comparison with those from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, is divided into more distinct stages and simply extends over a longer stretch of the narrative's timeline. And as a result, the description of the sentence and subsequent confiscation order is presented separately from his later, personal fate. But as far as legitimizing the separation of person and power is concerned, the king passing sentence is the center of the narrative. Coronel's rejection of the king's earlier calls did not in themselves bring about direct action to punish him or strip him of his possessions. The post-sentence confiscation order was the first time Ayala referred to possessions being formally stripped away. Also, although at the time of the surrender the chronicle reports that Pedro "saw" Alfonso Fernández, he did not speak to him and there was no additional ceremony or justification, only his execution.¹⁰⁶

Despite the narrative's dispersal and longer chronological scope, Alfonso Fernández Coronel's punishment in both material and personal terms ultimately turned on a single pivotal

provoking the king's wrath by making defensive preparations, as opposed to those run by not making any. Juan Manuel, *El conde Lucanor*, 164-74.

¹⁰⁵ It changed the nature of the situation, from a case of noble defiance to something worse. King, "War', 'Rebellion' or 'Perilous Times'?", 124. Though treason could be a vague charge, it was most commonly applied in relation to violent offenses directly against the king. In the *Siete Partidas*, for instance, Alfonso X sought to limit its use to situations where the king was the target. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 105, 110.

Additionally, in the *Partidas*, notorious crimes, or crimes the king saw personally, may be judged summarily. p.7, t.1, l.28. See also Jeffrey A Bowman, "Infamy and Proof in Medieval Spain," in *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, ed. Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 95-117.

¹⁰⁶ Despite the fact that Ayala had much to say about the circumstances of his surrender and death. For one thing, it was where he was said to utter the line noted in the introduction, "this is Castile, which makes men and destroys them." Also, the fact that he was described as executed by *alguaciles*, formal judicial officers, reinforces the sense of his death as an act of royal justice. p.2, t.9, l.20; Juan Manuel, *Libro de los estados*, 283. When Ayala later described Pedro killing unjustly, the killers were called *ballesteros*, suggesting a more military than judicial force. *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1358 ch. 3, pp. 481-483.

moment. As such, similar to the accounts in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, there was a tight connection between condemnation, punishment and loss of power. In addition, that loss of power was expressed in ways that evoked permanent dispossession. The term Ayala used to describe the seizure was “confiscate,” and he did not report the sharing out of seized possessions until after the sentence.¹⁰⁷ Though the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* did not employ the term confiscate, both chronicles place most seizures, and all redistribution of possessions seized, after a sentence.

The Chronicle Account in Context

Just like the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* accounts have to be interpreted in light of its pro-Alfonso perspective, so must Ayala’s chronicle be interpreted in terms of his anti-Pedro project. But his work is not fanciful either, and in this instance reflects, even if it does not simply repeat, royal case-making from the 1350’s. The village of Casarrubios del Monte was one of the possessions confiscated from Alfonso Fernández Coronel, and in February of 1352, the town’s senior officials received a *real provisión* informing them that they had been placed under the jurisdiction of a new lord.¹⁰⁸ The dating matches with the chronicle’s timeline, in which confiscations did not occur until after the king’s sentence, yet still before Alfonso Fernández’s eventual execution. That suggests Ayala’s insistence that the loss of his possessions depended on

¹⁰⁷ A *real provisión* relating to the consequences of his condemnation and execution, discussed further below, does not use it, saying that his possessions were to go to the king’s *Cámara*, the same phrasing used in the *Partidas*. p.7, t.2, l.2. Later accounts differentiate more strongly between types of seizure.

¹⁰⁸ Dated February 5, 1352 to the *alcaldes* and *alguacil* of Casarrubios [sic] del Monte, north of Toledo. Luis Vicente Díaz Martín, ed., *Colección documental de Pedro I de Castilla (1350-1369)*, vol. 3 (Salamanca: Junta de Castilla y León, 1999), doc. 681, 17-18. The new lord was Diego Gómez de Toledo. This letter was sent to a directly affected place, but sometimes general letters were sent if a significant figure was removed. For instance, in 1380 King Juan I sent a letter to the city government of Murcia explaining the arrest and removal Pedro Manrique, the *adelantado mayor* of León. His removal had little direct impact on Murcia, but the letter insists that Juan knew they would hear about it and wanted to make sure they got the “real” story. José Manuel Díez Martínez, *Documentos de Juan I*, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia 11 (Murcia: Academia de Alfonso X el Sabio, 2001), doc. 36, 66. The process of seizing possessions and redistributing them was an important part of political life. Devia, “Pedro I y Enrique II,” 70.

that single sentence, authorizing his personal punishment and dispossession together, echoed how that process was framed in the 1350's.

But more importantly, the letter did much more than simply announce the change. It also served to explain and justify it. The letter is written in the king's voice, and Pedro first recounted Alfonso Fernández Coronel's alleged misdeeds in similar terms as the chronicle, referring to them collectively as *desconocimientos*, *robos* and *yerros*.¹⁰⁹ However, he offered a more extensive list beyond his refusal to attend the *Cortes*, also claiming that he had engaged in an uprising, caused harm and damage to the king's lands, mistreated his subjects and encouraged others to disobey him as well.¹¹⁰ This list, however, appears to be secondary to the main issue, since the king then asserted that Alfonso Fernández refused him entry into Aguilar, and launched projectiles against both the royal standard and, in this version, Pedro himself. This act, described separately from the other charges, was the direct provocation in response to which Pedro "passed sentence against him and named him a traitor," and ordered that everything Coronel had "should be mine and for my *Cámara* and returned to the crown of my kingdoms."¹¹¹

Overall, the depictions of Pedro's judicial measures, and his justification for them, which the royal letter and Ayala's chronicle offer are quite similar. Still, there are differences in emphasis regarding, in particular, the nature of Alfonso Fernández's crimes. First, in the letter Pedro developed a more extensive case against him, and consequently his conduct appeared in a

¹⁰⁹ On the king's voice, see Theresa Earenfight, "Political Culture and Political Discourse in the Letters of Queen María of Castilla," *La corónica: A Journal of Medieval Hispanic Languages, Literatures, and Cultures* 32, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 136; Neal, *The Letters of Edward I*, 19.

Desconocimiento meant, in context, deliberate ingratitude or rejection. Specifically, his actions against the king's lands were called *males* and *daños*, while his political machinations were referred to as *levantimientos* and *alborozos*. *Males* and *daños* have featured in other examples, while *alborozo* is a term for an uprising.

¹¹⁰ In comparison with the *Crónica*, the letter insists explicitly that Coronel had refused a direct summons.

¹¹¹ "Por lo qual yo pase contra el por sentencia e lo di por traidor;" "que fuesen míos e para mi cámara e tornados a la corona de los míos regnos." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1352 chs. 1-2, p. 425.

less favorable light.¹¹² The chronicle does insist that his men fired on the royal standard, but before that also cast Coronel as a victim of Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque's malice. As such, his course of action can be interpreted as an attempt at self-preservation rather than a determination to defy the monarch.¹¹³ The letter, in contrast, does not allow for any mitigating factors, and goes even further to enumerate other blameworthy actions undertaken in the course of Alfonso Fernández's post-*Cortes* defiance. And regarding the confrontation at Aguilar, in contrast to the *Crónica* it asserts that the banner, and Pedro himself, were attacked at his direct order.

Taken together, these two divergences point to the greatest difference between the two sources. In the *Crónica*, Coronel was not explicitly named a traitor, whereas in the letter he was. Not all cases of noble defiance were, in practice or in law, defined as treason.¹¹⁴ Indeed, although Alfonso Fernández was in open revolt, the action most directly connected with the decision to name him a traitor was his deliberate attack on Pedro and the royal standard. But although played up in the letter more than the chronicle, according to both that action turned "ordinary" disobedience into something more serious.

As such, Ayala's chronicle narrative of this incident, in addition to its continuities with the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, is also well-grounded in mid-century royal case-making about Alfonso Fernández Coronel, despite its later date. To be sure, his account does differ from the message of the royal letter over the particular charge of treason, and by offering sympathetic explanations for Alfonso Fernández's conduct. That, however, is in keeping with Ayala's overall priorities. It does not necessarily make Pedro out to be arbitrary or cruel, as in later passages, but

¹¹² In addition to being in a different form, it came from Pedro's own officials.

¹¹³ In the *Libro de los estados*, for instance, Juan Manuel offered fear, along with greed, as explanations, though not excuses, for treason by vassals. *Libro de los estados*, 261.

¹¹⁴ According to Iglesia Ferreiros, treason was a fairly vaguely defined crime that could be applied broadly in theory but was applied narrowly in practice. Settlements were common in confrontations between the crown and the nobility, even in cases of open conflict. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 19, 114, 171; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 229-30; King, "'War', 'Rebellion' or 'Perilous Times'?" 121-3.

it does not allow him to be unambiguously in the right either. More importantly, both the chronicle and the letter depict Pedro, responding to a direct and open provocation, issuing a sentence that condemned Coronel to death and confiscated his possessions.¹¹⁵ And that, for both, was the key moment that separated Alfonso Fernández from his resources of power, despite the disputes which had been raging between him and his sovereign for some time before that step.

Conclusion

In the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and Pedro López de Ayala's work, processes of justice served as key mediators through which kings confronted, punished, and disempowered rivals among the nobility. In fact, both describe and characterize early to mid-fourteenth century removals in very similar ways, despite their different authorship and the chronological gap between their compositions.¹¹⁶ In particular, they depict kings personally reacting to what were cast as the crimes of those to be disempowered, and issuing sentences that mediated both personal punishment and material losses. Moreover, disempowerment took the form of formal loss of possessions, authorized, or legitimized, only after those determinations.¹¹⁷ The chroniclers drew on extensive and enduring views of royal justice, but in doing so they also enclosed royal action, or at least the justification of royal action, within specific boundaries.

When recounting events after 1355, López de Ayala's chronicle is caught up in the escalating conflict between King Pedro and his Trastámara rivals.¹¹⁸ In his effort to justify

¹¹⁵ That was a legally prescribed sentence for treason against the king. But, even though it may seem tailor made to depose, it was only applied in limited circumstances. Using justice to separate person and power was more complicated than simply naming the target a traitor. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 161.

¹¹⁶ However, Ayala himself had experienced those mid-century events as a young man.

¹¹⁷ And in which redistribution to new holders also waited for such a sentence.

¹¹⁸ This time is poorly documented in general, and some documents were destroyed during the civil war and in its aftermath, though the extent of deliberate destruction is debated. Andrew Villalon, "Wives, Mistresses, Lovers, and Daughters," 138; Ladero Quesada, *Guzmán*, 61-64; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 174.

Pedro's defeat and replacement, he stressed his lack of attention to justice and its forms. His chronicles of the first three Trastámara rulers return to more extensive depictions of judicial procedures as mediators of the separation of person and power. However, the form that justice took changed in ways which reflect important institutional and procedural innovations championed by the new dynasty. In consequence, the tight connection between guilt, punishment, and loss of power which characterizes these accounts unraveled. And with it, so did some of the limits that connection imposed on depictions of legitimate royal action, as well as the close association of loss of power with formal losses of possessions.

Chapter Two

Lopez de Ayala and the Trastámara: Loss of Power and Royal Justice Unravel

In Pedro López de Ayala's chronicles of the first Trastámara kings, the processes of royal justice continued to play important roles in mediating separations of person and power. But reflecting major innovations in judicial institutions, and ongoing developments in judicial procedures, his depictions of those processes from the latter half of the fourteenth century differ significantly from those in the narratives discussed in the previous chapter. Late-century removals from power were mediated by forms of justice which involved more participants than just a deciding monarch, and contained several stages unfolding over longer periods of time. As a result, the connections between guilt, punishment, and loss which had characterized earlier accounts were much looser. And the "gaps" opened between these elements were filled with royal actions, and justifications, which had no presence in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* or Ayala's own work on the mid-fourteenth century.

Discussing the ways in which Pedro López de Ayala framed removals from power, and the ways in which that perspective shifted in response to particular institutional changes, overlaps with late medieval "state" building narratives. One key facet of such accounts is the consolidation of central institutions and its consequences for political life. In a specifically Castilian context, Ayala's work, dating from the end of the fourteenth century, offers insight into a poorly understood period after important institutional establishments during the 1370's and 80's. However, beyond the impact of these developments in a functional sense, such as technical changes to procedure or new institutional settings, their assimilation into Ayala's chronicles also

underpinned changes in the roles played by monarchs, and in the nature of the losses singled out as significant.

More specifically, the roles of kings shifted away from sentencing and punishing. Instead, the most direct royal interventions occurred before any such resolutions, when kings arranged the temporary seizure, and arrest, of targets pending judgement. Though connected to the prospect of ongoing processes of justice, these actions did not depend upon the potential results of those processes, namely findings of guilt, sentences and attendant punishments. To an extent, those prior actions were associated with common invocations of judicial authority regarding the property, and liberty, of accused persons. But their status as the most direct royal interventions in these narratives means that a king using general powers of command to confront unruly subjects, rather than one passing judgement as a *rey justiciero*, came to the fore. And as reactive justice blended with proactive invocations of royal authority, new understandings of power and its loss were articulated.¹ In particular, the direct consequences of royal invocations of authority were not definitive losses of the possession of resources of power. Instead, those invocations interfered with a target's capacity for action, on a more contingent basis and in the short term.

On the whole, Ayala did not associate these novel, explicitly described, and often directly justified actions, and their consequences, with a distinctive terminology of their own. Indeed, the language of crime, guilt and punishment which dominated earlier accounts continued to pervade Ayala's writing, even as formal judicial procedures played less uniquely decisive roles. However, he did describe those actions in consistent terms, and their prominence is such that they draw attention to the temporary losses of the capacity for targets to act which they

¹ On describing, and also explaining, changes in representation and conception, see Steinmetz and Freedon, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 21.

authorized. Therefore, the close association of loss of power with losses of possession was loosened in these narratives. That suggests a more fluid way of understanding power and its loss, which the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, and even Ayala's own work on earlier removals, did not envision. And as a result, limitations on legitimate royal action in these later accounts were undermined in ways that increased the potential scope of royal intervention.

The Late Fourteenth Century: Ayala and the “New Justice”

Like in the previous chapter, Pedro López de Ayala's chronicles are read alongside documentary evidence, as well as contemporary works dealing with political thought and, especially, Ayala's treatment of justice and power in another of his well-known works, the *Rimado de palacio*.² But returning to the *Crónica de Pedro I*, Ayala turned toward the escalating conflict between King Pedro and his Trastámara rivals when recounting events after 1355. In the course of this conflict disempowerments and deaths at Pedro's hands abounded, but in an effort to depict him as cruel, judicial elements are often conspicuously absent from Ayala's accounts of them.³ This omission was a key part of his propaganda efforts, especially given that in other works, such as the *Rimado de palacio*, he insisted that respect for justice was central to a king's

² I also continue to reference the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*. The early fourteenth-century *Libro del caballero Zifar*, a popular caballeresque narrative, is once again a source of comparison for representations of royal justice at work, and for López de Ayala, his *Rimado de palacio* remains an important window into his broader thinking about, in particular, kingship and justice.

³ Ayala's chronicle work mostly postdates the marriage of the future Trastámara king Juan with a granddaughter of Pedro I, so an earlier argument that Pedro was illegitimate is absent. Ayala focused on Pedro's conduct as king. Ana Echevarría, *Catalina de Lancaster: Reina regente de Castilla (1372-1418)* (San Sebastián: Narea, 2002), 33-50; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 169-179; Covadonga Valdaliso Casanova, “La obra cronística de Pedro López de Ayala y la sucesión monárquica en la Corona de Castilla,” *Edad media: Revista de historia* 12 (2011): 193-211. His is by far the most significant and extensive surviving royal chronicle account of the era, but there are others, such as the short *Crónica Anónima de Enrique III de Castilla (1390-1391)*, ed. Michel García (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2013).

role and his legitimacy.⁴ Rulers, he said, should not kill or even dispossess their subjects without observing proper procedural forms.⁵

But my concern is not Ayala's legitimating project per se, but how he described this key measure by which he established or denied the legitimacy of royal action against, in particular, aristocratic subjects. As he moved past the conflict between Pedro and Enrique, accounts of kings targeting the power of political rivals by means of judicial procedures once again appeared in his work.⁶ Though the terminology of crime, guilt and punishment he employed was similar to that used in both his own depictions of earlier confrontations and those of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, he portrayed judicial procedures mediating the separation of person and power very differently.

Most importantly, in accounts of late fourteenth century removals, Ayala devoted significant attention to royal actions that were not stressed, or even depicted, in earlier accounts. He also placed those actions in new institutional settings and described the involvement of distinctive personnel. Taken together, those new elements undermined the centrality of a sentence declared by a king in a single moment. Instead, the separation of person and power occurred piecemeal, amid a progression of distinct measures and commands, often with their

⁴ In the *Rimado de palacio*, he emphasized the king's duty to maintain justice, but also more pointedly connected the king doing so to his keeping the "throne of his kingdom." López de Ayala, *Rimado de palacio*, 41, 59.

⁵ Ayala also wrote that kings who killed without justice were not to be called *justiciero*, but rather butchers. Justice must be done solemnly, and without cruelty. *Rimado de palacio*, 59. According to Francesc Eiximenis in *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, the "prince," should respect the private property of his subjects and not seize it arbitrarily, though taking it as a result of justice was another matter. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 121.

⁶ But even after the war, its return took some time. The years of Enrique II are sparsely covered, despite the fact that after the war there were major shakeups in the possession of power. And according to Ayala, even Enrique did not always act in an honorable way. For example, he promised to spare Martín López de Cordoba, a Pedro loyalist who held out until 1371. But, he then had him summarily executed. Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica del Rey Don Enrique segundo de Castilla*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 68 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953), 1371 ch. 2, pp. 8-9. In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala complained that sometimes kings "do not show concern for justice, for which they have no time in war." This somewhat vague formulation could include Enrique as much as his usual target, Pedro. *Rimado de palacio*, 58.

own justifications and procedural elements attached.⁷ With respect to the processes by which person and power were split apart, distinctions appeared between stripping away resources of power in an immediate and perhaps temporary sense, and judicial sentences devoted to the personal fate of targets and the ultimate disposition of their possessions. Legitimate losses of power, or at least of some power, occurred separately from the establishment of personal guilt and the assignment of personal punishment.

Judicial Reforms, the *Consejo*, and “Ceremonialization”

Differences between depictions of justice in the early and mid-fourteenth century, and Ayala’s depictions of it in its final decades, were a consequence of his adaptation to major developments in Castilian law, judicial institutions, and procedures in the second half of the century.⁸ First, the 1348 *Ordenamiento* of Alcalá established a hierarchy between different legal codes and traditions.⁹ In particular, it formally promulgated many of the principles of the already influential *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X.¹⁰ Subsequent rounds of legislation in a series of *Cortes* meetings between the 1370’s and 1390’s were important as well.¹¹ By the first half of the fifteenth century, works of the *doctrinal* genre offered summaries of law on specific subjects, in which the *Ordenamiento*, the *Partidas*, and the legislation of those late century *Cortes* meetings

⁷ The term “procedural elements” refers to attention given to the setting and personnel, the symbolic and ritual elements attached to a specific action and, sometimes, specific documentary forms.

⁸ The legal changes had deep roots, and extended beyond Castile. Nieto Soria, “La configuración eclesiástica de la realeza Trastámara,” 160; Kenneth Pennington, “Ecclesiastical Liberty on the Eve of the Reformation,” *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 33 (2016): 206. For a summary of the significance in the institutional sphere, see Cañas Gálvez, “La Casa de Juan I de Castilla,” 134.

⁹ François Foronda, “La semiótica del libro de ley sellado. Los manuscritos del *Ordenamiento de Alcalá*,” in *Comunicación y conflicto en la cultura política peninsular: (siglos XIII al XV)*, ed. José Manuel Nieto Soria and Óscar Villarroel González (Madrid: Sílex, 2018), 321-82. By the 1400’s, such “national” law was dominant and local law subordinate, but still active. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 394.

¹⁰ More than a code, it was also a work of legal and political theory. Liuzzo Scorpo, “La idea del poder,” 50. For its transmission, see Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 15-26; Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco, “Theorizing the Language of Law,” *Diacritics* 36, no. 3-4 (2006): 65-75.

¹¹ Especially Toro, 1371; Briviesca, 1387; and Madrid, 1391. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1863), 188, 362, 483.

all featured prominently.¹² In short, these codes and acts formed the basis of the legal normative background in which Ayala's later chronicle accounts unfold and were composed.¹³

However, institutional and procedural innovations were more important than new legal codes for driving changes in depictions of judicial procedures and, ultimately, how they worked to separate person and power.¹⁴ On an institutional level, during these decades Castile's high courts of appeal, the *Audiencia* and *Chancillería*, attained the form, at least in theory, they would enjoy for the rest of the period under consideration.¹⁵ These courts, staffed in part with legally trained *letrados*, contributed to the formalization of procedure and to increased numbers of, and roles for, legal professionals.¹⁶ However, given the political ramifications of the cases whose accounts are studied in this chapter, the status of those involved, and chronicle's focus on the

¹² José María Liste, introduction to Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, xxxviii. Alonso de Cartagena, the very influential fifteenth-century author of the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, still viewed the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* as the most authoritative body of Castilian law. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 15. On his influence see Francisco Castilla Urbano, "La idea del cuerpo místico en Alonso de Cartagena," in Roche Arnas, *El pensamiento político*, 355-7; Fallows, *The Chivalric Vision of Alfonso de Cartagena*, 22-24, 37-38, 45; Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política," 119; Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 242-3, 321, 335.

¹³ The results of this law-making and institutional establishment also penetrated other literature. In the *Rimado de palacio*, engaging in almost customary complaints about the courts and legal professionals, Ayala lamented that the *Partidas* and *decretales* would not help a poor man find justice. *Rimado de palacio*, 35.

¹⁴ The structures and processes through which political tensions were formed, and expressed, changed. Watts, *Politics*, 6.

¹⁵ For the high courts, see Carlos Garriga, *La Audiencia y las Chancillerías castellanas (1371-1525): Historia política, régimen jurídico y práctica institucional* (Madrid: Centro De Estudios Constitucionales, 1994); Pedro Andrés Porras Arboledas, Eloísa Ramírez Vaquero and Flocel Sabaté, *La época medieval: Administración y gobierno* (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 2003), 95-103. Generally, the *Audiencia* was associated with civil matters, the *Chancillería* with criminal. They were the domain of *pleitos ordinarios*, with which the *Consejo* was not usually concerned. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 403. The *Audiencia* and its *oidores* appear reliably in documents from the 1350's onward, such as in a dispute between the city of León and the region's *adelantado*. Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 166, 233; doc. 175, 245. See also Aguiar Andrade, *A construção medieval do território*, 51-74.

¹⁶ The term *letrado* was in use at least back to 13th century, but became important in the 14th. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 73, 89, 317. See also Thomas Devaney, "Virtue, Virility and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile," *Speculum* 88, no. 3 (2013): 721-749; Pere Molas Ribalta, "The Impact of Central Institutions," in Reinhard, *Power Elites and State Building*, 25.

As for procedure, it was seen as too complex and time consuming by some. A response to a petition from the *Cortes* of Toro in 1371 stipulated that the *oidores* of the *Audiencia* should work summarily and employ streamlined procedures. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:189. In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala lamented the nature of *pleitos*, or court cases, and the lawyers necessary to manage them. Throughout the work, references to legal terms and personnel recur. *Rimado de palacio*, 54-57, 316, 319-21.

actions of the king, most legal proceedings began directly with the king and his council, and continued there.¹⁷ But still, the personnel of the appellate tribunals were involved in sensitive cases at court, even if outside their “official” competence.¹⁸

Also, these years saw the institutionalization of the royal council itself.¹⁹ Certainly, kings had consulted advisors before.²⁰ The late fourteenth-century *Consejo*, however, was a more formal body, exercising numerous governmental functions with specifically delegated royal authority.²¹ Although not technically a judicial organ, in practice it had both political and judicial responsibilities.²² Speaking to its rapid rise in importance, and Ayala’s responsiveness to it, though few royal chronicle narratives of the early or mid-fourteenth century refer to any direct *Consejo* involvement in judicial procedures or decision-making, from the late fourteenth century onward nearly all of them do.²³

¹⁷ Criminal justice was more directly of royal concern than civil. María Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal en Castilla (Siglos XIII-XVII)* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1982), 29. And that is to say nothing of local justice, according to the *fueros* of Castile’s towns. Though for Paz Alonso, the reception of the Romano-Canonical *derecho común*, or *real*, in the thirteenth century made the spectre of royal authority stronger in justice on all levels. Paz Alonso, 11-13.

¹⁸ Acting as *jueces de comisión*. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 409

¹⁹ The appeals courts were, in some ways, aspirational. For decades, *Cortes* proceedings included complaints of understaffing and plans to remedy it. But the *Consejo*, as a legally defined body, took firm shape during the reign of Juan I in the 1380’s. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 71-74; *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:332-35, 2:382-4. See also Goldgar and Frost, introduction to *Institutional Culture in Early Modern Society*, xii; Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, “El ejercicio del poder real en la Corona de Aragón: Instituciones e instrumentos de gobierno (siglos XIV y XV),” *En la España medieval* 17 (1994): 58; Porras Arboledas, Ramírez Vaquero, and Sabaté, *La época medieval*, 103-08.

²⁰ Chronicles before the late fourteenth-century use the word *consejo*, but in a different sense than after the 1380’s. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 38-39, 53-57, 418.

²¹ On delegation see Aguiar Andrade, *A Construção medieval do território*, 67; Frederique Lachaud, “Representation and Authority in Thirteenth-Century England and Gascony,” in Lachaud and Penman, *Absentee Authority*, 112-14.

²² The *Consejo* was the king’s council, deriving its judicial authority from his judicial authority. It was not conceived as a court, but could become one due to its connection with the king and his own role in justice. It was usually a site of appeals, but some matters of importance that harmed both the king and the whole realm, called “*casos de corte*,” could be heard there in the first instance. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 116. Those included treason or other injuries to the king personally. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 402-410, 415-19; Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 94, 122. See also Emily J. Hutchison, “Defamation, a Murder More Foul? The ‘Second Murder’ of Louis, Duke of Orleans (d. 1407) Reconsidered,” in *Medieval and Early Modern Murder: Legal, Literary and Historical Contexts*, ed. Larissa Tracy (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2018), 255.

²³ That is, in the informal sense that prevailed before then. Also, as the high courts became separated from king in the context of late 14th reforms, the *Consejo* put some justice back with king. Ignacio Ezquerro Revilla, “El

In addition, by the late fourteenth century it is possible to speak of normative criminal procedure in royal courts.²⁴ Codes like the early fourteenth-century *Leyes de Estilo* point to the influence of the romano-canonical civil procedure advocated by the *Siete Partidas*, even before their partial promulgation in 1348.²⁵ Subsequently, records of petitions made in *Cortes* show repeated attempts, or perhaps more realistically aspirations, to regularize and expedite procedures in such courts according to those rules.²⁶ On the other hand, frequent complaints regarding the administration of justice, in the appeals courts and at the royal court itself, suggest both the expectations of petitioners and practical limitations to the effectiveness of these measures.²⁷

limes doméstico de la administración Castellana moderna,” in Gamba Gutiérrez and Labrador Arroyo, *Evolución y estructura de la Casa Real de Castilla*, 809-836.

But not necessarily with him alone. In the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*'s narrative of Juan Alfonso de Haro's fall, for instance, before the king set out to confront him, he first consulted with his *privados*, or close advisors, about how he should deal with him and his *sin razón*. Those counselors agreed that his actions were worthy of punishment, and recommend that the king should summon him and demand an explanation for his crimes. He refused to come, and then the *Gran Crónica*'s narrative re-joins that of the *Crónica*. The dating of the *Gran Crónica* is not certain enough to say whether it dates to before or after the 1380's *Consejo* reforms, though it is likely just before. However, although the term itself was not used, this account shows more characters involved in the process of judicial decision making in comparison with that of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. As a nobility-sympathetic chronicle, showing that the king had not acted unilaterally before successfully moving against an influential aristocrat might serve to limit claims to drastic royal action. But in any event, the king was less central than in the earlier account. *Gran Crónica*, ch. 157, 2:88-89.

²⁴ In the sense of a model to follow. Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 82-3; Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 9-15, 19-20, 34; Velasco, *Dead Voice*, 29. In particular cases judges, especially when that judge was a monarch, had great discretion in ordering procedure. Criminal procedure was theoretically distinct from civil procedure, but in practice the two overlapped and civil and criminal matters were dealt with in the same *proceso*. A *pleito criminal* could result in death, corporal punishment, loss of some or all goods, and exile. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 29. See the proceedings of the Cortes of Briviesca, 1387. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:372.

²⁵ Giordanengo, “Du droit civil au pouvoir royal,” 16. Castile's medieval legal archives are very thin. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 5; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 65. Individual documents, kept by parties in property or jurisdictional disputes, survive. But, the mass of procedural documents generally do not.

²⁶ Such as in the *Cortes* proceedings of Toro 1371, and Briviesca, 1387. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:189-192, 372-5. Similar complaints can be found in a plethora of places. Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 175-6.

²⁷ Such as at the *Cortes* of Segovia, 1386. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:348. Ayala complained about the ineffectiveness of *Cortes* measures in his *Rimado de palacio*, saying officials cleaned up their acts briefly afterward, then went back to their old ways. *Rimado de palacio*, 83. See also McCarthy, *Outlaws and Spies*, 40.

Reading royal chronicle narratives backed by the insights of these normative sources, their general principles can be seen at work, providing a template for descriptions of judicial procedures that unfolded over several stages and involved multiple participants.²⁸ Ayala's accounts can by no means be read as trial transcripts, but a brief review of certain aspects of normative procedure underpins my analysis of his narratives below. One of the first procedural steps was the enumeration of the charges in the *querella* or the *acusación*.²⁹ Once the process had begun, the defendant could be detained and face the sequestration of their possessions, particularly when the charges could mean physical punishment or the loss of property if guilty.³⁰ Next, the defendant answered the charges, and then the evidence was submitted to be evaluated

²⁸ This overview draws heavily on Paz Alonso's study. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 165-260. See also Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 255-64, 318-29. They are read alongside contemporary documents published in the series *Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa*. Most surviving documents having to do with justice and the courts, however, involve either the opening or close of proceedings, or else specific orders to parties involved over the course of them. For example, see Gregoria Caveró Domínguez, *Colección documental del Monasterio de San Esteban de Nogales*, Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 91 (León: Centro de Estudios y Investigación San Isidoro, 1999), doc. 255, 363-370. This sequence of documents shows the system at work in a civil appeal. A local judge sentenced, an appeal was made and heard by an *alcalde de la corte*, after which the original sentence was upheld.

²⁹ Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 29. This is the summary phase. A *querella*, by the fifteenth century, was usually a civil complaint, while an *acusación* was criminal. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 197; p.7, t.1, l.1. For examples of usage, see César Álvarez Álvarez, *Colección documental del Archivo de la Catedral de León*, vol. 12, Fuentes y estudios de historia leonesa 60 (León: Centro de Estudios y Investigación San Isidoro, 1995), doc. 3203, 48; Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 139, 191. See also Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 67, 76-77, 84-86.

³⁰ Sequester meant temporary seizure, though the term was not used regularly in chronicles until the fifteenth century. The property was taken out of the control of its holder, but not given to anyone else, though an administrator may be appointed. In ordinary cases, it was intended to prevent people from alienating goods in dispute or subject to seizure before the end of the case. Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 153. The 1433 *Ordenamiento* of Segovia specifies that was the only time when such blanket action could be taken. Juan Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia 16 (Murcia: Academia de Alfonso X el Sabio, 1984), doc. 180, 438.

by the judge or judges.³¹ Following that evaluation, sentences were generally short, with little explanation for the verdict and penalty.³²

In principle, monarchs could intervene at any point and modify procedure at their discretion and, since the clashes whose accounts are analyzed below involved the king and *Consejo* from the start, procedural corners could be more readily cut.³³ But still, this fluid though consistent outline of judicial procedure, coupled with the influence of new judicial institutions and officials, constituted the foundation for depictions of royal justice at work in Ayala's later accounts and, also, those of his fifteenth-century successors.

Finally, the expanding role of ceremony is an often remarked upon aspect of late medieval political culture.³⁴ Indeed, studies by Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado and José Manuel

³¹ Paz Alonso refers to this stage as plenary judgement, after having been informed and summoned by means of an *emplazamiento*. See also Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 320-22. In later accounts, these summonses could receive significant attention.

The *Gran Crónica*, for instance, follows the older chronicle verbatim with regard to Álvaro Núñez Osorio's trial. But before it, after the king had demanded the castles, it says that the king "placed blame on him," and sent men to the places the count held "against his will," to announce that, if he did not come before the king "in the term given to him, that he would hold him responsible and judge him as he may find the law demands." The focus of the earlier *Crónica* was on the moment of judgement, but in the later chronicle, this prior action was described as well. Alfonso formally summoned him by letter, and threatened that if he did not respond, he would judge him according to law. The king setting procedures in motion, and his actual sentence, both received consideration. *Gran Crónica*, ch. 94, 1:452,

³² Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 114, 149-51; Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 259; Axel Degoy, "Les avocats au parlement de Paris et la légalité pénale à l'époque de Charles VI et d'Henri VI de Lancastre (1380-1436)," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 1 (2018): 201-2, 229. For a *carta ejecutoria* for an *Audiencia* sentence, see Martín Fuertes, *Colección documental*, doc. 247, 335-340.

³³ Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 260-1; Hyams, "Due Process versus the Maintenance of Order," 79; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 295; Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 26. In addition, particularly dangerous crimes, or crimes defined as such, also called for rapid procedural action. Julien Théry, "'Atrocitas/enormitas.' Per una storia della categoria di 'crimini enorme' nel basso Medioevo (XII-XV secolo)," *Quaderni storici* 44, no. 131 (2009): 330, 358, 363. However, Gregoria Cavero Domínguez, in her study of the cathedral archives of Astorga, finds that royal sentences, as in sentences made personally by the king or directly in his name, were fairly rare. Cavero Domínguez, *Colección documental de la Catedral*, 14.

Also, personal status was in general very important in determining the details of judicial procedure, even without the heavy political elements of the situations under consideration here. Roberta Mucciarelli, "Fama e giustizia a Siena al tempo dei Nove: Per uno studio del disciplinamento sociale," *Archivio storico italiano* 171, no. 4 (2013): 625.

³⁴ The key point is not only that ceremony was important, but that it seems to have been becoming more important. Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 1-33. See also Cañas Gálvez, "La cámara de Juan II," 81-196; José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza: Propaganda y legitimación en la Castilla Trastámara* (Madrid: Nerea 1993), 15-20, 120-123, 130-133.

Nieto Soria discuss accounts of royal justice in those terms.³⁵ More specifically, Óscar Villarroel González argues for the development of certain ritual conventions for depositions from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, reflected in chronicle accounts.³⁶ He places that change within broader ceremonializing trends, and suggests it reflects increasing concern with marking deposition explicitly, separate from the replacement of an incumbent by another.³⁷ But as far as Ayala's narratives of removals from power by kings using judicial procedures are concerned, I interpret the greater prominence of distinctly described losses as a consequence of his adaptation to new forms of justice. That is not to say that there was no overlap between ceremonial concerns and how he, or other chroniclers, depicted processes of justice. But above all, a changing relationship between personal punishment and loss of power drove that distinctiveness.

The Twin Downfalls of the *Infante* Alfonso

López de Ayala's accounts of the downfalls of the *infante* Alfonso, Count of Noreña and illegitimate son of Enrique II, illustrate his adaptation to the late fourteenth-century institutional developments, and their impact on his depictions of judicial procedures mediating the separation of person and power. Alfonso was one of the *epígonos Trastámara*, members of the royal family given lands and titles by Enrique II after his accession, who were often at the heart of political factions in the 1380's and 90's.³⁸ Between 1383 and 1385, and again in 1394, he was disempowered by Kings Juan I and Enrique III, respectively.

These related incidents have a prominent place in Ayala's chronicles. Although in neither instance did legal proceedings end in a definitive sentence, he nonetheless depicted Alfonso

³⁵ Carrasco Manchado, "Símbolos y ritos: conflicto como representación," 489-546; Nieto Soria, "Más que palabras," 179-180, 190-191. See also Meccarelli, "La dimension doctrinale," 78.

³⁶ As portrayed in chronicles. Villarroel González, "Las deposiciones y sus ritos," 211-246.

³⁷ He focuses on removals from particular offices.

³⁸ Ladero Quesada, *Guzmán*, 66; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 69-73.

being firmly confronted, with his possessions seized and the *infante* himself either imprisoned or exiled. Also, despite the absence of a definitive sentence, in his accounts of each act in Alfonso's political drama, judicial procedures, and debate over the form they should take, sat at the center of how both monarchs dealt with him.³⁹ But the procedures Ayala described do not follow a model of personal royal justice, instead taking a more procedural form, consisting of distinct stages rather than turning on a single, pivotal moment.

In addition, and crucially for chronicles focused on kings, the most direct intervention of both monarchs was not to sentence and punish in response to findings of guilt. Instead, they set processes in motion that might lead to such an outcome, but left their completion to others. And at the same time, their potential consequences were less important for arranging, and even for justifying, Alfonso's practical disempowerment. Instead, Ayala's attention to new royal actions, and their outcomes, complicated the mediating role of judicial procedures and made space for new ways of understanding power and its loss.

1383-1385

The first major confrontation, between Alfonso and Juan I, began in 1383. In Ayala's telling, the two men were frequently at odds in the opening years of the latter's reign, which began in 1379. But although he described several disagreements, he did not mention any prospect of judicial action or penalty in response to them.⁴⁰ Instead, these disputes were ended with settlements between the half-siblings. That changed in 1383, when the king learned Alfonso was preparing himself for conflict in his stronghold of Gijón, in the northern region of Asturias. Initially, he and the king reached another settlement. But this time Ayala reported that Juan

³⁹ He was not the only figure to receive such treatment. I will reference other incidents that Ayala described with similar characteristics and consequences, to put the narratives of Alfonso's downfalls in context.

⁴⁰ *Crónica de Juan I*, 1381 ch. 3, p. 75; 1382 ch. 1, p. 77.

entered into it only after offering a pardon for Alfonso's misdeeds, on the condition that he would be at his service in the future.⁴¹ Although Juan forgave him again, the grant of a pardon moved their confrontation from a disagreement to a matter of crime and, if Alfonso broke the conditions, punishment.⁴²

Nonetheless, Juan soon learned that Alfonso had broken the terms of their agreement, opening the way for more drastic action. Later in 1383, the king caught Alfonso by surprise and arrested him.⁴³ According to the *Crónica*, Juan claimed that he took this step because after the pardon, Alfonso had continued to "err," despite his promises.⁴⁴ Though Alfonso denied wrongdoing, Juan "confiscated to the crown all the other goods the count had in Asturias," while the *infante* himself was kept imprisoned.⁴⁵

However, though neutralized in practical terms, Ayala suggested that Alfonso's ultimate fate remained unsettled. After recovering from a severe illness in 1385, he recounted that King

⁴¹ "E el Rey perdonó al conde é á los que con él eran." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1383 ch. 5, p. 83.

⁴² A letter to the city government of Murcia, dated July 20, 1383, explained the king's decision to show mercy and pardon his half-brother. The sense that the pardon was issued under the threat of justice, only implied in the chronicle narrative, was explicit. The king threatened Alfonso and the defenders of Gijón with treason charges, and he had to issue formal *requirimientos* before Alfonso stood down. Diéz Martínez, *Documentos de Juan I*, doc. 126, 236-238. See also Covadonga Valdaliso Casanova, "Comunicación política, correspondencia y propaganda en Castilla en la segunda mitad del siglo XIV: La reina recibe una carta del rey," in *Expresiones del poder en la Edad Media: Homenaje al profesor Juan Antonio Bonachía Hernando*, ed. María Isabel del Val Valdivieso, Juan Carlos Martín Cea, and David Carvajal de la Vega (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2019), 63-72.

⁴³ "é allí prendió al Conde Don Alfonso su hermano." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1383 ch. 7, pp. 83-84.

⁴⁴ "E la razón era ésta, segund que el Rey decía: que el dicho Conde...errára en enviar algunas cartas á Portugal contra su servicio, aunque el Conde decía qué nunca tal cosa ficiera." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1383 ch. 7, pp. 83-84.

⁴⁵ "confiscó para su Corona todos los otros bienes que el Conde avia en Asturias." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1383 ch. 7, p. 84.

In this instance, Ayala said that everything went to the crown, except for a portion that went to the "church" of Oviedo. The letter to Murcia about the pardon, however, states that when the king decided to pardon the *yerros* Alfonso had committed, he also announced the confiscation of Alfonso's castles, towns, and villages. In the *Crónica*, such an order does not appear until after the arrest, though at the time of the pardon Ayala did say he gave the king certain "sureties" (*recabdos*) for his good behavior. However, later on, when discussing the deliberations in 1385, Ayala suggested that after the pardon in 1383, the king returned Alfonso's lands and other *mercedes* to him. Overall, in Ayala's account, the losses were associated with the king taking action against Alfonso for alleged crimes, rather than forgiving him for them. Other pardons issued by Juan I included both cancelling personal punishment and the return of possessions. Diéz Martínez, *Documentos de Juan I*, doc. 28, 57.

Juan conferred with his *Consejo* about what should be done regarding his half-brother.⁴⁶ The king summarized his past dealings with Alfonso, insisting that he had been generous and patient with the count. But even after the pardon, his half-brother had committed further actions contrary to his service, in response to which he had ordered his arrest. Finally, Juan told the *Consejo* that he feared that if he died and his young son became king, Alfonso would exploit the regency which would ensue, due to his son's youth, to work his way back into power.⁴⁷ After producing documents "proving" his assertions, he asked for an opinion, while suggesting that the *infante* may well deserve a "great penalty."⁴⁸

According to Ayala, the prelates of the *Consejo* excused themselves, because it was a "matter of death," while the *caballeros* deliberated. In his telling, one advisor recommended that, given the "errors he committed against you," Juan should "commend this matter to two *alcaldes* of your court."⁴⁹ If they found that he had erred after the pardon, "they should make a judgment, and rule according to the laws and *fueros* of Castile and León, if he should be found to deserve it."⁵⁰

Another *caballero*, who though unnamed is meant to be Ayala himself, offered a longer recommendation, discussing not only the form the process should take but, characteristically,

⁴⁶ "E por tanto que les pedia consejo, pues le tenia preso, qué les parescia que debía facer dél, ca él les mostraria por cartas é por escripturas, cómo el dicho Conde Don Alfonso merescia grand pena, é que sobre esto les demandaba consejo cómo faria." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 4, pp. 93-94.

⁴⁷ He could lend legitimacy to the party he joined, giving him leverage. Ralph Griffiths, "The Crown and the Royal Family in Later Medieval England," in Ralph Griffiths, *King and Country: England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 15-18. And in fact, that was almost precisely what happened, in 1391. Based on the most likely date of the chronicle's composition, Ayala would have known about it when he crafted this passage. Whether or not King Juan genuinely expressed this fear in 1385, Ayala's highlighting it stressed Alfonso's troublesomeness, from a royalist point of view.

⁴⁸ "grand pena." The *Partidas* call *penas* both a punishment and an example. *p.7, t.21.*

⁴⁹ "yerros que vos fizo;" "debedes encomendar este fecho á dos Alcaldes vuestros de la vuestra corte." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, p. 94. An *alcalde de la corte* was a senior judge.

⁵⁰ "que lo juzguen, é se libre segund fallaren por derecho é fuero de Castilla é de Leon, si lo él asi meresciere." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, p. 94.

also how acting through judicial forms was crucial for royal legitimacy.⁵¹ He began by looking to the past, insisting that some of Juan's predecessors had acted toward their subjects such that "all Christian kings speak of it, saying that Castile's kings disgracefully killed some great men of their realms in their palaces, without any form of justice."⁵² Those actions, he warned, both damaged their reputations and caused them concrete political problems due to noble discontent.

Moving on to the matter of Alfonso, he declared that the first *caballero's* idea would not allow the *infante* to defend himself fully, and that people would think the *alcaldes* just did what the king told them to do. A better option would be to follow the advice the king of France received from his council over the prosecution of Charles of Navarre.⁵³ According to Ayala, they had suggested he let Charles appoint trained lawyers to defend him in public against the charges of the *procuradores del rey*.⁵⁴ Following such a precedent would protect Juan from accusations of having "passed sentence against him unjustly and contrary to legal forms."⁵⁵

But before any action was taken, Alfonso was granted a reprieve by circumstances. Though he remained imprisoned and his possessions confiscated, war called King Juan away.⁵⁶ After his death in 1390, a regency for his son, Enrique III, ensued and one of the parties fighting

⁵¹ *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, pp. 94-96. Such "speeches" are not necessarily reliable records of words spoken at the indicated time and place. However, this discourse plays an important role in Ayala's interpretation of the situation, a common historiographical technique. King, "War, 'Rebellion' or 'Perilous Times'?", 115.

⁵² "todos los Reyes de Christianos fablan dello, diciendo que los Reyes de Castilla mataron rebotadamente en sus palacios é sin forma de justicia á algunos Grandes de sus Regnos." Among them he included Juan Alfonso de Haro, who was killed "without being heard," and added that from that day the House of Cameros was greatly diminished. *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, pp. 94-96.

⁵³ For helping the enemies of the king of France, where Charles had lands and principally resided, despite his Navarrese title. As for the *infante*, the chronicle reports the king asked whether he should be executed or imprisoned. The *Consejo* replied that he deserved the loss of life and land. Although the word treason was not used, Ayala suggested that is what they were talking about. In addition to the severity of the penalty, such an action would fall under that definition according to laws like the *Partidas*.

⁵⁴ "que el Rey de Navarra catase abogados para que defendiesen su derecho...é que el Rey de Francia pagaria el salario;" "E asi si fizo...é un dia en la semana traian al Rey de Navarra á juicio, é los Procuradores del Rey de Francia acusábanle, é los Procuradores del Rey de navarra defendian su derecho." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, pp. 94-96.

⁵⁵ "pasaba contra él sin forma de derecho, é sin justicia." *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385, ch. 5 pp. 94-96.

⁵⁶ The war was over Juan's claim to the throne of Portugal. Juan lost, but then defeated a Portuguese backed challenge for the Castilian throne launched by John of Gaunt, who had married one of Pedro's daughters.

for the contested regency wanted Alfonso's support. What the late king had reportedly feared came to pass in 1391, when the *infante* was freed and his confiscated possessions restored.⁵⁷

1394

Alfonso's resurgence did not last long however. In 1394, Enrique III came of age and Alfonso, along with other *epígonos*, banded together against the advisors of the young king.⁵⁸ Even after this combination was stymied, Ayala insisted that Alfonso continued to ignore the king's repeated summonses to court.⁵⁹ Instead, Enrique learned that the *infante* had been spending his time preparing for conflict in his Asturian base, and in response he marched on Gijón as his father had done eleven years before.

On his way there, when in the city of León, the chronicle reports that messengers from Alfonso came to the king and offered a settlement. However, Enrique quickly resolved on a different path. He instructed the local bishop to hold a mass in the cathedral. Upon its conclusion, the king came forward and declared that his father had imprisoned Alfonso for many "crimes he had committed contrary to his service," and had confiscated all his goods. He also recalled that the *infante* had only been let out as a result of regency politics.⁶⁰ But since his majority, he accused, Alfonso had defied his summonses to court, stolen royal rents, and even sought to seize control of the city of Oviedo. So, the chronicle declares, "for all those reasons he

⁵⁷ *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1391 ch. 28, p. 181. But he received them back from the crown, not a new holder.

⁵⁸ Fadrique, Duke of Benavente and another half-brother of the king, and Leonor, Queen of Navarre and Juan I's sister, were involved. They faced consequences too, though Ayala stressed their fates are less than Alfonso's. Earenfight, "Political Culture and Political Discourse in the Letters of Queen Maria of Castilla," 94. I will compare the Duke of Benavente's treatment, in particular, with Alfonso's.

⁵⁹ *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 21, p. 228. According to Ayala, he claimed fear of Alfonso's advisors as an excuse. Though the Duke of Benavente had, Ayala insisted, been doing similar things, he reached an agreement with the king and was pardoned, though that did not last long. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 17, pp. 226-227. The "Asiento and Capitulación" is dated June 21. AGS Patronato Real, leg. 11, n. 67.

⁶⁰ "el Rey Don Juan su padre ficiera prender al Conde Don Alfonso por algunos yerros que ficiera contra su servicio, é estonce confiscara todos los sus bienes para la corona." *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 28, pp. 230-231.

stripped from him all the lands and goods he held in the kingdom, and confiscated them to the crown,” just as, he said, his father had done.⁶¹ Finally, the king swore to enforce his decision on the gospels and the holy cross, and ordered letters sent out to Alfonso’s possessions informing them of their confiscation.⁶²

Enrique then continued on to Gijón, trapping Alfonso there. However, the chronicle then reports that a deal was struck to submit the case to the French king for judgement.⁶³ Enrique would send a representative to “demonstrate the errors contrary to his service into which Count Don Alfonso had fallen,” while Alfonso would have an opportunity to defend himself.⁶⁴ If the French king found that the *infante* deserved to lose his possessions, he would lose them, and if he should be proven innocent, the king would pardon him and return them.⁶⁵ In the meantime, Alfonso’s possessions remained occupied by royal command.

After some delay, Ayala noted that both Enrique’s envoys and Alfonso himself went to France to make their respective cases according to *derecho*.⁶⁶ The French king asked his council

⁶¹ “por todas estas razones le tiraba todas las tierras é bienes que avia en el Regno, é los confiscaba para la corona, segund el Rey Don Juan su padre lo avia fecho é lo dejara ordenado.” *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 28, pp. 230-231.

The final part, “what he left ordered,” is a reference to Juan I’s contested will. Ayala reproduced it in the *Crónica de Enrique III*, and one provision referred to Alfonso, reinforcing the confiscation of his Asturian possessions. As such, Ayala cast Enrique’s action as a re-imposition of what Juan had done, rather than a new action by Enrique. Nonetheless, he did have to issue the orders again and further judicial action was contemplated afterward. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1391 ch. 7, p. 195.

⁶² “E por que esto fuese cierto, que luego, presentes los que y estaban, lo juraba asi en las manos del Obispo de Leon, que alli estaba, sobre la Cruz é los Sanctos Evangelios. E desto mandó luego dar sus cartas para todos los logares de Asturias quel dicho Conde tenia, como los tomaba para su corona.” *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 28, p. 231.

⁶³ *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 31, p. 231. According to Ayala, that decision was not without controversy, since some in the *Consejo* disagreed with submitting this matter to a foreign king. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1395, ch. 6, 235. For the complex role of “France” in medieval Castilian historiography, see Adeline Rucquoi, “La France dans l’historiographie médiévale castillane,” *Annales* 44, no. 3 (1989): 677-689.

⁶⁴ “á le contar é mostrar los yerros en que el Conde Don Alfonso avia caído contra su servicio, é el Conde Don Alfonso que se enviase á escusar dello.” *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 31, p. 231.

⁶⁵ “á que si el Rey de Francia fallase quel Conde debia perder la tierra por lo quel Rey de Castilla decia quel ficiera, que la perdiese; é si el Conde se salvase dello con razon, quel Rey le perdonase, é le tornase la tierra, é oviese la su merced.” *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 31, p. 231.

⁶⁶ *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1395 ch. 6, pp. 234-235.

for advice, before suggesting that more time be allowed for settling the matter. But the Castilian ambassadors rejected that idea. They offered one last chance for Alfonso to surrender himself, and if he did not, they asked the king to “pass sentence against the count and his goods.”⁶⁷

Ultimately, the chronicle reports no firm decision, but does note that Enrique seized the stronghold of Gijón. This time, there would be no comeback, since Alfonso died in de facto exile in France soon after.⁶⁸

Despite that fate, at no point did Alfonso face a definitive sentence. That was not terribly unusual, since Ayala’s chronicles contain many accounts of figures driven into exile, imprisoned or otherwise undone without one.⁶⁹ But what is noteworthy, in comparison both to Ayala’s depiction of Fernández Coronel’s downfall and those in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, is the attention bestowed upon specific procedural elements, both proposed and carried out, even in the absence of such a resolution. These narratives, reflecting late fourteenth-century developments in judicial processes and institutions, depict the confrontations between the kings and the *infante* extending beyond a single moment of royal judgement. In doing so, they dragged many invocations of royal power, and justifications of those invocations, into a judicial framework,

⁶⁷ “E dixerón los embajadores que en caso quel Conde non quisiese ir luego á la obediencia del Rey de Castilla, su señor, que requerian al Rey de Francia asi como aliado é amigo del Rey de Castilla, que por las condiciones de las ligas é de los tratós que eran entre ellos, pasase contra el Conde é contra sus bienes” *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1395 ch. 6, pp. 234-235.

⁶⁸ An informal state, but not an uncommon fate for losers of political contests. Di Crescenzo and Fisher, “Exile and Imprisonment in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” 6.

⁶⁹ Kings had broad powers to move against rivals in practice. A provision from the *Cortes* of Madrid in 1391 offers sense that it was possible to take many things by command rather than justice. But in that same provision, regents for Enrique III pledged not to do that, suggesting it was potentially controversial as well. They pledged, “non tiraran la tierra que tienen del dicho Sennor Rey, nin oficio nin tenencia nin merced nin heredad o por vida, salvo vacando o por merescimiento que feziere por quelo debiese perder con derecho.” *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:487.

while at the same time opening new paths along which rulers could disentangle person and power.⁷⁰

A Register of Justice

Like in Ayala's narrative of Alfonso Fernández Coronel's fall, a "register of justice" underlies both these accounts. The actions for which Alfonso was condemned, such as conspiracies, refusing royal calls to court, and rebellion in fortified places, were of a similar character to those which justified the disempowerment of royal rivals in the examples discussed in the previous chapter. And just as importantly, Ayala characterized those actions as crimes. For instance, he described Alfonso's 1383 misdeeds in the ubiquitous terms of service and disservice to the king, and when King Juan ordered his arrest after breaking the terms of the pardon, he said the *infante* had "erred."⁷¹ In the account of 1394, meanwhile, King Enrique recalled the *yerro*s, "contrary to his service," which Alfonso had committed against his father when justifying his own action against him. And the king, the *Crónica* insists, charged his envoys to France with showing the French king the *yerro*s into which Alfonso had fallen, again called "contrary to his service."

⁷⁰ Given Ayala's insistence on the necessity of kings acting through justice, telling things this way allowed him to show actions, and losses, as occurring in that framework even if they did not culminate in a formal sentence.

⁷¹ The *Partidas* spell out many ways in which subjects must serve their king. *p.2, t.13, l.7*. Indeed, the rhetoric of service and disservice was very important. See also García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 410; Víctor M. Gibello Bravo, *La imagen de la nobleza Castellana en la Baja Edad Media* (Caceres: Universidad de Extremadura, 1999), 141-153; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 146-7; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 42.

Also, the use of "pardon" is significant. When covering previous reconciliations, Ayala referred to Alfonso coming back into the king's *merced*. But after the king had marched against him a more formal resolution was imposed, in which disagreements were not only patched up, but crimes excused. *p.7, t.32, l.1-3*. For Ayala, a pardon implied guilt. In the *Rimado de palacio*, he wrote that kings should, if they could, "pardon the fallen for all blame and error." *Rimado de palacio*, 48. In the *Libro del caballero Zifar*, meanwhile, a confrontation between a king and rebellious count involved a choice between pardon and "justicia." *Libro del caballero Zifar*, 212-213. Pardons, though consequential, were quite common, and became themselves an important tool for wielding royal power. McCarthy, *Outlaws and Spies*, 38; Verreycken, "The power to pardon," 2-3.

In addition, Ayala characterized the procedures employed or proposed in response to these so-called crimes as methods for determining guilt and punishment according to law. That sense is particularly strong in his treatment of King Juan's *Consejo* consultation in 1385. When asking for advice the king hinted, so the *Crónica* claims, that Alfonso deserved a "great punishment." Moreover, in Ayala's telling, the first counselor suggested that he should be judged and then treated as *derecho* demanded, if that is what he should be found to deserve. This formulation evokes the tight connection of judgement, guilt and punishment on which earlier removal narratives turned. And Ayala, in the guise of the other unnamed counselor, insisted that the forms of impartial justice be observed, particularly in capital cases such as this one, before offering a suggestion as to what those forms should be.⁷²

Likewise, his account of the 1394 confrontation presents the role of the French king as being to sit in judgement on Alfonso, treating him according to what he was found to deserve. He also reported that the Castilian envoys urged him to pass sentence against both the count and his goods, the same formula he employed when describing Pedro's earlier condemnation of Fernández Coronel. Overall, there is a great degree of continuity in the terminology Ayala used to characterize the processes of justice, and the alleged crimes that brought them about, within his own work and in comparison with the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*.⁷³

⁷² The *Gran Crónica* emphasizes that Juan Alfonso de Haro had been executed in accordance with "the law." It calls his execution a punishment for the "terrible and ugly errors into which he had fallen." Then it adds that "don Alonso de Haro, Lord of los Cameros, was killed as this history has told you, completely justified, and with no blame attached to the king." *Gran Crónica*, ch. 157, 1:88-90.

The *Crónica*, in contrast, associated *derecho* with the loss of property, not his death directly. By emphasizing his own fault, and Alfonso's lack of the same, the *Gran Crónica* seems to be taking the king's side. But it defends him in terms that minimized royal power. Alfonso was right because Haro had first acted to deserve such treatment, to which the king responded appropriately as the law demanded. Although it is an account of royal action, it is not an account of royal power, but royal justice. He had not simply intervened to take out a noble political rival, but punished one in accordance the laws.

⁷³ In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala described justice turning on a scale, condemning those who commit misdeeds yet tempering the *castigo* given to the sinner. *Rimado de palacio*, 99.

New Forms of Justice, New Forms of Action

However, his depictions of such processes, and the roles they played in pulling apart person and power, depart from accounts of earlier removals. Although justice and its procedures remained the key mediator and legitimizer of the separation of person and power, those departures had a significant impact on how the force behind that separation, and the loss of power itself, were conceived. Indeed, both of the trial processes Ayala portrayed differ significantly from any of those described as having been carried out, or considered, before. Although they have some important differences among themselves, I focus on what both have in common.

In the account of the 1385 consultation, formal judicial procedures appeared principally as proposals. But even so, their nature shows the influence of late century institutional developments. First, Ayala insisted that the king consulted the *Consejo*. The reference to the specific body, rather than a more amorphous group of advisors, is an indication of Ayala's attention to the workings of the court and the new *Consejo*.⁷⁴ As for the procedures the counselors recommended, both suggestions envisioned a prominent role for legal professionals in judging Alfonso. The first proposed having the *alcaldes* of the court make the decisions.⁷⁵ The second, though not specific about who would decide a potential case, envisioned lawyers on behalf of both the defendant and the king arguing in public.⁷⁶ Most importantly, both suggestions

⁷⁴ In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala outlined an ideal *Consejo*, composed of prelates, knights, learned men and urban leaders, with whom the king should "govern his affairs" (*sus fechos gobernar*). *Rimado de palacio*, 295. As noted above, the *Consejo*'s power was defined, and expanded, in the 1380's.

⁷⁵ In the proceedings of the *Cortes* of Toro in 1371, *alcaldes* were associated with criminal cases. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:202. See also Ezquerro Revilla, "El limes doméstico," 812.

⁷⁶ Above all, the *procurador fiscal*, an official tasked with representing royal interests in court. In some capacities, they were analogous to a public prosecutor, though the analogy should not be pushed too far. At the *Cortes* of Briviesca, a petition asking that holders of that post be *letrados* was granted. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:389. Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 323.

displaced the king from the central role he had played in previous narratives, presenting the case and, most importantly, passing sentence personally. And Ayala, in the guise of the second advisor, suggested that a perception the king had too much influence over the process would be undesirable.⁷⁷

Though less explicitly expressed, a similar dynamic is at play in Ayala's account of the proceedings of 1394. After Enrique cornered Alfonso in Gijón, the chronicle reports that the case was to be submitted to the French king for, in effect, arbitration.⁷⁸ It was still to be decided by a monarch, but not the one Alfonso had offended. And in the hearing subsequently described, Enrique's advocates, and Alfonso, pleaded their respective cases before the king of France. Neither Juan nor Enrique made judgements in response to charges he himself enumerated or actions he witnessed.⁷⁹ So, although both narratives evoke a register of justice, the judicial procedures they envision involved a less direct, and less exclusive, role for kings in "trial and sentencing."⁸⁰ Of course, neither of the narratives ultimately indicates a clear sentence was reached.⁸¹ But as Ayala described the contemplated procedures, neither ruler was to have been too closely involved in such proceedings anyway.

However, Ayala nonetheless showed Alfonso being handily dealt with each time, suffering severe material penalties and restrictions on his personal freedom of action. Kings Juan

⁷⁷ Note that there was no sense of a "trial by peers" here in the stereotypically English sense. T.B. Pugh, "The Southampton plot of 1415," in *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages: A Tribute to Charles Ross*, ed. Ralph Griffiths and James Sherborne (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 62-4.

⁷⁸ The *Partidas* offer guidance for such cases. *p.3, t.4, l.23-27; p.3, t.18, l.15-16.*

⁷⁹ Of course, in this situation Enrique could not play such a role. But the action Ayala described shares this dynamic with the face-off between lawyers proposed in 1385.

⁸⁰ In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala devoted significant space to complaining about the length and expense of court cases. The blame fell not on the king, but on the lawyers and, to a lesser extent, judges. *Rimado de palacio*, 314-337. This new image of justice was not something that Ayala necessarily liked, but he did insist on the necessity for justice in mediating royal action. And his narratives reflect the changes discussed above, despite his complaints about some aspects of late century Castilian justice. And those delays were the responsibility of the parties involved, especially the defense, as often as the "system" itself. Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 256.

⁸¹ Despite the fact that elsewhere Ayala stressed their importance. In the *Rimado de palacio*, he wrote that if it was proven a person should be punished (*penado*) then the judge must sentence them. *Rimado de palacio*, 100.

and Enrique played an active role in bringing about those consequences. But as far as stripping apart person and power are concerned, they acted in capacities other than a *rey justiciero*, and Ayala described them taking types of actions that earlier accounts had not stressed as significant.⁸² Indeed, elements analogous to those concentrated in the trial “moment” in previous narratives are spread out in both of these accounts. That is to say, they are separate from, and placed prior to, decisions, or contemplated decisions, regarding the guilt and personal fate of the target. Such elements include justification, ceremonial displays, and losses of possessions, liberty, or other resources of power.

Looking more closely, each narrative describes a distinct command, which the respective kings issued personally, to confiscate Alfonso’s possessions and, in the first account, to imprison him as well. Moreover, these decisions were put into effect before discussion of what judicial procedures to employ against the *infante* himself even began. In the first account, two years passed by before those discussions, while the second suggests a shorter though still significant gap between the confiscation and the agreement to submit the matter to France. Although Ayala depicted both kings as having been involved in discussions about what procedures ought to be followed, in neither case were they to carry them out themselves.⁸³

Instead, the kings played their most direct roles by issuing those initial confiscatory commands. And when describing the monarchs taking these actions, Ayala’s narratives associate

⁸² Watts notes that royal actions more broadly, in particular actions of “grace,” became more publicly prominent and were attended by specific justifications in the late medieval monarchies. Watt, *Polities*, 32.

⁸³ This distancing of the king in person was not unique to justice. Of course, he remained a central figure, but at the *Cortes* meetings in Toro in 1369 and, subsequently, 1371, several provisions dealt with limiting the use of the king’s private seal, redirecting business through “ordinary” court channels. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:170-171, 195.

According to Salustino Dios, in *Consejo* business, a distinction between matters of “grace” and matters of justice developed, which suggests that this institutionalization had an impact. High ranking lords were concerned with deciding issues of politics and power in a broader sense, while *letrados* dealt with the details of justice. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 120-124; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 135.

them with elements of process and justification akin to those that had accompanied sentencing moments in his account of Alfonso Fernández Coronel's fall, and also in the earlier *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. For instance, in his account of 1383, Ayala offered what he claimed were the king's justifications for acting against Alfonso alongside the confiscatory command itself. He repeated them, at least in part, when he described Juan's 1385 consultation with the *Consejo* regarding what should be done about the *infante* personally. As such, the same justifications underpinned the king's imprisonment of the count and the seizure of his possessions, and also the later deliberation over the judicial procedures that would determine his personal fate.⁸⁴ However, although linked by similar justifications, Ayala presented them as distinct episodes.

In 1394, meanwhile, King Enrique connected his actions in León, and the reasons he publicly offered for them, to those taken by his father. Specifically, he evoked the justifications Juan was said to advance for his decision to authorize Alfonso's imprisonment and the confiscation of his possessions, not the subsequent and ultimately abortive *Consejo* consultation over further judicial action. Also, Ayala recounted rather elaborate procedural, and even ceremonial, elements attending Enrique's 1394 command in the cathedral. In particular, the king personally, without consultation, enumerated the charges against Alfonso, which has much in common with earlier royal trial accounts.⁸⁵ However, in describing the result of that process,

⁸⁴ However, Ayala also claimed that in 1385, King Juan had asked the *Consejo* to consider what to do about Alfonso in light not just of what he did, but what he might do. The notion of using justice proactively is developed further in the next chapter, but this points to another important shift.

⁸⁵ In 1394, Enrique also ordered the arrest of the Duke of Benavente. According to Ayala, the king had been told that the duke had been stirring up trouble with the other *epígonos*. He then summoned the duke under what Ayala described as false pretences. When he arrived, the king was in *Consejo*, but he then rose and left. After that, two squires came to arrest the duke. He protested that since his recent pardon he had committed no annoyance (*enojo*) against the king or caused any harm to the realm. But the *Consejo* members replied it was the king's *merced* he be arrested, and that the reasons why would be shown to him. Ayala then reiterated that this was done because of his communications with the other *epígonos*, but also because, in line with King Juan's fears in 1385, the king worried what might result if he were to join with them. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 24, pp. 228-229.

Ayala did not suggest the king's command constituted a formal sentence, a term he saved for the later hearing before the French king.

In both accounts then, Ayala described the respective kings ordering, and justifying, serious measures against Alfonso in settings that may or may not resemble a "trial," in the sense of a procedure through which a monarch enumerated charges and passed sentence in response to them. But certainly, those measures were authorized by means other than a formal sentence. In the accounts of earlier removals, a moment of judicial decision-making, in the hands of the king, was pivotal in mediating the separation of person and power. In addition to presenting a close association between determining the target's guilt, their punishment, and their loss of power, descriptions of those moments of justice were relatively concentrated within chronicle narratives. In these later accounts, both kings acted forcefully against Alfonso and his resources of power on different bases, yet with their own justifications and attended by procedural elements. Moreover, although further procedures were contemplated, large gaps existed between them and Alfonso's prior, practical disempowerment in both chronological and narrative terms.

Complicating the Separation of Person and Power

Despite that separation however, such actions can and should be interpreted as parts of continuing, or potentially continuing, judicial processes. For instance, in each account the justifications employed to support the royal orders overlapped with those advanced in relation to contemplated further procedures. As for the consequences of those orders, directives to seize Alfonso's possessions and to imprison or otherwise contain him were the main results of these explicitly justified, and in the latter case solemnized, commands. Such measures were certainly not new within the sphere of justice. Indeed, they have much in common with measures that had been authorized in legal codes long before, carried out on the authority of a court, in the context

of ongoing proceedings.⁸⁶ As such, they can be understood as representations of a court, namely the king and his counselors acting in a judicial capacity, making use of ordinary powers. But these narratives attach much more significance to the king taking those steps than those of earlier removals.

In consequence, both suggest a potential for seizures on two different bases, one initiated at the king's command, and another to be worked out later through a continuing formal judicial process.⁸⁷ In 1383, the king's command authorized both Alfonso's arrest and the confiscation of his goods, while in 1394, Enrique ordered the confiscation of Alfonso's possessions in León Cathedral. However, in the 1385 consultation, though Ayala depicted the king asking, mainly, about Alfonso's personal fate, the issue of his property and possessions was also included in the *Consejo's* recommendations. Moreover, in his account of the 1394 arbitration involving the French king, Alfonso's possessions, except Gijón, had already been seized. But nonetheless, when Juan's envoys argued with Alfonso before the King of France, the question of whether Alfonso should lose his possessions for good, or have them returned, was the central matter in dispute.

⁸⁶ Prison was generally envisioned as a place for those awaiting trial rather than a place of punishment. The *Partidas* reserve it for those who, if found guilty, would suffer a "pena de cuerpo," including death. *p.3, t.8, l.8; p.7, t.1, l.16; p.7, t.29, l.1-3*. See also Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 167-9; Di Crescenzo and Fisher, "Exile and Imprisonment in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," 14; Kay, "Martin IV and the Bishop of Bayeux," 460.

As for property, the goods of those who did not respond to a summons could be seized and, after a year, became forfeit to the treasury. *p.3, t.10*. Though, most *Partidas* laws dealing with this issue are about the sequestration of property in dispute, not subject to criminal penalties.

⁸⁷ According to Eiximenis, echoing an established principle, the goods of rebels could be confiscated. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 222. But, whether rebellion opened them up to seizure via judicial procedures, or they could just be taken from someone in open rebellion, was unclear. In Ayala's narratives however, such seizure alone was not enough. For instance, after Benavente's arrest, he reported that the king sent out letters to his possessions, telling them that he was taking them for himself, until he could determine what his *merced* about the duke might be. In other words, their ultimate disposition remained unsettled. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 25, p. 229.

To be sure, seizures of possessions, or suspensions of their nominal holder's ability to make use of them, were not out of the ordinary in the course of ongoing legal disputes.⁸⁸ Indeed, specific terms like *embargar* were sometimes used to differentiate them from permanent losses, though less specific terms, like *tomar*, appeared as well.⁸⁹ In these narratives however, Ayala's descriptions are ambiguous. The term he used to describe the seizures both kings ordered was confiscation, which in principle implied a permanent and settled loss of possession. For example, he used the word in that sense when portraying Alfonso Fernández Coronel's downfall, though only after King Pedro had passed sentence.⁹⁰ But in his accounts of these incidents, it appeared in relation to losses ordered before even the contemplation of procedures to reach such a sentence.

Moreover, in both the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and Ayala's work on earlier removals, redistribution of seized possessions to new holders was not reported until after kings issued a sentence.⁹¹ But despite Ayala's use of confiscation here, he had little to say about

⁸⁸ The powerful Guzmán family, for example, endured it in an ordinary legal dispute. Ladero Quesada, *Guzmán*, 101.

⁸⁹ *Embargar* refers to suspending official powers or payments. When these powers were over, or payments from, specific possessions or resources of power however, it can be ambiguous as to whether physical seizure occurred as well. Discussed at both the 1371 *Cortes* of Toro, and the 1401 *Cortes* of Tordesillas, it was in use throughout the period in question. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:193, 538. See also José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Enrique III de Castilla y la promoción eclesiástica del clero: Las iniciativas políticas y la suplicas benéficas (1390-1406)," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 33 (1995): 43.

⁹⁰ The importance of passing sentence was not just a concern for Ayala. At the Toro *Cortes* of 1371, Enrique II pledged not to take anything, or kill anyone, without trial. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:212.

⁹¹ Regarding the Duke of Benavente, Ayala described the king informing his possessions that he was temporarily taking them. On the other hand, he also said the king "turned over" his *behetrias*, a particular Castilian form of lordship, to other knights. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 25, p. 229. That, however, could be understood in a temporary sense, overseeing them while the duke could not. Later, however, he reported that Count Pedro, another *epígono* whose possessions were seized at the same time as the Duke of Benavente, was pardoned and received places that, he stressed, used to belong to the duke. No formal sentence had been reported in the meantime, yet this passage seems to imply a permanent change of possession. So although it might be too much to say Ayala was consistent in differentiating between temporary and permanent seizure based on whether a sentence had been passed, if indeed that was a distinction he could establish, this episode also offers a sense of temporary followed by more permanent losses. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 30, p. 231. Count Pedro had also been condemned for treason in 1384 (according to a royal *mandato* for carrying out the penalty, dated September 14), but like the *infante* Alfonso, had managed to restore himself to grace. AGS Patronato Real, leg. 59, n. 123.

See also Carlos Estepa Díez and Cristina Jular Pérez-Alfaro, "Castilian *Behetría* Lordship: From Current Perspectives towards a European Context," in *Land, Power, and Society in Medieval Castile: A Study of Behetría Lordship*, ed. Carlos Estepa Díez and Cristina Jular Pérez-Alfaro, *The Medieval Countryside* 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 1-28.

redistribution.⁹² In the first round, he insisted that Alfonso's possessions were confiscated to the crown, with one named exception. As for the second, he claimed guardianship of Alfonso's castles had been given to Ruy López Dávalos, on a temporary basis, while the rest of his possessions remained in the king's hands.⁹³ So despite Ayala's use of the term confiscation, the losses he described seem to be in keeping with possessions placed under *embargo*, or what later chroniclers called "sequestration," an explicitly temporary form of seizure.⁹⁴

But whether or not Ayala was conveying something akin to what would later be called sequestration, each account suggests that the ultimate disposition of Alfonso's possessions was still an open question after the initial seizure orders. At that point in both narratives, further judicial procedures were considered or under way, but not completed. Therefore, Alfonso's material losses by those newly stressed royal commands appear distinct from, but also less secure and permanent than, those authorized, or potentially authorized, by a definitive sentence.

Ultimately, Ayala's accounts place Alfonso's practical disempowerment, meaning loss of access to possessions or loss of freedom of action, before further judicial action, whether only contemplated or carried out. A place for judicial confirmation in stripping power and, in 1385 at least, the personal fate of the target, certainly endured. But determining guilt and personal

⁹² On the other hand, a certain degree of ambiguity could adhere to loss and redistribution, even in documentary sources. In the aftermath of the Trastámara victory in the 1366-9 civil war, many possessions changed hands as the vanquished were despoiled and the victors rewarded. In 1369, for example, Enrique II granted Fernán Carrillo all the moveable and real property of his relation, Ferran Pérez Calvillo, who was said to still be "disserving" the king. However, the exact terms on which, and process by which, the former owner had lost those goods was not specified. Lope Pascual Martínez, *Documentos de Enrique II*, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia 3 (Murcia: Academia de Alfonso X el Sabio, 1983), doc. 2, 2. Somewhat later, in 1373 the Count of Carrión received the possessions of several people who had "fallen into a state that they deserved to lose their goods." This time, the grant did suggest the losers had been condemned in some way before passing them on. Pascual Martínez, *Documentos de Enrique II*, doc. 128, 193.

⁹³ A rising favorite of Enrique III, Ruy López returns in the next section. Ayala said this state of affairs was arranged with Alfonso's consent, pointing to the role negotiation plays in this confrontation. On the other hand, he also described them as already having been seized by the king, so that consent appears to have been more formal than active. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1394 ch. 31, p. 232.

⁹⁴ Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 154.

punishment was not directly in the king's hands, and Ayala devoted his attention elsewhere, to those things which more directly were. In both narratives, the firm connection between sentence, guilt, punishment and loss which characterized accounts of earlier removals was much less evident.⁹⁵

Of course, neither narrative reports such a sentence. But regardless, the royal role in trying and sentencing Alfonso was envisioned differently. The kings may put the wheels of justice in motion, but their place in any ongoing judicial process was less central.⁹⁶ Instead, their most direct involvement shifted toward issuing confiscatory commands. Moreover, earlier narratives presented losses of power, concentrated in a single moment, in binary terms. That is to say, possession gave way to loss of possession following a clearly expressed royal judgement. In Ayala's later accounts however, with justice depicted as an unfolding process, he also described, and indeed directed his focus toward, seizures implied to be temporary or subject to further review.⁹⁷ This element of ambiguity turned losing power, like justice itself, into a kind of a process.

Most importantly, through their association with the king, these accounts accord losses of power of this kind prominence while also connecting them to procedural and justificatory

⁹⁵ That is not to say that had been the only way of depicting kings acting in ways which impacted the power of their subjects, only that within this particular kind of narrative that separation, while still within in overall judicial framework, was new.

⁹⁶ Although his role in personally deciding may have declined, a sense of his responsibility for making sure justice was done certainly endured. Royal responsibility to do so was stressed in the *Partidas* and was affirmed in *Cortes* proceedings, such as Briviesca in 1387, which insisted he must make sure his people are "well ruled in peace and justice, and must correct and improve things that may be contrary to good government." *p.2, t. 1, l. 6; Cortes de los Antiguos Reinos*, 2:362. In fact, the concept of the government or management of the realm grew in importance in the fifteenth century, and these changes in the king's role may be tied to it. Black, *Political Thought*, 187; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 110-155; Jaime de Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla y León en la edad media* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2000), 129-130.

⁹⁷ Yet still, in these accounts, the monarchs in question did benefit. Even if the fate of the target and their possessions was undecided, in the context of ongoing confrontations, their political and military threat was curtailed.

elements.⁹⁸ Although Ayala suggested that Alfonso remained politically difficult after both seizures, to the point that Juan desired, and Enrique was open to, further proceedings, he did not portray them or their outcomes as the only factors that could legitimize the losses Alfonso faced. Justified royal commands, associated with judicial processes but falling short of the punishment of a guilty target for specific crimes, were also significant.⁹⁹ Later, the disposition of seized possessions, and the target's personal fate, may remain subject to formal justice. But in terms of conceiving power and its loss in the context of confronting a rival, Ayala described kings intervening to undermine practical power distinctly from, though still connected to, long term efforts to secure their formal condemnation.

⁹⁸ This shift highlights tension between state or institution building narratives and ceremonialization discussions. On the one hand, García-Gallo notes a decline in the significance of the personal lordship of the king in the later Middle Ages. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 738. On the other hand, the idea that his personal conduct and example was vital for the good of the realm was quite strong. Ayala, indeed, expressed it in the *Rimado de palacio*, saying the realm was governed by the king's example. *Rimado de palacio*, 104. See also Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza*, 68; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 36, 85; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 73.

⁹⁹ Ayala wrote that justice was a virtue that not only punished crimes, but ensured a prosperous realm (*la tierra tien poblada*). *Rimado de palacio*, 59. This double purpose suggests both a reactive, punishing sense of justice, but also its more proactive benefits for good government. Harding, *Medieval Law and the Foundations of the State*, 2.

For another example, in his *Crónica de Juan I*, Ayala recounted the downfall of Pedro Manrique, who was arrested, dismissed from office, stripped of his possessions and imprisoned in 1380. The king had received word that he had been conspiring against him, contrary to his service. As a result, Juan summoned him to court. The ensuing confrontation was placed specifically "at court" where the king, in the midst of his *Consejo*, asked the *infante* Alfonso, the main witness, to confirm the accusations. He did so, and despite Manrique's denials, the king ordered his arrest. Although this incident, like Benavente's arrest, shares similarities with older accounts of royal justice, no sentence or formal judgement of guilt was described. Indeed, in Ayala's further explanation the king had previously reached a settlement with Manrique's relatives, in which they swore they would not protest his treatment in exchange for his offices and possessions being kept in the family. Nonetheless, Ayala introduced this settlement, which he presented as putting an end to Manrique's machinations, by means that echoed the terminology and forms of justice. *Crónica de Juan I*, 1380 ch. 4, pp. 68-69. The *Corte* in general could be conceived a site of justice, whatever the king's role in it may be. See Antonio Bádenas Zamora, "Los casos de corte y su enjuiciamiento por los alcaldes del rey," in Gamba Gutiérrez and Labrador Arroyo, *Evolución y estructura de la Casa Real de Castilla*, 1033-1061.

Also, a royal communication to the city government of Murcia describes, with respect to this situation, a deal similar to that chronicled by Ayala. Díez Martínez, *Documentos de Juan I*, doc. 36, 66.

Conclusion

In the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and Pedro López de Ayala's extensive chronicle work, processes of justice serve as key mediators through which kings confronted, punished, and disempowered rivals among the nobility. But what those processes entailed, and in particular what role kings played in them, look quite different in Ayala's depictions of late-century removals than they did in the earlier accounts. Those differences owed much to his assimilation of late fourteenth-century developments in judicial institutions and procedures. In consequence, Ayala's later narratives offer a distinct vision of the way in which judicial processes separated person and power, and of the nature of the losses suffered by targets.

In particular, immediate practical losses of power, carried out at royal command, and decisions about long term arrangements or personal punishments, were separate, even though both had been tightly bound together in accounts of earlier removals, with one another and with royal determinations of guilt.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, late-century depictions direct more attention to losses of power of the first type, and connect them with both justifications and procedural elements. Though sometimes ambiguously defined, they played at least as important a role in Ayala's accounts of later separations of person and power as the prospect of permanent losses associated with determinations of guilt. However, Ayala continued to use the same language of crime, guilt, and punishment which he, and Sánchez de Valladolid, had employed in older narratives.

¹⁰⁰ Mollat and Wolff, studying popular uprisings in the late medieval era, refer to the "invasion of society by the state," especially by its fiscal apparatus. Michel Mollat and Philippe Wolff, *The Popular Revolutions of the Late Middle Ages* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1973), 283. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública* supplies a contemporary take on this sentiment. According to Eiximenis, an ideal prince was a shepherd who protected his subjects and their property, but when discussing the foundations of their power, he suggested that in comparison with former times, rulers in his own day demanded more from their subjects and showed less concern for their rights. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 121, 177.

Ayala's chronicles end in 1396, but others took up the task of writing royal chronicles. They continued to work with similar judicial conventions to those which Ayala assimilated into his work, and which had helped to expand the limits of legitimate royal action when disempowering troublesome subjects. But thanks to a quasi-revolution in expressions of royal authority beginning in the 1420's, those later chroniclers could "fill" the gaps between loss of power and the establishment of personal guilt, and define the losses depicted independently of it more securely. Absorbing this new terminology, they also developed a sense of royal justice as a tool of governance as much as punishment, and closely connected to that, a conception of power as something exercised rather than possessed. As a result, a distinctive new register through which rulers could legitimately confront and disempower subjects emerged.

PART TWO

Chapter Three

Loss of Power along a *Vía de Justicia*: The Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century

King Juan II, the infant son of Enrique III, succeeded his father in 1406. Due to the king's youth, regents ruled until he came of age in 1419, opening over thirty years of recurrent political struggles.¹ In those contests, aristocratic members of frequently shifting bands of rivals often suffered losses of power at royal hands.² Moreover, with the new reign also came new chronicles dedicated to it, and those confrontations, along with many of their attendant downfalls, have a major place within them.

In those accounts, judicial procedures still played key roles in legitimizing separations of person and power.³ Their depictions share much with Ayala's late fourteenth-century work, and the continued framing of deposition narratives around such procedures forms an important link between them.⁴ Below, I work closely with four accounts of important removals from the chronicles of the reign of Juan II, which also serve as the basis for the next two chapters. For

¹ He reigned until 1454.

² Like with the early fourteenth century, that is not to say that these years were turbulent in comparison to a stable norm, but they did see an unusually high number of "court coups" and other enforced reshuffles of the circle around the king. Foronda, "Le prince, le palais et la ville," 533. Despite that, the legitimacy of the monarchy, its institutions and, for the most part, its claims to authority, were not seriously called into question. Freedon, "Crisis? How Is That a Crisis!?", 20. Finally, despite the turbulence, the court in this era was an important intellectual and cultural hub, and nearly all the historical and literary works under consideration were written by figures associated with it. López-Vidriero Abello, "Crónicas impresas y lectura de corte," 424.

³ Influential Catalan political theorist Francesc Eiximenis, writing in the late fourteenth century, insisted that the best kingdoms retained the respect for law found in ancient city states, and suggested knowledge of law was among the most important qualifications for leadership. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 91.

⁴ That organizational form remained even as meanings within it shifted. Freedon, "Conceptual History, Ideology and Language," 119, 124. On continuities, see Fernández Gallardo, "El discurso directo," 134-5; Fernando Gómez Redondo, "Discurso y elocución," 230; Ward, "'Chronicle' and 'History'," 104-5.

Also, Robert Folger argues that fifteenth century Castilians, when engaging with royal chronicles, viewed the various chronicles in some ways as a "homogenous historiographical whole," tied together by the common thread of the succession of reigns. Folger, "A Genealogy of Castilian Historiography," 62-64.

now, that means laying out their basic “shape” and placing them in the context of contemporary narratives of judicial procedures.

The term *vía de justicia* is a useful way to characterize those depictions, employed here to refer to judicial procedures unfolding over an extended chronological and narrative space, with multiple steps and multiple possible outcomes. Like in Ayala’s late fourteenth-century work, a *vía de justicia* made room for describing royal interventions, attendant justifications, and outcomes separate from sentences and punishments. Moreover, fifteenth century chronicle narratives also direct their focus toward similar measures, and their consequences, with which they also most directly associate the figure of the king. That makes them at least as significant as formal findings of guilt, when, that is, such findings appear at all.

For now, that is the extent of my engagement with these accounts. But as I explore in the next two chapters, in contrast to their fourteenth-century predecessors, chroniclers of the first half of the fifteenth century employed a distinct vocabulary for the measures they described, and their consequences. They did not abandon, but certainly supplemented, the language of guilt, punishment and loss of possession on which Ayala, in particular, relied.⁵ Combining the new terminology with this by now well-established way of depicting royal justice facilitated new ways of articulating what it meant to lose, and to have, political power. That articulation, moreover, changed the terms on which monarchs confronted troublesome subjects in ways that helped to solidify a strong, central role for royal authority as the premier arbiter of power in the realm.

⁵ On silences, see Steinmetz and Freedon, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 29.

Fifteenth Century Royal Chronicles

Unlike for much of the fourteenth century, when each reign had only one royal chronicle devoted to it, Juan II's reign is the subject of multiple royal chronicles.⁶ Following the conventions of *crónicas reales*, they focus on the activities of the king and his court.⁷ For the years between 1420 and 1434, the period during which all of the incidents whose accounts are examined below took place, there are two principal royal chronicle "traditions."⁸

The first is that of the *Crónica de Juan II*.⁹ Shortly after López de Ayala stopped his chronicle work around the turn of the fifteenth century, courtier Álvaro García de Santa María was chosen to succeed him by then-regent Fernando de Antequera, brother of the late Enrique III.¹⁰ He was certainly responsible for a chronicle of the years 1406 to 1419. But for my purposes, more significant is a separate account extending from 1420 to 1434. Although Álvaro García is a

⁶ Though certainly contemporary, in contrast to the relatively straightforward authorship and dating of their predecessors, there is considerably more confusion on both counts. Bautista, "La segunda parte de la *Crónica de Juan II*," 135-8. Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, writing in mid-century, criticized the state of historical writing in Castile, and questioned the objectivity of chroniclers sponsored by rulers or those close to them. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 5-7. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 511-18.

⁷ Fernández Gallardo, "La Crónica Real," 281-322. Fifteenth century accounts had to accommodate intense factional conflict and the role of royal favorite Álvaro de Luna, but they still framed actions as being taken by the king, and his authority was still described as being at work. Distinctions between ruler and office meant that such difficulties could be accommodated, but the king and royal power could not be totally separated. Even if in fact the work of advisors or officials, actions were framed as the king's. Black, *Political Thought*, 187; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 36. According to Nieto Soria, the court was a privileged site, as the scene of conflicts involving "sovereign power." José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 15-55. See also Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 349.

⁸ I say traditions because there are, for each, a surviving contemporary chronicle and a later reworking that is substantially based on the respective originals. That is not to say they are identical, but the later accounts are not really independent either, even in the sense of using existing materials in an original way. The contemporary chronicles are also ascribed to authors who worked at court, with access to royal documents.

⁹ Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 183-87.

¹⁰ Although the formal office of royal chronicler had not yet been created, he was certainly given the role, which by this time was well-established. Fernando was also the father of the *infantes* of Aragón, who played a major role in the politics of the era. See Santiago González Sánchez, *Fernando I: Regente de Castilla y rey de Aragón*, (Gijón: Trea, 2012). García de Santa María's connection to Fernando also extended to his children, especially the *infante* Juan, but he ultimately remained with Juan II and his advisor Álvaro de Luna when they came into conflict with the *infantes* of Aragón. That is significant, since most of the fifteenth century removals whose accounts I study were connected to the various confrontations in which they were involved.

possible author, his responsibility for it is uncertain.¹¹ However, both these accounts form the basis for coverage of the years 1406 through 1434 in a chronicle of Juan's entire reign published in 1517 by Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, and attributed by him to Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, the second account of this tradition.¹² The earlier account, from 1420 to 1434, is cited simply as *Crónica de Juan II*, and the later one as Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*. Though Pérez de Guzmán's authorship is doubtful, he is identified as such in the edition cited and it allows for simple differentiation.

The other tradition is that of the *Crónica del Halconero*. Around the time of King Juan's majority, another courtier, Pedro Carrillo de Huete, began a basic chronicle of the newly adult monarch's reign.¹³ He continued this effort, with growing complexity, until 1441. Thereafter, another author took up the task more or less where he left off, though both parts are placed together as the *Crónica del Halconero*.¹⁴ The author of that second part, most likely Bishop Lope de Barrientos, is also associated with the so-called *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero*. Its

¹¹ Poet Juan de Mena held the by then official post of royal chronicler in the middle of the fifteenth century. López-Vidriero Abello, "Crónicas impresas y lectura de corte," 424-29; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y Legitimación Dinástica*, 182, 187. That would be significant, since Juan de Mena was broadly sympathetic to Álvaro de Luna while García was closer to the *infantes*. Pérez de Guzmán, another anti-Luna figure, wrote that García's work was solid, but after him the task of chronicling passed to others and was "corrupted." *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 8. Also, even in the account stretching from 1420 to 1434, certain changes in style suggest it is possible that after about 1430 Álvaro García's role, assuming he was involved after 1419, diminished or ended under pressure by Álvaro de Luna or his partisans. Gómez Redondo, "Discurso y elocución," 226-29, 245. See also Donatella Ferro, ed, *Le Parti Inedite della "Crónica de Juan II"* (Venice: Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, 1972); Angus Mackay and Dorothy Sherman Severin, eds, *Cosas Sacadas de la Historia del Rey Don Juan en Segundo* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1981).

¹² The later printed account is somewhat abridged in comparison to its earlier inspiration. It also certainly reflects interventions and additions made by other contributors, among whom were quite probably Diego de Valera and Galíndez de Carvajal himself. As for Pérez de Guzmán, he had few reasons to love the king, and indeed his posthumous character sketch of him, added to his slightly earlier collection *Generaciones y semblanzas*, is not flattering. Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," xviii-xxi; Mata Carriazo, "Estudio Preliminar," xx-xxvi; Moya Garica, *Edición y Estudio de la Valeriana*, lxxii-lxxvi; Jorge Sanz, introduction to Gutierre Díez de Games, *El Victorial: Crónica de don Pedro Nino*, ed. Jorge Sanz (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 1989), xxxiv.

¹³ Carrillo de Huete also got his start under Fernando de Antequera. But he was close to King Juan as well, and sympathized with him against the *infantes*. And thanks to his court post, he had access to documents.

¹⁴ On that change, the differences between it and the *Crónica* tradition, and its role in the later printed version, see Fernández Gallardo, "El discurso directo," 113-15.

first modern editor considered it, essentially, a more sophisticated mid-century reformulation of Carrillo de Huete's chronicle up to 1439. In terms of structure, it follows the *Crónica del Halconero* quite closely in its coverage of the critical 1420's and 30's.¹⁵

These narratives, three broadly contemporary with the events they describe, tend to agree among themselves about the outlines of those events, but differ in emphasis and interpretation.¹⁶ But rather than focusing on the perspectives of individual chroniclers regarding specific events or people, similarities between the ways in which they described the justification, authorization and nature of separations of person and power are emphasized.¹⁷ And when compared with their predecessors, and especially with Ayala's work, the later chronicles depart from their example in specific, similar ways.¹⁸ That suggests that more than just individual preferences or perspectives drove those departures.¹⁹

Reading them alongside other contemporary sources shows that the accounts shared, and were subject to, common influences.²⁰ First, consultation of documentary evidence which contextualizes the chronicle accounts continues, in order to better understand the main events

¹⁵ The *Crónica del Halconero* begins as a spare record of events, but becomes more complex. The slightly later *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero* has been seen as a reworking of Carrillo de Huete. More recently, the strength of its relationship to the *Crónica del Halconero* has been questioned. Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," xxi-xxxiii, xlv-lv; Mata Carriazo, "Estudio Preliminar," xxxiv-xlv, cxii-cxvi.

¹⁶ And style itself, along with the "rhetorical tools" at the disposal of the chroniclers, have an impact as well. Julio López-Arias, "López de Ayala: Rasgos sobresalientes de su narrativa," *Hispanófila: Literatura - Ensayos* 122 (1998): 2.

¹⁷ The new ideas discussed above had an impact in both traditions, and they were not associated with the priorities of only one chronicler or the structure of a particular account.

¹⁸ The *Crónica* tradition accounts tend to cast the king acting through law and institutions. The *Halconero* tradition accounts present him more as an individual with preferences which guide his actions.

¹⁹ Ayala and Sánchez de Valladolid had specific projects, both broadly royalist, and Ayala in particular highlighted processes of justice as a basis for legitimacy. It is not surprising that the later accounts have different concerns than Ayala, but the fifteenth century chroniclers all tended to present processes of justice in similar ways to him within their narratives. So, there are links between them which facilitate evaluating changes within narratives that share genre conventions. This approach also contrasts with much recent work on royal power and justice in fifteenth century Castile, which casts these ideas as coming from the court, then focuses on the ways in which others reacted to royal claims or tried to bend them to their purposes. Based heavily on documentary sources, they focus on the influence of new ideas on the practice of power, while here the focus is on its conception.

²⁰ Especially emanating from the court, where they were produced. Fernández Gallardo, "El discurso directo," 97-8.

and their sequence, and also to facilitate comparisons between chronicle accounts and royal “messaging.”²¹ Indeed, all the fifteenth century chroniclers extensively incorporated what they identified as copies of royal documents to help them advance their narratives, and terminology pioneered in those documents influenced chronicles of both traditions throughout.²² Finally, these narratives, like their fourteenth-century predecessors, are placed in the context of a continually evolving legal normative tradition and representations of justice, and royal power, at work in contemporary literature.²³

Royal Justice in the Chronicles of Juan II

Like their fourteenth-century forebears, no fifteenth century chronicle account of judicial procedures mediating the separation of person and power can be read as a trial record.²⁴ Yet accounts of both traditions do describe judicial processes with procedural or legal details which

²¹ Castilian archival records of this time are very fragmentary. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 418.

As noted, the written word as a propagandistic device was particularly prominent in Trastámara Castile. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 24, 198. For its use in how the central government maintained its influence over local officials see Pérez-Alfaro, “Monarquía y gobierno territorial en la baja Edad Media.” For similar concerns in an English context, see; Saul, “Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship,” 875. Anthony Black also notes the ideological nature of records, arguing they promote the views of those who employed the specialists who created them. Black, *Political Thought*, 4-5.

²² For instance, before inserting one, the earlier *Crónica* suggests that including a statement from the “mouth of the king,” would lend authority to its account. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 1, p. 169. Barbosa Schiavinato, “Cronística medieval em Portugal,” 299; Fernández Gallardo, “Sobre los orígenes de la crónica real castellana,” 771-2; Velasco, *Dead Voice*, 41.

²³ Aristotle’s ideas were hugely important, as were those of Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome and Ramon Llull. More particularly for Castile, Francesc Eiximenis and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo were also important. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 645. For Sánchez de Arévalo see Tjällén, “Political Thought and Political Myth,” 273-4. On links between chronicle writing and popular works of fiction, see López-Vidriero Abello, “Crónicas impresas y lectura de corte,” 413. In comparison to the fourteenth century, especially before the Trastámara, many works in these traditions were produced at the initiative of members of the nobility rather than rulers. Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 31.

²⁴ Yaamina Foehr-Janssens, “The Queen on Trial: Spectacle of Innocence, Performance of Beauty,” in Brown-Grant, Rosalind, Bernard Ribémont, and Anne Dawson Hedeman, *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval France: Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 223-229; Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 40-58. For more on law or justice in narratives, see Wilf, “Law/Text/Past,” 543-564.

establish, according to contemporary standards, a “register of justice.”²⁵ To get a sense of what such a register looks like in both chronicle traditions, in contexts beyond specific narratives of disempowerment, two examples from the 1420’s are illustrative. They involve political figures of lesser rank who were subjected to forms of justice at court, but their personal fates were not associated, in either tradition, with losses of resources supporting power of the kind associated with the downfalls of more prominent figures.

First is the 1428 execution of Juan García de Guadalajara. Among the political contests noted above, one enduring element from the mid-1420’s to the mid-1440’s was a rivalry between Álvaro de Luna, King Juan’s closest advisor, and the king’s powerful cousins, the *infantes* of Aragón.²⁶ Juan García’s end was associated with this long confrontation. As a court functionary, his removal from the political scene did not make much difference in terms of the balance of power in the realm. But, that makes his fall a good example for understanding how fifteenth century chroniclers depicted “crime and punishment” justice, before moving on to the more complicated process of disempowering significant political actors along a *vía de justicia*.

²⁵ The late fourteenth-century reforms formed the basis on which the “justice system” would in theory operate thereafter. Complaints about inefficiency and corruption never went away, but they were expressed in terms of those formal rules not being followed, such as in royal *ordenamiento* issued in Guadalajara in 1436. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 195, 487-90. But other changes were proposed, and sometimes enacted, throughout Juan’s reign. For instance, in 1427 he established which glossators could be cited in Castilian courts. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 91. However, chronicle narratives do not generally go into that level of detail. Also, according to García-Gallo, Castile had a “national” legal tradition by the late Middle Ages, but he describes it as a system of norms more than a set of specific laws. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 93, 167.

²⁶ Álvaro de Luna was a minor member of the important Aragonese House of Luna, who came to Castile at a young age and quickly became close to King Juan II. The *infantes* were cousins to the king, and their father Fernando had been regent during Juan’s minority, during which time he ensured his own children were well provided for. Fernando later became king of Aragón, and was succeeded by his eldest son Alfonso in 1416, while another of the *infantes*, also named Juan, held important lordships in Castile and became king of Navarre by marriage. Another brother, Enrique, became the Master of the military-religious Order of Santiago, a very powerful post. Meanwhile the *infanta* María became queen of Castile after she married her cousin, Juan II, while Juan II’s sisters, María and Catalina, married Alfonso, King of Aragón and Enrique, Master of Santiago, respectively. As such, they had an extensive power base both within and outside Castile, and were at the center of many political controversies between 1420 and 1445. See Víctor Muñoz Gómez, *El poder señorial de Fernando "el de Antequera" y los de su casa* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2018). Political rivalries were in fact more complex, and less stable, than a simple Álvaro-*infantes* divide. However, they were each at the center of opposing bands of allies more often than not.

More specifically, before Juan García de Guadalajara's execution, he had been declared responsible for forging letters which had implicated several powerful figures in treasonous activity back in 1422.²⁷ Although by 1428 the forgery itself was several years in the past, one of those powerful figures, the *infante* Enrique, was then in the ascendant at court. In 1427, the *infantes* of Aragón succeeded in pushing their rival, Álvaro de Luna, away from the king's side, thus strengthening their own influence.²⁸ The *infante* Enrique, therefore, was in a position to demand a review of the affair.²⁹

The accounts of the *Crónica* tradition describe this event indirectly. According to the contemporary *Crónica de Juan II*, the *infante* Enrique asked King Juan to help publicize his redemption once his name had been cleared and Juan García had met his end. In particular, he requested that the king send out a general letter to the realm stressing that competent judges at court had examined the letters in question, and had "issued a sentence condemning [Juan García] for forgery, and accordingly he was justly beheaded and dragged through the streets."³⁰ Galíndez de Carvajal's later reworking of the *Crónica*, in contrast, devotes less attention to procedure, saying only that Enrique asked that the king's letters should show Juan García's "falsehood" had been proven, and he had been sentenced to death because of it.³¹

The *Crónica del Halconero*, for its part, reports the execution directly, without describing any prior judicial process. However, it includes what it calls the proclamation made by a herald

²⁷ This incident is explored in greater depth below. Ruiz, "Fiestas, torneos y símbolos de realeza," 254. Velasco, *Dead Voice*, 34.

²⁸ Juan García probably acted on Álvaro de Luna's behalf. The letters certainly helped him, discrediting two powerful rivals.

²⁹ His execution did not take place until after Álvaro de Luna's return. However, he apparently was unable to intervene or, more likely, uninterested in doing so.

³⁰ The judges are referred to as "Alcaldes del Rey;" "condenáronlo por sentencia á pena de falso, por virtud de la cual fué degollado é arrastrado por justicia." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 5, pp. 9-11.

³¹ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 5, p. 415. Proven, in this context, meant proven based on a ruling by a court.

on the day of his execution, which affirmed that his death was the “justice that our lord the king had ordered carried out against this forger.”³² While this proclamation directly connected the king’s command with Juan García’s penalty, its phrasing follows a standard model, and does not really reveal anything about the process involved in reaching that decision or how much, or little, the king was involved in it.³³

These three accounts of Juan García de Guadalajara’s fall are each quite concise and concentrated within their wider narratives. In that, they have much in common with depictions of removals from the early and mid-fourteenth century. Looking more closely, the earlier iteration of the *Crónica* emphasizes that his sentencing was in response to a crime. However, the king’s judges were responsible for issuing the sentence, and the king’s distance from the decision is more in keeping with late-fourteenth century examples. The later *Crónica*, though reporting the same sentence for the crime of forgery, notes only that it had been proven, without asserting who was responsible for making that determination. As for the *Crónica del Halconero*’s treatment, although its depiction of the herald’s speech casts his royally authorized execution as the result of a formal sentence, in response to a specific crime, it has nothing to say about how that sentence was determined. But none of the chronicles insist on any direct royal involvement in condemning Juan García in a procedural sense, echoing Ayala’s late fourteenth-century accounts.

Altogether, each of the three chronicles treat Juan García’s condemnation as a matter of crime and punishment under royal auspices, but without much direct royal involvement. However, his fall did not involve the often much longer process of disentangling person and

³² “justicia que manda fazer nuestro señor el Rey a este falsario.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 2, pp. 19-20. See also Cañas Gálvez, “La cámara de Juan II,” 122.

³³ The *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero* omits this incident entirely.

power in the midst of political controversies. In narratives of that type, the enduring legitimacy of the king's judicial functions served as the basis for a much wider range of interventions which, unlike in their late fourteenth-century predecessors, had a distinct identity.

Chronicle accounts of the downfall of Fernán Alfonso de Robles offer a foretaste of those other justifications and authorizing forces, depicted at work along a *vía de justicia*. Arrested in 1427, soon after Álvaro de Luna's expulsion from court, he was another court functionary who fell from grace in the course of disputes among the king's confidante and the *infantes*. Amid the political upheavals of the late 1420's he had angered King Juan, while at the same time earning the ill will of the *infantes*, leaving him doubly exposed.

In the accounts of the *Crónica* tradition, his fate was decided at a *Consejo* meeting in the presence of King Juan II. In their depictions of the gathering, the *infante* Juan, brother to Enrique, accused Fernán Alfonso of having acted in the king's "disservice." More specifically, the *infante* identified him as the prime mover behind recent conflicts, and offered to provide proof to back up his assertions.³⁴ In the contemporary chronicle account, the *infante* Juan then urged the king to "do justice" against Fernán Alfonso. The *Consejo* concurred, saying that he should be arrested and that the king should "order an investigation," and then respond justly, according to its findings.³⁵ The later reworking, in contrast, says only that the *infante* asked the king to remedy the situation, after which the king ordered his arrest on the *Consejo*'s advice.³⁶

³⁴ In the earlier *Crónica* the king instigated the meeting because he shared the "bad feeling." In the later one, the *infante* Juan instigated it. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 5, pp. 9-11; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 5, p. 415. On what constituted proof in such a context, see Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 88, 114; Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 48-49, 95-99. Generally, the significance of documentary proof grew at the expense of testimonial proof over the course of the period in question.

³⁵ "mandar saber la verdad." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 12, pp. 458-461. That was a common phrase used in judicial investigations. Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 63-64.

³⁶ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 8, pp. 442-443.

Moving on to the *Halconero* tradition accounts, each abruptly announces that Fernán Alfonso de Robles had been arrested in the aftermath of Álvaro de Luna's 1427 expulsion. They also claim that this action had been put in motion by "some gentlemen" who disliked him. The *Crónica del Halconero* casts the king's role in reactive terms, saying only that he had "approved of his imprisonment."³⁷ And this account, uniquely, does not suggest any disagreements between him and the king. Indeed, it attributes his fall to the king's trust in him, of which the *infantes*, then in a powerful political position, were aware. Since they knew that he did not support them, it implies, they seized their chance to eliminate him.³⁸ In contrast, the *Refundición* gives the king a more active role in the affair, saying he commanded, rather than just approved, the arrest.³⁹

Like Juan García de Guadalajara, Fernán Alfonso de Robles was of only moderate status, and none of the accounts mentioned any possessions or offices being stripped from him.⁴⁰ However, although the earlier *Crónica* account presents his confinement as a matter of justice put before the *Consejo*, both the accounts of the *Crónica* tradition and their *Halconero* counterparts center their narratives on his arrest undertaken at the king's command, or at least allowed by him. Relatedly, there is little sense in any account that his arrest was punishment for a crime.⁴¹ In the *Crónica* accounts, especially the earlier one, although a formal investigation and

³⁷ *Crónica del Halconero*, 14.

³⁸ The author of the *Crónica del Halconero* was often the most personally sympathetic to king Juan, but also took less care to protect the more abstract dignity of the crown than those of other narratives. Here, he cast the king as having been more or less imposed upon, while others insisted that he was also angry at Fernán Alfonso for his role in helping to push Álvaro de Luna out of court, thus suggesting that he achieved some sort of goal in punishing Robles as well.

³⁹ *Refundición*, ch. 23, 53-54.

⁴⁰ However, according to *Generaciones y semblanzas*, his possessions were seized as well. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 108. And a *real cédula* dated March 24, 1428 ordered the sequestration of his financial assets. AGS Cámara de Castilla, Diversos, 41, 28.

⁴¹ And in the contemporary *Crónica*, an investigation and trial, though proposed, had certainly not been carried out. Instead, it offers a sense of there being personal political or emotional interests involved behind his removal. A relatively defenseless courtier, out of friends, was done away with due to personal animosity. But even with stronger royal authority joined to new royal roles, not every action a king took, whether through judicial procedures or not, was simply dressed up as royal government. Here, both in the more "procedural" *Crónica*

trial had been proposed, at that point in the narrative it had not yet occurred. However, all four accounts stress, in their own ways, the interplay of personalities and politics behind the arrest rather than accusations of specific misdeeds. They all note bad blood between the *infantes* and Fernán Alfonso, while three, the *Crónica del Halconero* being the exception, insist that the king had been angry with him as well. Similar juxtapositions of judicial forms with wider varieties of motives occurred in more substantial deposition narratives along *vías de justicia* as well.

To be sure, an arrest pending trial was in keeping with judicial norms. However, none of these chronicle accounts describes a trial, and only the earlier *Crónica* insists one was even contemplated.⁴² As for the arrest, they each suggest it was authorized by a royal command which was justified by, at most, vague allusions to criminality. The whole affair, in fact, is cast more as a response to the desires of particular actors in a specific political circumstance. Overall, in the case of Juan García de Guadalajara, the chroniclers behind both traditions affirmed he was subjected to straightforward royal justice, even if they did not describe its course. But with respect to Fernán Alfonso de Robles, judicial settings and suggestions of judicial procedures served as a path to authorize and justify an effective outcome, imprisonment, which did not depend on formal findings of guilt and their resulting punishments.

Loss of Power along a *Vía de Justicia*

Judicial elements, and justifications, play similar roles in accounts of depositions of nobles at royal hands in these same chronicles. Their narratives of separations of person and power are structured in ways that follow, or at least allude to, what can be called a *vía de justicia*. The use of the term *vía* to describe judicial processes was longstanding, and could mean simply

accounts, and the simpler *Halconero* narratives, his arrest owed more to undisguised grudges than the good of the realm. Although that did not excite much comment in this case, in others it certainly did.

⁴² The earlier *Crónica* comes closest, with the king's order of an investigation.

going to court rather than settling in another manner.⁴³ However, it can also refer to procedural justice working over time and in stages. Royal chronicle narratives of both traditions certainly represent distinct measures that mediated the separation of person and power, while still associating them with larger judicial processes, or the prospect of them.⁴⁴ But in doing so, they cast those processes as paths toward authorizing and legitimizing losses on much more varied terms than Ayala's accounts did.⁴⁵

The 1437 arrest of prominent nobleman Pedro Manrique de Lara on royal orders, and subsequent negotiations between his supporters and King Juan, offers a concrete example of how judicial processes could serve many purposes in confrontations.⁴⁶ His arrest itself was described, and justified, similarly to detentions which, in the more substantial accounts examined below, preceded further judicial action. His abrupt confinement, however, caused an uproar, though open conflict was averted thanks to a deal worked out between the king and Pedro Manrique's allies.⁴⁷ According to its terms, he would be imprisoned for two years, during which time his brother would take custody of the fortresses over which he had exercised control.⁴⁸

⁴³ García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 157. A similar term is the *via procesal*, referring to procedural justice as it developed in the late fourteenth century. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 449.

⁴⁴ Identifying specific laws broken was less important than showing process had been followed. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 31.

⁴⁵ Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 42.

⁴⁶ By 1437, Álvaro de Luna had achieved a dominant position at court. This arrest was arranged at his instigation, likely to neutralize a potential rival. It backfired tremendously, helping to spark nearly eight years of intermittent internal conflict which included another period of exile from court for the favorite himself. For signs of his involvement, see an order from 1437 directing him to arrest Pedro Manrique. José Manuel Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna (1419-1453): Colección diplomática* (Madrid: Dykinson, 1999), doc. 44, 138.

⁴⁷ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1437 ch. 3, p. 534; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 220, pp. 248-250; *Refundición*, ch. 120, p. 216-217.

⁴⁸ The later *Crónica* adds that his property was sequestered while under arrest, which is supported by documentary evidence. In a letter dated August 23, 1438, King Juan indicated he had ordered such a step to the city government of Murcia. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 202, 499-503. According to Pérez de Guzmán, Pedro Manrique enjoyed times in power, and was also imprisoned and exiled, but never suffered a disastrous fall. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 83-86.

Ultimately, despite the arrest, neither chronicle tradition stresses the start of a formal judicial *proceso* against him. However, other sources shed light on how, in describing this incident, they depict actions that can be placed along a *vía de justicia* that did not end in a formal resolution, yet effectively undermined, for a time at least, the power of a royal rival.⁴⁹ For example, Pedro Manrique escaped in 1438, and a royal letter to the city government of Murcia ordering the authorities not to aid him also offered a summary, from a court point of view, of the recent troubles between him and the king. Written in the king's voice, in the letter Juan claimed that he had intended to proceed by the *vía de justicia* against him back in 1437, but was convinced to use the *vía de clemencia* instead, resulting in a deal like the one described in the chronicles.⁵⁰ The king also insisted that, by agreeing to the deal, Pedro Manrique declined to defend himself by the *vía de justicia*. Though the procedures begun were not "completed," the threat of such action was cast as having helped achieve this royal rival's limitation, if not destruction.⁵¹

Chroniclers often described royal deponents taking similar routes when property and liberty were at stake. But this incident underscores that many stops on this *vía* could be involved when targeting a rival, and there were also ways to turn off that road in response to changing circumstances.⁵² Chronicle narratives reflect that as well, presenting judicial procedures, and the

⁴⁹ A *proceso* meant, essentially, a trial. However, each account's description of the incident does include some sense of solemnity surrounding his arrest. The *Crónica del Halconero* places the arrest in *Consejo*, where the king ordered Manrique's detention for "some reasons complimentary to his service." The *Refundición* does so as well. Though it does not use the word detained, it describes the king saying "yo vos mando," "I command you," before telling him to go with Álvaro de Luna, and later refers to the *adelantado* as "preso." The later *Crónica*, now past 1434, echoes the text of the *Refundición* almost verbatim. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1437 ch. 3, p. 534; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 220, pp. 248-250; *Refundición*, ch. 120, pp. 216-217.

⁵⁰ "me suplico e pidio por merced e a grande justicia que yo no quesiese mandar proceder enel dicho negocio por via de justicia mas que plugiese a mi merced de tener enello la via de clemencia." Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 202, 499-500.

⁵¹ In political cases, or indeed in judicial matters more broadly, harsh punishment was not necessarily a goal or measure of success. Claude Gauvard, "Justification and Theory of the Death Penalty at the Parlement of Paris in the Late Middle Ages," in Allmand, *War, Government and Power*, 198.

⁵² J. B. Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 13.

removals they mediated, as unfolding processes with distinct steps that could achieve multiple ends. But in the context of the ideological and legal developments of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, that diversity made room for more varied conceptions of the forces which authorized the separation of person and power, and what constituted legitimate grounds for doing so. Both of those developments, in conjunction, amplified the capacity of rulers, or those with influence at court, to act against their rivals.

The Narratives

With the many possibilities of the *vía de justicia* in mind, analysis of chronicle accounts of four prominent downfalls anchors an exploration of how fifteenth century chroniclers filled in the “gaps” between justice and loss of power that their works share with Ayala’s later deposition narratives. Looking ahead, that process underpinned new ways of defining power and its loss.⁵³ The removals in question are the 1422 arrest and temporary dispossession of the *infante* Enrique, the 1422-23 trial, dispossession and de facto exile of Constable Ruy López Dávalos, the 1430-31 flight and trial of Diego Gómez de Sandoval, Count of Castrogeriz, and the 1431 imprisonment of Diego de Sarmiento, *adelantado* of Galicia.⁵⁴

As noted, closely studying these accounts also serves as the base for the two chapters that follow. This chapter opens a discussion of new views of power and its loss in the fifteenth century, but certainly does not close it. And in contrast to the next two chapters, in which each chronicle tradition and its priorities are treated separately before comparing them with one

⁵³ For now similarities within the traditions are emphasized.

⁵⁴ As Pérez de Guzmán’s long list of unfortunates attests, they were certainly not the only aristocratic figures to face significant losses of power. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 138-9. Other significant removals will be referenced in notes, in particular the 1429 arrest of the Duke of Arjona and the Count of Luna’s detention in 1434. The downfalls of the *infante* Enrique, Diego Gómez de Sandoval and Diego de Sarmiento are significant across both traditions. Treatment of Ruy López Dávalos is unequal.

another, here I proceed according to individual deposition rather than chronicle tradition. That minimizes repetition, and aids in establishing broader historical and narrative context before diving into more focused analysis of how person and power were separated, and what kinds of separations were most significant, in each chronicle tradition.

The *Infante* Enrique

In 1422 King Juan II imprisoned his cousin, the *infante* Enrique, and took hold of his possessions in Castile. Shortly after the king came of age in 1419, a contest for influence at court ensued, and in 1420 the *infante* and his allies seized control of the king and his residence at Tordesillas. However, there was significant opposition to this move and, ultimately, Enrique lost control of the king and ended up on the losing side. After negotiations with King Juan and his courtiers, in which he was promised safe conduct, he came to face the king in Madrid in the hopes of returning to his good graces.⁵⁵

According to the nearly identical representations of the subsequent confrontation in the *Crónica de Juan II* and its later reformulation, the day after his arrival the king summoned the *infante* Enrique to appear before him in the royal residence.⁵⁶ Once there, he and Juan both proceeded to a room in which a “dais for holding *Consejo* meetings” had been set up.⁵⁷ As the *infante* knelt before him, the king explained that he had intended to be lenient, but had just been

⁵⁵ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 12, 279-282; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 9-10, pp. 415-416. He received a *carta de seguro* from the king, dated April 21, 1422. AGS Cámara de Castilla, Diversos, 9, 58. Afterward, he pledged to come to court in a *pleito homenaje*, dated May 29 of the same year. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, car. 455, n. 70.

⁵⁶ This meeting was not their first confrontation. According to each account, Enrique had wanted to speak to the king right away after a tense reception on the first day, but Juan refused. Also, returning to the theme of the court as a dangerous place, both accounts suggest Enrique was nervous about going there, urging his associate, Garci Fernández Manrique, not to come with him, since he suspected the king’s anger was deeper than it appeared. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 11-13, pp. 278-286; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 9-11, pp. 415-17.

⁵⁷ “estrado para tener consejo.” Cañas Gálvez, “La cámara de Juan II,” 110. The *sala de Consejo* was also identified as the site of Ruy López Dávalos’s trial. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 51.

shown letters implicating Enrique in further plots.⁵⁸ As his set-piece speech continued, he added that “it is necessary and greatly to my service that I learn the truth, and respond to them in a manner that accords with my service,” and then ordered that the letters be read out before the *Consejo*.⁵⁹ Enrique then begged the king to investigate more fully, saying “if I am found guilty, which God knows could not be, your highness should pass judgement against me,” with the most severe penalties possible.⁶⁰ The king agreed he should “learn the truth about this matter, and that is my intention and *merced* to do so,” but also declared that “until the truth is known, since this case involves you, it is my *merced* that you be detained,” at once.⁶¹

The *Crónica del Halconero* and the *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero* also offer a description of the *infante* Enrique’s arrest. However, characteristic of their treatment of events before the 1430’s, both are sparing with details.⁶² Still, each depicts a royal order to detain Enrique issued at a *Consejo* meeting, in which the king played an active role in confronting him

⁵⁸ The same letters that Juan García de Guadalajara was later executed for forging.

⁵⁹ “antes es necesario é cumple mucho á mi servicio que yo sepa la verdad, é provea cerca de ellas, como cumple á mi servicio.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, pp. 283-6. The phrase “sepa la verdad” implied a judicial investigation. For instance, according to the *Partidas*, kings must “seek the truth” of the suits and complaints brought before them. p.3, t.17; p.7, t.1, l.27.

⁶⁰ The older *Crónica* reads: “plegue á vuestra Señoría de saber al verdad en este fecho; é si en alguna manera fuere yo fallado culpante en este fecho, lo que Dios no quiera nin podría ser, V.A. pase contra mí por las mayores penas que ser pudiere.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, pp. 283-6. The later one says: “suplico quiera mandar saber la verdad, é si yo fuere fallado culpante, lo que Dios no querrá y no podrá ser, Vuestra Alteza pase contra mí como el mas baxo hombre de sus Reynos.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 11, pp. 417.

⁶¹ The contemporary account reads: “Primo: Vos decides bien, que yo sepa la verdad de este fecho, é esa es mi intencion, é asi es mi merced de lo hacer.” The later reformulation reads: “Muy bien dicho es que yo sepa la verdad deste hecho, y esta es mi intención, é asi es mi merced de lo poner en obra.” Regarding the arrest, the respective lines are: “é en tanto que se sabe el verdad, pues tanto toca á vos este fecho, mi merced es que seades aquí detenido;” “pero en tanto que la verdad se sabe (pues esta caso á vos toca) es mi merced que seais detenidos vos é [others].”

Both accounts narrate the arrest of the Duke of Arjona in similar terms. He came to the king’s camp, and Juan received him, directing him to explain his conduct to the assembled *Consejo*. The older account suggests that the duke attempted to explain himself, but the king ordered his arrest anyway. Certainly, it later describes the king reassuring the duke’s followers that his “prisión” would not affect them. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 24, pp. 91-95. In the later *Crónica*, the king took the initiative, explaining his *quexos* with the duke. The duke insisted he had not erred, and begged the king to “mandar saber la verdad.” Juan agreed, but said it was his *merced* he should be detained in the meantime. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 23, p. 462. See also Vicente Ángel Álvarez Palenzuela, “El precio de la guerra: Algunos datos sobre el enfrentamiento entre Castilla y Aragón y Navarra. 1429-1430,” *Estudios sobre patrimonio, cultura y ciencias medievales* 19, no. 1 (2017): 70.

⁶² Julio López-Arias, “López de Ayala: Rasgos sobresalientes de su narrativa,” 14.

with justifications for that command.⁶³ However, as these narratives describe their meeting, Juan explained his orders by saying simply that he was acting “for reasons complimentary to my service” and the good of the realm.⁶⁴

After this incident however, the accounts of two traditions diverge further. The *Halconero* tradition chronicles say little about the subsequent fate of the *infante* Enrique or his possessions, until they both report his release in 1425, thanks to the intervention of his siblings, the other *infantes* of Aragón.⁶⁵ The *Crónica* tradition, in contrast, presents the arrest as an opening to further action against Enrique.⁶⁶ Soon after, each of those accounts states that the king ordered the seizure of Enrique’s personal papers, in order to search for further evidence.⁶⁷ Furthermore, they describe several royal orders to formally sever his ties to his Castilian possessions. For instance, the king seized his fortresses and towns, placing them in “sequestration.”⁶⁸

⁶³ *Crónica del Halconero*, 7-8; *Refundición*, ch. 17, pp. 44-46. The *Refundición* also adds that the *infante* Enrique was nervous that none of the *grandes* of the *Consejo* had come out to meet him when he arrived, and had also received warnings that he was to be arrested, yet determined to go anyway. On the other hand, it suggests much less tension at the initial meeting of Enrique and the king than the *Crónica* tradition accounts did.

⁶⁴ “E desque llegó el ynfante, mandóle asentar, e díxole estas palabras: Infante, por algunas cosas que cunplen a mi servicio e al pro e bien de mis reynos, yo vos mando que seades detenydo.” *Crónica del Halconero*, 7-8. “E estando el Rey asentado en un estrado de su sala, presentes algunos grandes de sus reynos, dixo al ynfante estas palabras: Ynfante, por algunas cosas conplideras a mi servicio y al pacífico estado y bien de mis reynos, mi voluntad es que seáys detenido.” *Refundición*, ch. 17, pp. 44-46.

Both *Halconero* tradition accounts portray the Duke of Arjona’s arrest similarly. In the *Crónica del Halconero*’s telling, the king sent for him, and he came to the royal pavilion where the *Consejo* was assembled. Once inside, the king informed him, that “a mi plaze que seades detenido.” In response the duke offered to prove the truth, that he had not erred. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 20, p. 39. The *Refundición*’s telling is essentially the same, other than using *preso* in place of *detenido*. *Refundición*, ch. 39, p. 78.

⁶⁵ *Crónica del Halconero*, 10; *Refundición*, ch. 20, pp. 48-9. Coverage of the 1420’s in the *Halconero* tradition is sparse. The *Refundición* expands on some incidents in comparison to the *Crónica del Halconero*, but not this one. On that 1425 intervention, see Álvarez Palenzuela, “El precio de la guerra,” 62-3.

⁶⁶ Returning to the Duke of Arjona, no account says anything about seizing the duke’s possessions, though following his death soon after, the *Crónica* accounts say some of his possessions were granted to others. Arrest could stand on its own as a consequence, but also could form part of a larger effort. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 4, pp. 181-2; 1430 ch. 12, pp. 197-8; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 13, p. 482; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 34, pp. 56-7; *Refundición*, ch. 49, p. 94.

⁶⁷ Such an order fits in with the royal resolve to “know the truth” about the matter that each account describes. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 14, p. 287; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 12, p. 417.

⁶⁸ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 18, pp. 293-94; 1422 ch. 20, pp. 296-98; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 14-16, pp. 419-420.

However, despite their insistence that the *infante* Enrique requested an investigation, and their suggestion of a possible *proceso*, neither account clearly follows up on either.⁶⁹ There is evidence that legal proceedings were indeed considered.⁷⁰ But among chronicle narratives, only the contemporary *Crónica de Juan II* hints at them.⁷¹ In its telling, *Consejo* members present on the day of Enrique's arrest later requested, after his possessions were seized, that "whatever might be confiscated for your *Cámara* of the goods and lands of the *infante* and his party, if they merit confiscation," should be given to them as a reward.⁷² That passage presents the disposition of those possessions as undecided, pending a further decision.

Ultimately though, each *Crónica* narrative describes Enrique's eventual release without a resolution to a *proceso*. But in explaining the decision-making process behind his liberation, they connect his ongoing detention to the 1422 confrontation and its aftermath. Both recount another *Consejo* meeting, in 1425, to consider demands for the *infante*'s release made by his siblings, who were threatening to intervene militarily if he remained confined. When describing the deliberations, they each repeat the justifications they had reported in their descriptions of the Madrid meeting from 1422, suggesting that opponents of his release reiterated them to explain their disapproval.⁷³ Recalling the arrest order here, with which both justifications and procedural

⁶⁹ A royally ordered investigation, or *pesquisa*, suggests a criminal investigation. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 438. In the *Partidas*, a *pesquisa* can be ordered by a king for the better regulation of his dominions. p.7, t.24, l.32.

⁷⁰ In April 1422, the king swore to imprison the *infante* Enrique and proceed against his person and his possessions, calling his actions *maleficios* and *crimines*. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 15, 44.

⁷¹ As noted, the *Crónica* tradition accounts are generally more "institutional." Also, by the time of the compilation of the later *Crónica*, this event had been surpassed in importance by the later Luna-*infantes* conflict, and Enrique's losses did not stick whereas Ruy López Dávalos's did. For the latter, both accounts deal with his *proceso* extensively.

⁷² "pluguiese á su Merced que lo que confiscase para su cámara de los bienes é tierras del Infante é de su cuadrilla, si mereciese ser confiscado, ficiese merced á ellos en galardón de los peligros en que por servicio del Rey se ponían." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 21, pp. 298-300. The later *Crónica* does not report a discussion about Enrique's possessions. However, both it and its older source do note a request, at the same time, that the king not release Enrique without first consulting those who had supported his arrest. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 17, p. 420.

⁷³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1425 ch. 5, pp. 360-361; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1425 ch. 3, p. 430.

elements had been attached, emphasizes its key role in their accounts of Enrique's disempowerment.

Altogether, the chronicles of both traditions portray the king commanding and justifying the arrest of a major political rival, similar to Ayala's late fourteenth-century depictions of "royal justice."⁷⁴ This confrontation, accompanied by the sequestration of his possessions in the *Crónica* accounts, is the pivotal moment in all four narratives.⁷⁵ The arrest order, its justifications, and its consequences, are of the greatest significance in each.⁷⁶ And the *Crónica* narratives each show the king managing the arrest and subsequent seizures, in a context that can be interpreted as the opening of a judicial process, but in the absence of ongoing procedure, a definitive sentence, or of much concern for either.⁷⁷

Ruy López Dávalos

The next set of narratives recount the deposition of Constable Ruy López Dávalos, which was closely connected with the *infante* Enrique's fall both in fact and within the chronicles.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ The setting of that arrest can be interpreted as a *consulta*, a solemn act of the *Consejo* in the king's presence. It was different from the *Consejo* making ordinary administrative or judicial decisions. Especially when a *grande* was involved, a wide consultation of other key players often took place alongside, and in addition to, judicial procedures. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 460.

A *grande*, a term which had replaced the earlier *ricohombre* by this time, was a powerful aristocrat. In a qualitative sense, it referred to someone whose scale of political influence and action extended across all or most of the realm. Quintanilla Raso, "Élites de poder, redes nobiliarias y monarquía," 959-60.

⁷⁵ Those orders did not preclude negotiations and other forms of settlement, covered extensively in the *Crónica* narratives and mentioned in the *Halconero* accounts. And Enrique's status made him a particularly sensitive case. Griffiths, "The Crown and the Royal Family," 17.

⁷⁶ Despite the appearance of "royal justice," the king did not issue a sentence. That is similar to Ayala's accounts of later removals, but such scenes were still a prelude to further procedure. In these accounts they could be, but did not have to be.

⁷⁷ But although no account reports a sentence at the end of the *via de justicia*, that does not mean they convey senses of failure. Though this detention and sequestration did not destroy Enrique forever, they did help bring the conflicts stemming from the end of Juan's minority to a close. In 1425 circumstances had greatly shifted. Enrique and his brother Juan, who had been at odds, reconciled and joined with another brother, the king of Aragón. In contrast, Ruy López Dávalos was also involved in the 1425 ultimatum. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 94, 269. However, although still able to participate in politics to some degree, his position in Castile was never rebuilt.

⁷⁸ At least those of the *Crónica* tradition.

The constable had risen from fairly humble origins to a position of great influence during the time of Juan II's father, Enrique III. He remained an important figure into the fifteenth century, and had been involved in the same political machinations for which Enrique found himself in trouble. Unlike the *infante*, Dávalos escaped the king's clutches and fled to Aragón.⁷⁹ But he ultimately faced much more severe personal consequences, and remained in de facto exile until his death.⁸⁰

According to the *Crónica de Juan II* tradition accounts, although Ruy López Dávalos had been summoned to court in 1422 along with the *infante Enrique*, he decided to stay away. But the incriminating letters which had undermined Enrique implicated him even more, and after describing the king's order to arrest the *infante*, both narratives turn to the actions he took against the constable.⁸¹ First, Juan sent out orders to detain him.⁸² Efforts to do so were not successful, but after his flight to Aragón the king sent further commands to seize his possessions and directed towns under his jurisdiction not to obey his commands any longer. Moreover, both recount a separate set of orders to seize castles he held on the Granada frontier, as well as some "treasure" belonging to him that was discovered in one of those fortifications.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ultimately though, both were in some way subject to royal justice, whether captured or not. And perceptions about exile and imprisonment could overlap. E. Amanda McVitty, "The Prisoner's Voice in Conflicting Narratives of Loyalty and Political Legitimacy in Late Medieval England," *Parergon* 34, no. 2 (2017): 25.

⁸⁰ Uniquely, a portion of the records from his *proceso* survive, including the *acusación* and the sentence. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 28.

⁸¹ After which they return to Enrique and the sequestration of his possessions. This may reflect chronology, but also shows a *via* type narrative, where reports of losses, and the orders behind them, were spread out and not dependent on a specific moment, but rather on when royal commands were issued. As noted, those letters were forgeries, and ultimately Dávalos's conviction did not rest on them.

⁸² *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 14, p. 287; Guzmán, *Crónica*, 1422 ch. 12, pp. 417-18. The earlier iteration of the *Crónica* insists that king had sent secret orders to try to arrest Ruy López a week before, and both accounts describe measures taken to intercept him. That suggests Juan wanted to capture him and not simply hold a trial in absentia, which was eventually done. Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 151-53; McCarthy, *Outlaws and Spies*, 24, 28.

⁸³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 15, pp. 288-9; 1422 ch. 17, pp. 291-2; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, pp. 418-19.

Stepping outside the chronicle accounts for a moment, in 1422 a judicial *proceso* was set in motion against the constable.⁸⁴ But in the midst of their narratives of that year, neither the contemporary *Crónica* nor its later reformulation stress its initiation. Instead, their attention rests on the king's orders to arrest Dávalos and, failing that, to seize his possessions and suspend his jurisdiction.⁸⁵ However, each account does claim a *proceso* had begun shortly after the constable's arrest when, after moving on to other events, they return to the matter of Ruy López and report a sentence handed down against him in 1423.⁸⁶ They recall that, back in 1422, *acusaciones* had been placed against him by the *procurador fiscal*.⁸⁷ As for the sentence, it declared those accusations had been proven.⁸⁸ In consequence, he deserved to be deprived of what he held from the king, along with all his other possessions, which were to be confiscated to the royal *Cámara*.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ The *emplazamiento* is dated July, 1422. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 28.

⁸⁵ After reporting the sequestration of the treasure, both accounts note that the king shared it out among those to whom he intended to give it if the *proceso* determined Dávalos deserved to lose his goods. That framing is similar to how the author of the earlier *Crónica*, in his account of Enrique's detention, implied a firm decision about his possessions was still pending. The term *proceso* does not appear in that account, but that potential for further decision making is one reason why I think that it implies the prospect of one. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 21, p. 298; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 17, p. 420.

⁸⁶ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 4, p. 318; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 6, pp. 424-25.

⁸⁷ As noted in the previous chapter, a *querrela* usually meant a civil complaint, while an *acusación* was criminal. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 29. That distinction, or at least the association of *querrela* with civil complaints, was maintained by Alonso de Cartagena. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 197.

A *procurador fiscal*, or *fiscal* for short, was a royal official who represented the king in legal matters that affected him. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 65; Paz Alonso, 84-86. Charges were often formally brought by them, a process Juan II indicated he wished to further regulate in a command issued in Medina del Campo in February 1431. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 170, 418. Since the late fourteenth century, the *fiscal* had to be, or at least was supposed to be, a *letrado*. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:389; Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 195, 488-89.

⁸⁸ "Que por quanto se probaba que este don Rui Lopez de Avalos había cometido é fecho todas las cosas que por el Fiscal le fueron acusadas." The later chronicle says that "history" does not need to follow the details of the *pleito*, but says the *sentencia* was important. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 4, p. 318; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 6, pp. 424-25. According to Round, legal maneuvering and broader case making were distinct, with the latter being more important for broader consumption. Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 105.

⁸⁹ "fallaban que merescía perder é ser privado de la Condestablia é del Adelantamiento del reino de Murcia, é de todos otros cualesquier officios que del Rey tenía, é perder todos los bienes, muebles é raíces, así en villas e lugares, como castillos é fortalezas é otros cualesquier que en cualquier manera tuviese e le perteneciesen, é todas las mercedes que del rey tenía, así de juro de heredad, como de merced é de tierra é en otra cualquier manera, é ser confiscados todos para la Cámara del Rey, é que así lo pronunciaban, é pronunciaron por la sentencia." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 4, p. 318; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 6, pp. 424-25. The distinction between things

These accounts each describe a “completed” trial against the constable and its results. But despite having a sentence and punishment to report, the roles of royal orders and decision-making, and their consequences, are by no means diminished in either. Moreover, they describe the *proceso* itself as having been out of the king’s hands, with the case made by the *fiscal* and decided by judges who were described as learned *doctores* of the *Consejo* in the earlier *Crónica*, and not at all in the later text.⁹⁰ In both, the king’s main role was giving the orders to set the *proceso* in motion, while also commanding the dismantling of Ruy López’s power base. The sentence then confirmed those losses, connected with the measures taken in 1422, but narrated separately.⁹¹

The accounts of the *Halconero* tradition, in contrast, are mostly uninterested in Ruy López Dávalos and his fate.⁹² But as noted, in fifteenth century narratives, judicial procedures often functioned as ways to manage the application of royal authority against a target, as much as they served to judge and punish them. However, neither *Halconero* narrative interprets Ruy López’s fate as a direct consequence of an external force separating him from his resources of power, whether as punishment for crime or on some other basis.⁹³ For example, the *Crónica del*

held from the king and personal possessions was not insignificant. But here, both were subject to confiscation according to the sentence.

⁹⁰ The *proceso* documents identify the *partes* as the *fiscal* and various lawyers for Ruy López Dávalos. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 28. Also, the king had a much more active role as a judge in them than in the chronicle narratives. Royal invocation of *poderío real absoluto* to override objections made by Dávalos was frequent, and the king was directly responsible for at least issuing the sentence, which he did from a throne in the *cámara de Consejo*. Guerrero Navarrete, 38, 105. The royal *carta de merced* naming Álvaro de Luna constable in 1423 also refers to the sentence of against Ruy López as having been issued by the king. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 23, 67. In the chronicles, once Dávalos was out of the political picture, having been forced to flee and losing his possessions, interest in him quickly waned, at least as far as connecting his trial with the king was concerned.

⁹¹ That is, they were “turned into” confiscations. Also, within the sentence, his “physical” punishment was mandated separately from the confiscation of his property. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 106.

⁹² The *Crónica del Halconero*’s coverage of the 1420’s is spotty, but the *Refundición* generally offers a more robust account. However, it dates to a later period, when this affray had been surpassed in urgency by the Luna-*infantes* conflict. Indeed, though they say little about Ruy López Dávalos, both note the consequences of his fall for Álvaro de Luna.

⁹³ These differences regarding Ruy López Dávalos’s downfall underscore that narrating losses of power in terms of justice had particular purposes. Although this incident occurred in the 1420’s, not prominent in the

Halconero notes that the king gave Álvaro de Luna the post of constable in 1423, but says nothing about what had happened to the former holder of that office.⁹⁴ And for its part, the *Refundición* also reports the appointment, associating it with a dispute between the king and Dávalos, and suggesting that his subsequent abandonment of the realm also constituted an abandonment of his responsibilities as constable.⁹⁵ In other words, he was out of office but had not, in its telling, been deposed from it.

Diego Gómez de Sandoval: 1430-31

The downfalls of both the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos occurred amidst a conflict springing from the end of King Juan's minority, and the rise of Álvaro de Luna at court. Those specific contests were largely settled by 1425, but fights to dominate the court were far from over. In 1427, the king's advisor was forced to leave court by his rivals, led by the *infantes* of Aragón, but he engineered a return within a few months. Undaunted, his enemies responded, and in 1429 another confrontation between noble factions erupted, in which the king's reliance on Álvaro de Luna was once again a central issue.⁹⁶ As a result, Diego Gómez de Sandoval,

Halconero tradition, both do include coverage of the *infante* Enrique's arrest with some judicial trappings. With Dávalos though, the way they interpret his fall does not require or encourage such a way of depicting it. Whereas the *Crónica* accounts typically frame the conflict as mediated by judicial processes and institutions, the *Refundición* characteristically attributes it to a more personal disagreement with king. But neither focuses on the trial, and the king's authority was the most important force at work.

⁹⁴ *Crónica del Halconero*, 9.

⁹⁵ *Refundición*, ch. 19, pp. 46-47. It also claims the goods and offices of the "exiled" Dávalos were shared out after his death. *Refundición*, ch. 24, pp. 54-55. In fact, Álvaro de Luna became constable before that, and the letter naming him to the post refers to his predecessor's sentence. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 23, 67. He also became *camarero mayor de los paños*, another office Dávalos had held. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 21, 58. Pérez de Guzmán described his possessions as taken from him, by the king's order, after his flight but before his death. He also claimed he fled for fear of arrest, and described his fate as "exile and loss of possessions." *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 33.

⁹⁶ This time, they involved their brother Alfonso, King of Aragón. The fact that the *infantes* and their allies could call on Aragonese support, and fall back there (or to the Kingdom of Navarre) in times of difficulty, is important for understanding the longevity of their contest with Álvaro de Luna and Juan II.

Count of Castrogeriz, found himself in a delicate position.⁹⁷ He had been raised in the household of the *infantes* of Aragón, and owed his advancement to their father, Fernando. After some attempts at balancing his divided loyalties, he ultimately fled Castile one step ahead of royal justice, with serious additional consequences for the power base he left behind.⁹⁸

Beginning in 1429, the accounts of the *Crónica de Juan II* tradition make repeated references to those efforts at negotiation. But by 1430, the *Crónica* and its later reformulation each claim that the king learned the count was, nonetheless, collaborating with the *infantes*. As a result, Juan ordered him to turn his fortresses over to the crown “for as long as the war between him and the kings of Aragón and Navarre should last,” particularly the castle of Castrogeriz. The count did not, but further negotiations led to an agreement between them.⁹⁹ Both accounts offer a summary of the terms, which attempted to manage his conflicted loyalties without forcing an open breach.¹⁰⁰ But later in 1430 when the king called Gómez de Sandoval to court for counsel regarding, officially at least, a war against Granada, he fled instead. According to the chronicles, he feared that the call was a trap to facilitate his arrest, and defended his flight by claiming the terms of his agreement with the king exempted him from such a summons.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ In 1429 King Juan threatened Diego Gómez de Sandoval with a judgment of treason when he refused to allow the king into the fortress of Peñafiel. The accounts of both traditions associate quite a bit of solemnity with the event, to the point that an *estrado* was set up for the king to pass sentence. Sandoval backed down at the last moment, however. In those narratives, the *vía de justicia* worked in another way, as the means for compelling, or at least framing, a settlement when previous demands had failed. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 chs. 10-13, pp. 55-56, 61-67; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 12, pp. 456-7; *Crónica del Halconero*, chs. 17-18, pp. 35-37; *Refundición*, chs. 25-27, pp. 70-75.

⁹⁸ Like the *infante* Enrique he did come back, but only following a major shift in political circumstances. Pérez de Guzmán referred to him as having been twice exiled. This incident was the first. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 87-88.

⁹⁹ Álvarez Palenzuela, “El precio de la guerra,” 83.

¹⁰⁰ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 10, pp. 192-5; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 11, p. 481. A key provision was that he would not be called to war against the *infantes*. Another was that he had to surrender Castrogeriz, but he did not.

¹⁰¹ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 29, pp. 237-9; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 29, p. 490. When discussing these *capítulos* both accounts, looking ahead, insisted that they did not excuse Diego Gómez from having to answer calls to court in general. That helped clear the way for his subsequent trial in each of these narratives.

Though the count had left the realm for Aragón, early in 1431 both narratives describe royal orders to seize Castrogeriz and, subsequently, to initiate a *proceso* against him.¹⁰² Also, in accordance with a provision in the agreement between him and the king that specified the manner in which disputes over its terms should be settled, King Juan ordered a review of Diego Gómez's excuse. At the same time however, he commanded the *fiscal* to place an accusation against the absent count *por vía de derecho*.¹⁰³ After reviewing the *fiscal*'s charge, the appointed judges issued an *emplazamiento*, summoning him to defend himself. From that point, both accounts specify, a *proceso* continued against the count. Following a gap in their narratives, they return to the *proceso* in late 1431, saying that he had not responded to the summons, but that the *fiscal* had proven his charges against him.¹⁰⁴ So, after what the chronicles refer to as a long review, the judges issued a sentence pronouncing him disobedient and rebellious.¹⁰⁵

Both accounts, before describing the *proceso*, depict the king taking steps to seize Diego Gómez de Sandoval's fortresses, in particular Castrogeriz, the occupation of which they had placed at the center of tensions between them since 1429. That seizure, however, was less clearly connected to the *proceso* than those described in their accounts of Ruy López Dávalos's downfall. Instead, the *proceso* was most directly related to, though still distinct from, an inquiry into whether the count had lived up to his obligations under his agreement with the king. Juan ordered the inquiry and the *proceso* at the same time, but placed the ongoing work in the hands

¹⁰² *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 1, pp. 253-5; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 1, p. 490.

¹⁰³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 3, pp. 256-7; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 3, p. 491. In their narratives of these measures, both iterations of the *Crónica* appear to deal very quickly with two separate issues. First, the judges decided he had broken the terms of the *capítulos*, then the charges were made.

¹⁰⁴ The gap is mainly taken up by a campaign against Granada.

¹⁰⁵ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 30, p. 321; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 27, pp. 501-2. Reinforcing the sense of the judges deciding two separate issues sequentially, they say nothing about the prior agreement or its terms here. Nor indeed does the copy of the sentence reproduced in the *Crónica del Halconero*. "En rebeldía" is also term for, essentially, "in absentia" or "in default." Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 82. But here "rebellious" declared him a rebel against the king, not a court.

of professionals. Overall, the king, though responsible for initiating judicial processes, did so in the context of managing a more wide-ranging political problem, namely the count's loyalties and his possession of key fortresses, which had been extensively described.¹⁰⁶ The *proceso* had a prominent place in that effort, but not a uniquely decisive or consequential one.

As for the *Halconero* tradition narratives, like their *Crónica* tradition counterparts, they both culminate in an anti-Sandoval *proceso* and a sentence naming him a rebel. They also describe an agreement between the king and the count whose interpretation proved controversial. But though they share those basic elements, the ways in which they came together to mediate the separation of person and power were rather different. Nonetheless, the accounts of this tradition also describe royal authority advancing royal interests alongside, but distinctly from, ongoing formal judicial procedures in the hands of legal professionals.

In contrast to the long series of negotiations described by the *Crónicas*, the *Halconero* accounts each abruptly declare that in late 1430 King Juan summoned Diego Gómez de Sandoval to court. He fled in fear, but not before ordering his possessions in Castile to put themselves at the king's disposal.¹⁰⁷ Nonetheless, once the king learned of his flight, he consulted his *Consejo* regarding the count and his possessions. They advised him to appoint two *oidores* of the *Audiencia* to decide how to proceed, who in turn consulted "certain gentlemen." According to the *Crónica del Halconero*, they recommended that since Sandoval had absented himself from the realm and gone over to the king's enemies, it would be in Juan's service to sequester his goods, fortresses, offices and other resources. The *Refundición* follows the *Crónica del*

¹⁰⁶ In other words, this loss of power was placed in a very particular context, with the specific losses meeting only what were described as the king's particular needs.

¹⁰⁷ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 60, pp. 73-74; *Refundición*, ch. 56, pp. 104-5. According to the *Crónica del Halconero*, the summons included a threat that he would lose offices and other possessions if he did not comply. Such threats were not uncommon, but often they would be followed by further procedure if the target did not, in fact, comply. The *Refundición* mentions no such threat. Instead, it stresses that he feared arrest. In short, one focuses on loss of possessions, the other the potential for arrest.

Halconero's narrative quite closely, but insists that his refusal of the call to court was at issue as well, and claims that the judges asked whether his goods could be sequestered with *justicia*, not merely whether it would be in the king's service.¹⁰⁸ But both agree that the judges and the "gentlemen" also advised that the seized possessions should be put, for the moment, under the management of whoever the king might choose to designate.¹⁰⁹

At the same time however, the judges issued an *emplazamiento* summoning Diego Gómez de Sandoval to court, setting a *proceso* in motion. The *Crónica del Halconero* inserts what it calls the full text of that letter, while the *Refundición* only offers a paraphrase, but both representations warned that he would be considered disobedient and suffer fitting penalties if he did not obey.¹¹⁰ Each then recounts that he refused, defending himself by arguing that, due to certain provisions in a hitherto unmentioned agreement between him and King Juan, the monarch had no basis to proceed against him for disobedience.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ The terms service and disservice were common ways of characterizing political action. But in fourteenth-century accounts, they usually described actions taken by targets and the king's response to them. Here it refers to the king's actions.

¹⁰⁹ "e salió el Rey con los suso dichos que era bien que fuesen dados dos juezes sin sospecha ni enemigos del conde de Castro, los quales fueron dados por mandado del rey...Los quales obieron su ynformación de ciertos caballeros de estado. La qual ynformación fue tomada en esta guisa. A cada uno, que dixiesen que pues don Diego Gomes de Sandoval era ausentado del reyno de Castilla para el reyno de Navarra, sy entendía que era servicio del Rey ser secrestados sus bienes...E según pareció por sus dichos ante la merced del Rey, todos dixeron que era servicio del señor Rey que fuesen secrestados, en su mano o en qui en él mandase. E luego fueron mandados secrestar a los juezes." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 65, pp. 77-8; *Refundición*, ch. 57, p. 105. The seized places included Castrogeriz, though it was not singled out as an object concern in these accounts.

According to the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, those who went over to the enemy should be executed if possible. If not their goods should be seized and they should be banished. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 149-50.

¹¹⁰ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 66, pp. 78-9; *Refundición*, ch. 57, p. 106. Penalties were not specified in the *Refundición*, but in the text inserted in the *Crónica del Halconero*, loss of offices and a fine were named. As noted above, the *Crónica del Halconero* already had insisted he was threatened with those consequences. But a threat does not necessarily imply action, even if the conditions were met. Also, the *Refundición* refers to the letter as issued by the judges, but the reproduction in the *Crónica del Halconero* is written in the king's voice. That fits in with the former's concern for the "justice" of the sequestration, rather than if it would serve the king.

¹¹¹ *Crónica del Halconero*, chs. 67-68, pp. 80-81; *Refundición*, ch. 58, pp. 107-9. Both insert what they say are the terms Sandoval highlighted, that he would not have to answer a royal call against the *infantes* for a certain period of time. However, since this call was officially about a war against Granada, the judges ruled it did not apply.

After describing the count's objections however, the accounts diverge. According to the *Crónica del Halconero*, the king sent a general letter to realm announcing that he had named two judges to review an accusation placed by the *fiscal* against Sandoval.¹¹² Then, after a long gap in the narrative, it returns to recount that in late 1431 those judges issued a sentence naming him a dissolver of the king, the text of which it then inserts. It also found him liable for court costs, but otherwise specified no material penalty.¹¹³ The *Refundición*, in contrast, describes the sentence against him immediately and, while doing so, explicitly refers back to the count's objections, noting that despite his appeals based on his deal with the king, the judges found against him.¹¹⁴

Ultimately, those differences among the *Halconero* tradition accounts are minor. But the same cannot be said for the differences between the accounts of the two traditions. The *Crónica* accounts place Diego Gómez de Sandoval's fate in the context of an ongoing disagreement between him and the king, focused on the possession of vital fortresses. Both the seizure of Castrogeriz and the *proceso* occurred only after other efforts to solve that issue had failed. The *Halconero* accounts, in contrast, describe a more extensive effort to seize the count's possessions following his flight, and without the context of the political dispute, his disempowerment appears to be more strictly a response to his defiance.¹¹⁵

¹¹² *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 70, p. 86.

¹¹³ "el dicho don Diego Gomes, conde de Castro, por las cosas e mobimientos por él fechas e continuadas después que fué fallado por la dicha carta del dicho señor Rey e ynclusibe acá, fué e está desobediente al dicho Rey nuestro señor, e le desservió e dessyrve en ello; e por ende, en ausencia, contumacia [e] rebeldía del dicho conde de Castro, pronunciando, declaramos al dicho don Diego Gomes, por las cosas sobredichas, e por otras muchas que por el proceso de este pleyto puedan parescer e parescan, aver sido desobediente al dicho señor Rey, e non aver guardado ni guardar en todo ello su servicio, e averle deservido a desservyrle. E por esta nuestra sentencia defenetiba lo declaramos, juzgamos e pronunciamos así." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 105, p. 116.

¹¹⁴ But it still does make it clear that the sentence was issued at a later date. *Refundición*, ch. 59, pp. 109-11. That is not the only time the *Refundición* places together events which the *Crónica del Halconero* keeps apart chronologically. Likely, that is due to its status as a later reformulation.

¹¹⁵ Accounts of both traditions mix negotiations with judicial procedures. And looking more broadly back to 1429, the king's dealings with Diego Gómez de Sandoval were marked by both. The sentence of 1431 represented the failure of those negotiations, but threats of justice and subsequent talks kept them going for a long time. But in the *Halconero* tradition, they are presented as a series of separate incidents, while the *Crónica* accounts weave them together.

Also, although both traditions insist a *proceso* was placed in the hands of *oidores* of the *Audiencia*, the *Crónica* narratives describe the king consulting mainly with legal experts, while in their *Halconero* counterparts, he conferred with the *Consejo* more broadly.¹¹⁶ This difference in the personnel involved in decision-making overlaps with differences in the subjects of those decisions. In the *Crónica* accounts, the consultation centers on how to interpret the particular terms of the agreement between the king and the count, an issue raised, in their telling, by the king. In the *Halconero* tradition, the agreement only appears in the context of an objection raised by Diego Gómez, while the subject of the king's consultation is the disposition of his possessions in general, for which the *Consejo*, not legal experts, was more suitable.

Altogether, the *Crónica* tradition accounts envision a king consulting legal experts, and authorizing a *proceso*, in the course of an ongoing political dispute over specific issues.¹¹⁷ In the *Halconero* accounts, in contrast, the king consulted his *Consejo* over how to deal with a defiant nobleman, and his power base more generally, before proceeding to judicial procedures. Yet in both traditions, the king himself is detached from the *procesos* he set in motion alongside more urgent commands to seize the count's possessions. And those commands resulted in the most specific losses since, as all four chronicles describe the sentence ultimately reached by the delegated judges, it mandated few material penalties.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ The *Audiencia* was associated with civil justice, the *Chancillería* more with criminal. But those distinctions were not always observed or even entirely clear. For royal efforts to respond to ongoing jurisdictional disputes see Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 140, 373; doc. 176, 424. The *Crónica* accounts focus on the king's choice of two *doctores* to review the *capítulos* and the case, with no mention of the *Consejo*. The *Halconero* narratives, though noting two *doctores* at the consultation, refer to the king taking counsel with the *grandes*.

¹¹⁷ His goal was not presented as bringing him to justice per se, but he used its forms to help accomplish that goal when all else failed. The new language of royal authority and interests gave that action a distinct identity.

¹¹⁸ In Sánchez de Valladolid's account of Álvaro Núñez Osorio's downfall, the king was very involved in his "trial," even though he had already been killed and his fortresses recovered. In contrast, in the accounts of both traditions for this incident, once the king ordered the seizure of Sandoval's possessions, whether defined narrowly or broadly, his involvement stopped. The *proceso* continued, but the king moved on.

Diego de Sarmiento

The last set of narratives describe the arrest and long-term detention of Diego de Sarmiento, *adelantado* of Galicia, in 1431.¹¹⁹ He was involved in the same factional struggles as Diego Gómez de Sandoval, but an influential relative, the Count of Ledesma, intervened to spare him the full impact of royal justice. Nonetheless, he faced significant restrictions on his ability to act in the ongoing political contest.

According to the *Crónica de Juan II* tradition accounts, the king learned that Diego de Sarmiento had been conspiring with the *infantes* and determined to arrest him.¹²⁰ After his capture, Juan ordered him detained, and he was then “accused by the *fiscal del rey* before certain judges delegated for the purpose.”¹²¹ According to the older narrative, most of the charges were proven, but the Count of Ledesma soon asked the king to pardon him. He agreed, although the *Crónica* also insists that Juan was only “continuing the attitude he had often taken of not greatly condemning such things,” by responding leniently.¹²² However, the king did not excuse him fully either, ordering that Sarmiento remain confined in the count’s custody.¹²³

The later reformulation, reporting that only some of the charges had been proven, contains no reference to an immediate appeal by the Count of Ledesma. Rather, it recounts that

¹¹⁹ A member of a significant family, he had recently inherited the position. César Olivero Serrano, “Las Cortes de Castilla y el poder real (1431-1444),” *En la España medieval* 11 (1988): 228.

¹²⁰ They both insist that he intended to carry out that detention personally, and therefore sent out two search parties by night to capture him, one of which he led. The other one was led by Álvaro de Luna.

¹²¹ “é fué acusado este Adelantado por el Fiscal del Rey de las cartas é cosas sobredichas ante ciertos Jueces para ello diputados.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 27, pp. 315-16; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 24, pp. 500-501.

¹²² Depicting royal policy in that way was not necessarily a suggestion of weakness. Barbosa Schiavinato, “Cronística medieval em Portugal,” 47.

¹²³ “é como quier que fué probado asaz de aquello en que era acusado... fué suplicado mucho por sus parientes al Rey que non quisiese acatar á la mocedad de este Adelantado, que era asaz mozo, é que su merced fuese perdonar;” “en caso que non le perdonó de todo punto, mandóle soltar de la prisión en que estaba, e entregarle a don Pedro de Stúñiga, Conde de Ledesma.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 27, pp. 315-16.

after two years of confinement, the king ordered Sarmiento's release at the count's request.¹²⁴

Still, despite those differences, each account presents a situation where Sarmiento was spared the full consequences of a *proceso* begun against him, yet remained confined for some time.¹²⁵

Turning to the *Halconero* tradition narratives of Diego de Sarmiento's fall, they also each describe an arrest at royal instigation, followed by an incipient *proceso*, which was then cut off by a settlement arranged by the Count of Ledesma. Meanwhile, the king's reasons for ordering his arrest were said to be that Sarmiento had not wished to obey royal commands.¹²⁶ After describing his capture, both accounts then move on to other matters, before returning to the subject of the *adelantado*. They both report a royal order, placed in early 1432, to return Sarmiento's possessions to him, suggesting that they had been seized in the meantime. Offering some context for the seizures that must have preceded this command, they then insist that, at the behest of the Count of Ledesma, the king also ordered the *fiscal* to stop a *pleito*, or court case, that had been launched against him.¹²⁷ But the king, at the same time, also decided that he should remain imprisoned.

The accounts of both traditions describe King Juan, faced with a troublesome nobleman, issuing orders to secure his confinement. Afterward, each suggests a *proceso* was begun, placed in the hands of legal professionals. The king's most direct roles were arranging Diego de Sarmiento's detention and, though more developed in the accounts of the *Halconero* tradition,

¹²⁴ "E como quiera que le fué probado algo de aquello de que fué acusado, despues de haber estado do años preso, el Rey lo mandó soltar a suplicacion del Conde de Ledesma." The two depictions are not mutually exclusive, and both ultimately cast his fate as being up to royal discretion. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 24, pp. 500-501.

¹²⁵ Although the later *Crónica* is abridged, the absence of that reference to justice and clemency makes the king look more arbitrary. Álvaro de Luna was also described as heavily involved in the whole affair, and given the later *Crónica*'s general hostility to him in its accounts of his later troubles, that may be a deliberate omission.

¹²⁶ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 101, p. 113; *Refundición*, ch. 68, pp. 125-6.

¹²⁷ "Mandó más a sus fiscales que cesasen el pleyto que se seguía por parte del Rey contra el adelantado." *Crónica del Halconero*, chs. 119-120, p. 126; *Refundición*, ch. 73, pp. 130-31.

intervening to stop the *proceso* he had initiated when it did not serve royal interests to continue.¹²⁸ However, even without a formal resolution, all agree that Sarmiento remained temporarily detained at the king's discretion.¹²⁹

The *Vía de Justicia* Revisited

Settings, personnel and terminology suggesting the workings of procedural justice play important roles in framing narratives of clashes between monarchs and nobles. Taking a general view, royal summonses, whether directly or indirectly, set the stage for confrontation. Accompanying them, or coming shortly after, were orders for the detention of targets, the seizures of their possessions, or a combination of those things.¹³⁰ In some accounts, those are the only measures described, whereas others also describe the king setting an investigation or *proceso* in motion at approximately the same time.¹³¹ But his relationship to those *procesos*, and their consequences, was often distant. The work was left to legal professionals, in comparison with the direct royal involvement in the *pre-proceso* commands.¹³²

¹²⁸ Ledesma was powerful, and was an ally against the *infantes*, so he certainly had to be accommodated. On the suspension of procedure, see Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 267-8. Diego Sarmiento himself returned to a position of political activity. Just before the Battle of Olmedo in May of 1445, for instance, he entered into a pact of mutual support with the Count of Haro. AHN Sección Nobleza, Frías, car. 1, n. 21.

¹²⁹ A similar insistence featured in the letter to Murcia about Manrique's escape. None of the accounts suggest that the king's reversal meant failure, and the earlier *Crónica* stresses the king's pardon as an example of his clemency. Royal clemency could be another way to assert royal power, since a pardon intervened to reach an outcome besides what the law or justice demand. With increased claims to royal authority, the role of *gracia real* was often highlighted. Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 60; Nieto Soria, "La nobleza y el 'poderío real absoluto' en la Castilla del siglo XV," 253; Nieto Soria, "La parole: Un instrument de la lutte politique," 720-1.

¹³⁰ There were also repeated references to *emplazamientos*, while sequestrations and detention orders could be characteristic of the summary phase of a criminal case. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 415-16; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 165, 204. Royal summonses were particularly powerful. The *Partidas*, for instance, declare that accusations of certain types had to be answered before the king, with no legal excuses. *p.3, t.3, l.5*. For a more general treatment of terminology see García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 280-85.

¹³¹ The *Crónica* tradition accounts do so more often, but their coverage of the 1420's is more extensive when compared to the *Halconero* tradition. For the incidents in the 1430's, the *Halconero* accounts do so as well.

¹³² Summary procedure was important in high level or "notorious" cases and was frequently used by specially commissioned judges. It maintained procedural appearances, while moving faster. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 30-31, 87; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 287-294. "Notorious crimes" had to be punished quickly since not dealing with them might undermine faith in justice. Paz Alonso, 289, 310; Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 429-439, 451. In those narratives where *procesos* did unfold, they were described as taking at least several months

Not every account contains all these elements, and neither do they present an absolutely unified image of judicial procedures or their consequences.¹³³ But within these fifteenth century narratives, despite their different origins, royal commands work distinctly, preceding any kind of formal judgement and punishment, in order to effectively separate person and power.¹³⁴ As such, they depict judicial procedures as vehicles through which a target may be judged and punished, but also one through which the king managed political affairs and dealt with rivals.¹³⁵

To be sure, the expanded possibilities of a *vía de justicia* did not mean the idea of punishing criminal behavior disappeared from chronicle narratives. That remained a tool for legitimizing the separation of person and power, but only one of several in accounts that envision

which, while not especially long, was not especially rapid either. In any case, the immediate losses highlighted in the accounts above happened before, or in the absence of, sentences, and so were not just presented as results of summary procedure.

As for the *letrados*, the fifteenth century was when they come fully into their own. Kagan, for instance, notes their rapidly expanding presence in legal documents. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 63. And royal ones as well, where their presence, or at least claimed presence, served as important evidence of legal legitimacy. Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 63.

¹³³ Nieto Soria casts judicial procedures in these situations as being about their mediating function primarily. It was the process, not whatever formal resolution may be declared, that counted. In the chronicle narratives of both traditions, calling attention to that process also called attention to new consequences besides such formal resolutions. Nieto Soria, “Más que palabras,” 189-95, 197-8.

¹³⁴ Confrontations without a sentence were not necessarily presented as unsuccessful, and descriptions of *procesos* halted due to negotiations are not accounts of failure, but of political maneuvering that worked to pull new ideas about royal authority into the judicial processes that anchor the narratives. Often, the important thing was that the king got what he needed, not that the target was sentenced and punished. And even if never brought to “culmination,” authors of deposition attempts still sought to confer legitimacy and worked with prevailing political values. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 114; Owens, ‘*By my Absolute Royal Authority*’, 40. Mollat and Wolff emphasized that institutional limitations meant governments could not exert their theoretical rights with any degree of consistency. Mollat and Wolff, *The Popular Revolutions of the Late Middle Ages*, 231. But in these accounts those rights were, if not always exerted, still asserted.

¹³⁵ And that invocation of authority was underpinned by a power, justice, which was uniquely his. According to Nieto Soria, the king’s role and “estate” remained incomparably superior to others due to, among other things, his connection to God and his judicial role. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 56. See also Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política’,” 29; Dios, “El Estado Moderno, ¿un cadáver historiográfico?,” 404-5; Robert Folz, “Sur le principe de l'autorité au Moyen Âge,” *Revue des sciences religieuses* 37, no. 1 (1963): 27; Rucquoi, “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos,” 13-14; Steven A. Stofferahn, “Resonance and Discord: An Early Medieval Reconsideration of Political Culture,” *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 36, no. 1 (2010): 6. Indeed, the *Doctrinal de los caballeros* stressed the uniqueness of the king. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 47.

more extensive, and malleable, processes of justice.¹³⁶ As discussed in chapter two, adaptation to late fourteenth-century institutional and procedural developments underpinned shifts in royal roles within Ayala's narratives of justice. Those shifts opened gaps between determinations of guilt and punishment, and practical losses of power, that persisted in these accounts as well. But in both fifteenth century chronicle traditions, new assertions of royal authority filled those gaps. Though kings still acted through judicial procedures, they served as vehicles for rulers to tear apart person and power for their own ends, and ultimately led to new understandings of what having, and losing, political power could mean.

¹³⁶ Including both justice and, though often conditional, clemency. Both were tools of a "governing" king. They also drew political maneuvering and deal making closer to royal justice, but justice acting as a vehicle for legitimate royal authority rather than a way of finding guilt.

Chapter Four

“Absolute Royal Authority” and Governing Kings

Looking back to Pedro López de Ayala’s narratives of late fourteenth-century removals from power at royal hands, determinations of guilt and punishment, and royal commands leading to practical losses of power, were consistently described separately from one another.¹ Chronicle narratives from the fifteenth century, of both major traditions, also contain analogous gaps in their *vías de justicia*. However, Ayala did not endow those royal commands, and their consequences, with a specific identity, and vocabulary, of their own.² His fifteenth century successors did, depicting royal commands, and their consequences, using consistent and distinctive terminology, and associating them with equally characteristic justifications. Their accounts of separations of person and power present judicial procedures as avenues enabling the action of a proactive, governing king rather than a reactive, judging one. Specifically, the major executive force behind those separations was defined in terms of royal authority, and the justifications for its use in terms of royal interests.³

¹ Ertman stresses that institutional settings influence possibilities for action. In chronicle narratives of the fifteenth century, kings were not just shown acting in new ways, but undertaking new kinds of actions. Ertman, *Leviathan*, 320. Although the connections between institutional norms and their actual functioning were not always clear cut, chronicles could be attuned to those changes. For instance, Nieto Soria argues the issuance of a new *ordenamiento* for justice at court in 1433 impacted how fifteenth century chronicles presented justice there. Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 108. In addition, the growth of these institutions and the norms associated with them provided rulers and their officials with an additional set of tools to justify and authorize removals from power, which they controlled. Giordanengo, “Du droit civil au pouvoir royal,” 21.

² Adeline Rucquoi, “Privanza, fortuna y política: La caída de Álvaro de luna,” in Rucquoi, *Rex, Sapientia, Nobilitas*, 343.

³ As noted, government and justice were mixed, especially at the royal level. Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 351. As for the idea of “interests,” I will develop it over several chapters. Many actors claimed to act in those interests, but here it refers to what were put forward as the needs of the ruler, according to chronicle accounts of royal actions and pronouncements, and sometimes royal documents. Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política’,” 50. This kind of “pragmatism” in evaluating and justifying royal actions was not unprecedented, but in these accounts it was also linked with new conceptions of what it meant to lose, and have, power. Harari, “La función de los consejos en el ‘Poema de Alfonso Onceno’,” 58.

These new expressions in chronicle narratives are best understood in the context of the articulation, and promotion, of new claims of royal authority, new ideas about the basis of political power, and new conceptions of royal roles in government. In each of these spheres, novel ideas gained steam from the 1420's onward, particularly assertions of royal authority pioneered at court. These innovations provided the basis for the new terminology, and broader justificatory strategies, which supported distinctive new ways of depicting separations of person and power in royal chronicles. They are also the subject of much study, along with their influence on fifteenth century Castilian politics and political discourses. Their advance, and its consequences, underpins explorations of a stronger royal role which cast monarchs, or at least the "royal office," as the premier arbiter of power in the kingdom.⁴

That role is associated with a broader shift in Castilian politics in this era, which increasingly became a royal-noble dialogue, in which the crown and its institutions became the central reference point of political life while other actors lost clout.⁵ In that context, the power for which nobles fought was recast as "shares" in the resources and jurisdiction of the crown.⁶ But with power conceived in those terms, rulers gained good grounds to decide who should, or

⁴ Francisco Bertelloni, "La construcción de la figura del Emperador como soberano absoluto en el *De monarchia* de Dante Alighieri," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 75, no. 3 (2019): 1618; Nieto Soria, *Legislar y Gobernar*, 43. And also an arbiter of legitimacy. Hutchison, "Defamation, a Murder More Foul?," 261.

⁵ Jorge Díaz Ibáñez, "Iglesia, nobleza y oligarquías urbanas," in Nieto Soria, *La Monarquía como conflicto*, 197-252; Suarez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 51. The concrete subject of this dialogue was the resources of the Crown, but there were ideological implications as well. "The crown" was central in conceptualizing public power, its exercise, and distribution. It was a collection of rights and resources, a "fictitious person" in which sovereign power was vested. The concept created space for others to participate in the exercise of power. Guenée *States and Rulers*, 43, 157-8; For Nieto Soria, it was under the Trastámara that this concept came to its "full" medieval development. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 139-144, 165. See also the classic: Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

According to Angus Mackay, by the late fourteenth century political activity was focused in the court and the council, Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages*, 143-158. See also Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 91. For an English comparison, see Ormond, *Political Life in Medieval England*, 35.

⁶ That meant money and jurisdiction more than landed property. François Foronda, "La privanza dans la Castille du bas Moyen Âge. Cadres conceptuels et stratégies de légitimation d'un lien de proximité," in Alfonso Antón, Escalona, and Martin, *Lucha Política*, 153-198; François Foronda, "La privanza, entre monarquía y nobleza," in Nieto Soria, *La monarquía como conflicto*, 73-132; Ladero Quesada, "Aristocratie et régime seigneurial," 1349.

should not, hold shares.⁷ However, those advantageous foundations were further strengthened by the advance of absolutist claims by the crown and its officials in the early decades of the fifteenth century. Though subject in practice to limits, these developments concentrated power in the crown and diminished legal constraints on its action.⁸

In chronicle accounts of deposition, framing narratives in terms of judicial procedures formed an important link between new robust expressions of royal power and older royal responsibilities related to justice.⁹ Of course, chroniclers did not all accommodate and adapt to new expressions of royal power and roles in exactly the same fashion. But they all did in some fashion. Added to the legacy of the fourteenth century's institutional reforms, the interplay of both trends contributed to distinctive new ways of characterizing and legitimizing separations of person and power, and new roles for monarchs in bringing them about, in comparison to older accounts.¹⁰ Indeed, that interplay, and its consequences, is a mechanism through which the centrality of royal power and institutions was advanced.

⁷ Carrasco Manchado, "Símbolos y ritos: Conflicto como representación," 489. By the turn of the fifteenth century noble power was not "autonomous" but based on a relationship with "the state." Ladero Quesada, "Aristocratie et régime seigneurial," 149-51; Zmura, *Monarchy, Aristocracy and the State*, 25, 34. On the other hand, fifteenth century author Alonso de Cartagena advanced the idea that if someone got *tierra* or *honor* (terms for payments from the crown) from the king in "Spain," they should not lose it without reason. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 264.

⁸ This change did not prevent conflict between nobles and the crown. But royal power became more important in defining, gaining, and losing, political power. Carlos Estepa Díez, "Naturaleza y poder real en Castilla," in Jara Fuente, Martin, and Alfonso Antón, *Construir la identidad*, 163-182; Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 185. However, despite this trend, juridical arguments were not always "royalist" in the sense of the figure of the king, but rather in terms of the crown in a more abstract sense. Monsalvo Antón, "Poder político y aparatos de estado," 121; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 110.

⁹ By authority, I mean a force that encourages compliance without direct coercion. Legitimation and justification came to the fore where force was insufficient, and emphasizing "proper" procedures had the potential to be effective at that. Kangas, Korpiola, and Aiononen, foreword to *Authorities in the Middle Ages*, ix, xi; Robert F. Berkhofer III, Alan Cooper, and Adam J. Kosto, introduction to *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe: 950-1350*, edited by Robert F. Berkhofer III, Alan Cooper, and Adam J. Kosto (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 1-10; Madden, "Symbols and Soldiers, English Royal Authority in Gascony," 270. See also Bayona Aznar, "Las expresiones del poder," 14-15, 31; Contamine, "La royauté française à la fin du Moyen Âge," 48; Lachaud, "Representation and Authority in Thirteenth-Century England and Gascony," 128; Graham McAleer, "Giles of Rome on Political Authority," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60, no. 1 (1999): 28.

¹⁰ Nieto Soria suggests ideology was slow to change in reaction to institutional changes. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 45. But Alan Harding, writing about the conceptual stakes of "state" narratives, is

With important practical losses of power separated from determinations of guilt and punishment, direct and explicit invocations of royal power, in the service of royal interests, took their place in chronicle narratives. Linking new claims with old forms, these narratives build an image of a “governing king” arbitrating power proactively, and freed from the limitations of reactive justice in which he acted mainly as a *rey justiciero*.¹¹ In that context, what a deposing king commanded and required, as much as what the target did and deserved, served as a distinct and well-developed basis for separation of person and power. Not only was the monarch freed from the constraints of reactive justice, but he also enjoyed a new and versatile set of tools to justify large scale political interventions. Moreover, that new capacity for legitimate royal power resonated elsewhere. As I discuss in the next chapter, the nature of the specific consequences arranged by proactive, governing kings also facilitated a further, more conceptual change in what it meant to lose power, and hold it, for everyone else.

Authority and Justification in the Chronicles

To analyze and account for these developments, I return to the same four narratives of key removals studied in the previous chapter.¹² Through close attention to the accounts of each

concerned with how an abstraction, the idea of the state, came to dominate political consciousness. The narratives of justice studied below offer some perspective on that question, advancing proactive views of royal power as much as a reactive ones. Harding, *Medieval Law and the Foundations of the State*, 2. And in a more immediate sense, Richard Kagan argues that fourteenth-century precedents, such as those discussed in the previous chapter, laid the groundwork for a fifteenth century legal revolution in Castile. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, xxi.

¹¹ The fifteenth century chronicles are not continuations of Ayala’s project, but they do offer new bases for interpreting losses of power that, like those depicted in his work on late fourteenth-century removals, did not depend on judicial decisions from which kings were separated. Among other things, rulers delegated more and, although justice was still important, also governed by “grace” and *merced*, stressing more proactive royal initiative over more reactive justice. Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 334-9; Helen Lacey, “Defaming the King: Reporting Disloyal Speech in Fourteenth-Century England,” in *Monarchy, State and Political Culture in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of W. Mark Ormond*, ed. Gwilym Dodd and Craig Taylor (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), 72.

¹² Two other significant removals will be referenced in notes, the 1429 arrest of the Duke of Arjona and the detention of the Count of Luna in 1434.

chronicle tradition, I isolate the actions of a king proactively using judicial procedures to deploy his authority, in his own interests, and establish their distinctiveness from reactive judgments of criminal guilt.¹³ Such scrutiny also helps establish the firm links between actions of that type and a series of distinctive consequences, which will be crucial when discussing, in the following chapter, how new ways of separating person and power both encouraged, and were enabled by, new conceptions of power itself.

As discussed in chapter three, chronicle accounts across both traditions single out royal commands that authorized significant consequences for political rivals of the king and his allies. Those orders set in motion judicial procedures, in the hands of legal professionals, but also immediate actions taken against targets and their possessions. To command, arrest, and seize, rather than to sentence and punish, were the king's most common functions.¹⁴ Ayala's depictions of removals from power in the late fourteenth century also displayed concern for royal actions of that type. But in these accounts, the king's authority was directly presented as a force "making" separations of person and power happen.¹⁵ At the same time, its use was explicitly and distinctively justified, and sometimes also attended by depictions of substantial procedural formality.¹⁶

¹³ Along with the characteristic consequences that accompanied them, to be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁴ The king, or royal authority at least, retained an important role in putting the sentences of royal courts into effect via *cartas ejecutorias*. Several from the period in question survive, such as a decision rendered by the *Audiencia* in 1428. ARCV Pergaminos, caja 90, n. 1.

¹⁵ Authority was often "put to work" by the term *mandar*, meaning to command. But *merced*, *voluntad* and other words for the royal will were used as well. Carrasco Manchado, "El lenguaje de la politización," 559-592; Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, "Léxico político en el Seguro de Tordesillas," in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *Du contrat d'alliance au contrat politique*, 99-100, 122-23; Medina Ávila, "Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto," 817.

¹⁶ Especially when described as occurring in *Consejo*. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 471. That fits in with larger discussions about the ceremonialization of political life, and even justice itself. Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis*, 223; Watts, *Polities*, 32. Wilentz interprets ceremonies as ways to both legitimize and de-legitimize, while shifts in them can signal shifts in where legitimacy lies. Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 3-5.

But increased prominence for royal authority meant more than portraying the king's orders, and their results, separately from ongoing processes of justice and their consequences. It made way for chronicle narratives to express new conceptions of the basis upon which, and the reasons for which, person and power were split apart.¹⁷ The various chronicles do not represent and incorporate these elements in exactly the same ways. However, although the accounts of each tradition have some unique concerns and perspectives, they depart in similar ways from their fourteenth-century predecessors.

Those departures should be understood in the context of ongoing reformulations of the nature and extent of royal authority, especially in the spheres of law and justice.¹⁸ Such reformulations had deep roots, but most important were specific efforts, and associated terminological changes, which were advanced after about 1420.¹⁹ In particular, the term *poderío*

¹⁷ And which were part of larger political discourses. Isabel Alfonso Antón, "Judicial Rhetoric and Political Legitimation in Medieval León-Castile," in *Building Legitimacy: Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimacy in Medieval Society*, ed. Isabel Alfonso Antón, Hugh Kennedy, and Julio Escalona, The Medieval Mediterranean 53 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 89-106; Jorge Díaz Ibáñez, "Iglesia, nobleza y oligarquías urbanas," in Nieto Soria, *La monarquía como conflicto*, 197-252; Funes, "Historiografía nobiliaria," 5-38; Cristina Jular Pérez-Alfaro, "The King's Face on the Territory: Royal Officers, Discourse and Legitimizing Practices in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Castile," in Alfonso Antón, Kennedy, and Escalona, *Building Legitimacy*, 107-38.

¹⁸ Alonso de Cartagena also gave laws themselves authority. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 15. See also Monsalvo Antón, "Poder político y aparatos de estado," 117-20.

¹⁹ The year in which, following King Juan's majority, Álvaro de Luna's rise, and the attendant struggles over control of the court, began in earnest. Political ideas and discourses, and even legal ones, at pretty much any time can be described as evolving in some way. Stofferahn, "Resonance and Discord," 13. And even if specific developments overlap in time, that does not mean they were necessarily part of a coherent and self-conscious program. J. M. Firnhaber-Baker, "From God's Peace to the King's Order: Late Medieval Limitations on non-Royal Warfare," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 23 (2006): 19-20. But these particular chronicles date from within a few decades of the 1420's, as do the events they describe. Just as Ayala's work was placed in the context of specific recent changes, I do a similar thing here. One of the more immediate "roots" was the increasing use of so-called derogatory clauses in royal documents toward the end of the fourteenth century. These clauses were inserted in royal documents to claim a right to make arrangements contrary to otherwise established law.

That usage has parallels with the employment of claims to *poderío real absoluto*, and were a controversial subject in many *Cortes* meetings of the era. Fernando Martín Pérez, "Castilla y el 'mi poderío real absoluto'," in Val Valdivieso, Martín Cea, and Carvajal de la Vega, *Expresiones del poder en la Edad Media*, 73-80; Nieto Soria, "La nobleza y el 'poderío real absoluto' en la Castilla del siglo XV," 238-43; José Manuel Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469): La monarquía como conflicto," *En la España medieval* 21 (1998): 165-68.

real absoluto, or absolute royal authority, increasingly appeared in royal documents.²⁰ This concept did not represent a claim to full control over political affairs, but it was a claim to ultimate legal authority beyond which there was no appeal.²¹ It was also used to assert a royal right to act in ways contrary to law and custom, and to bend ordinary judicial procedures as required.²² Kings acting in that way was not a new possibility, either in practice or in chronicle narratives. But chroniclers' new focus on asserting and defining the authority by which he could do so contributed to much more distinctive depictions of those actions and, ultimately, their consequences.²³

As the word claim suggests however, this conception of royal power was not universally shared.²⁴ It was nonetheless favored by the *letrados* of Juan's court, who were most involved in

²⁰ *Cierta ciencia* and *propio motu*, related terms, also rose in importance. Crawford, *The Fight for Status and Privilege*, 163; Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages*, 144; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 45, 124-27; Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 32, 42; Owens, "El largo pleito," 222; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 55. For an example of usage together, in 1422 King Juan deployed them to absolve Álvaro de Luna of pacts he had previously made with political rivals. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 18, 49-51.

²¹ Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 115; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 424, 443; Gueneé, *States and Rulers*, 67-8; Meissonnier, "Théorie et pratique du pouvoir royal," 310-11; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 65-67, 51-58, 141; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 96-97. Absolute power was also a claim to independence from any superior authority, like the papacy. Gaines Post, "Blessed Lady Spain: Vincentius Hispanus and Spanish National Imperialism in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 29, no.2 (April 1954): 206-8.

²² This concept could be used to argue that monarchs could disregard the law or procedure. Black, *Political Thought*, 152-53; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 794; Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 96; Meissonnier, "Théorie et pratique du pouvoir royal," 318. For a study of such a case, see Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 96-97, 114. On the other hand, according to Owens, it was most effective when exercised through them. Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 37. Also, *poderío real absoluto* was as much about clemency, forgoing action, as it was about taking action. José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Los perdones reales en la confrontación política de la Castilla Trastámara," *En La España Medieval* 25 (2002): 216. For specific associations of *poderío real absoluto* and clemency, when King Juan issued a general pardon following political upheavals involving Álvaro de Luna and the *infantes* of Aragón in 1427, see Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 128, 355.

²³ For example, at the *Cortes* of Guadalajara in 1390 and Madrid in 1393, the annulment of all political pacts made among nobles was decreed. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:294, 530. Both commands also were featured in the *Doctrinal de los caballeros*. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 293-95. Though done by the king's authority, the term *poderío real absoluto* did not appear. In 1427 however, King Juan II annulled a similar pact, but then his command was backed up by a claim to *poderío real absoluto*. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 30, 92-93. See also Calderón Ortega, doc. 21, 58.

²⁴ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 111, 124-27. Controversy over the king's use of derogatory clauses in commands is an example. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 475; Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 46, 122. That problem is distinct from other actors using these ideas to advance their own agenda by forcing the ruler's hands at times of weakness, which was not uncommon in the fifteenth century. Indeed, that helps to explain why they advanced despite that weakness. Medina Ávila, "Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto," 815.

drawing up documents and carrying out judicial procedures there.²⁵ For their part, none of the fifteenth century royal chroniclers fully adopted the terminology associated with such claims.²⁶ They did adapt to it however, since accounts of both traditions describe not just the substance of commands, but the authority at work behind them.²⁷ And although guilt and punishment did not disappear from their narratives of disempowerment, the direct interventions of the king and his authority occurred elsewhere.²⁸ The consequences of those actions, whether a chronicle reports a judicial sentence or not, were thus authorized and executed on a different, though still strongly defined, basis.

Just as significantly, those actions were justified in terms distinct from the “crime and punishment” characterizations favored in earlier works, and even in Ayala's later contributions when practical losses of power had been separated from formal sentences.²⁹ After all, in the four

²⁵ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 45. *Letrado* was in use since the 13th century, but became more important in the 14th. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 73, 89, 317; Devaney, “Virtue, Virility and History in Fifteenth-Century Castile,” 721-749; Molas Ribalta, “The Impact of Central Institutions,” 25. And although court figures may have promoted these clauses, they could not have sustained them with at least some acceptance. Neal, *The Letters of Edward I*, 25, 43, 49. See also Adelina Romero Martínez, *Los papeles del fisco: Estudio diplomático de la documentación fiscal castellana bajomedieval* (Granada: Grupo Editorial Universitario, 1998).

²⁶ Though they do appear within inserted or paraphrased royal documents, which have a larger presence in these accounts than they did in those of the fourteenth century.

²⁷ According to Nieto Soria, juridical aspects of royal ideology were the most dynamic, turning absolutist in the fifteenth century. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 110. Round also identifies a coherent, if not necessarily dominant, absolutist ideology by mid-century. Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 115. The tensions of that turn are reflected in chronicle narratives across both traditions. New ideas of royal authority were woven into their accounts of judicial procedure. Fourteenth-century institutional developments drove changes in Ayala's work, and in the works of his predecessors, new ideologies of power had a similar role.

²⁸ That is, losses were shown justified and ordered before guilt, as chronicles describe it, could be proven.

²⁹ Such terms were still in use, but not as prominently as in fourteenth-century accounts. In a 1422 royal document asking for political support against the *infante* Enrique, for instance, Enrique's actions were described as *maleficios* and *criminosos*. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 15, 44. Eccentric aristocratic author Enrique de Villena, in his early fifteenth century *Los doce trabajos de Hércules*, a commentary on the mythical labors of the hero, used terms like *malos*, *malas costumbres* and *detestables usos* to refer to the crimes of the centaurs Hercules faced, and the creatures themselves were called *criminosos* and *malfechores*. Enrique de Villena, *Los doce trabajos de Hércules*, ed. Margherita Morreale de Castro (Madrid: Clásicos Españoles, 1958), 12, 22. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 459. In the mid-century “Doctrinal de privados,” written by the Marqués of Santillana after Álvaro de Luna's downfall, his *yerros* and *maleficios* were described as *punidos* and *castigados*. Iñigo López de Mendoza, “Doctrinal de privados,” in *Poesía crítica y satírica del siglo XV*, ed. Julio Rodríguez Puértolas (Madrid: Castalia, 1984), 162. Pérez de Guzmán also used *males* and *daños* to refer to the favorite's actions. *Generacions y sembalanzas*, 137.

narratives discussed in chapter three, even when sentences were described, both the delegated process of judging and punishing, and immediate seizures and detentions, were authorized at the same time by royal command. In other words, when those accounts depict such seizures, guilt for crimes, never mind punishment for them, had not been established. But more broadly, whether or not they ultimately describe a sentence being handed down, these later chronicles present distinct justifications for royal commands, expressed in terms of serving royal political needs or meeting royal responsibilities.³⁰ Those justifications offered a proactive rather than reactive view of the purpose of the orders, and their consequences, in which what mattered was what the king wanted or needed, at least as much as what the target had allegedly done.³¹

Although chroniclers of both traditions tended not to employ whole-heartedly the terminology associated with new claims of royal authority, closely connected to *poderío real absoluto* was another claim, that of *cierta ciencia*. It refers to a special knowledge possessed by kings regarding what was in the best interests of, or of the greatest utility for, the realm.³² Often

³⁰ Paz Alonso identifies criminal matters themselves as becoming a concern of the whole community more than just the parties involved in any case. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 91.

³¹ Charges like “robbing the king’s lands” have a smaller presence in these later accounts, certainly as a primary charge. For context, a letter sent to the authorities in Murcia in 1422 directed them to prosecute locals involved in “robos” and other crimes in a time of disorder, but it was not directly part of the high-stakes court maneuvering regarding Enrique and Dávalos. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 62, 214. See also Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 195-99.

Also, the idea of urgent necessity has a long history as a justificatory force that allowed rulers to demand things of their subjects, especially money, in excess of what would ordinarily be allowed, in order to meet their responsibilities in times of danger (though it was often used in many more circumstances than that). However, here there was no such sense of even nominal emergency. Guenée, *States and Rulers*, 101; O’Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León*, 35-6; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 62, 241, 265; Michael Prestwich, *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 16; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 291-2.

³² José Luis Bermejo Cabrero, “La idea medieval de contrafuero en León y Castilla,” *Revista de estudios políticos* 187 (1973): 304; Joel Blanchard, “Commynes on Kingship,” in Allmand, *War, Government and Power*, 108; Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 357-8; Medina Ávila, “Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto,” 817; Nieto Soria, “El poderío real absoluto,” 165-66; Manuel Alejandro Rodríguez de la Peña, ‘Rex excelsus qui scientiam diliget’: La dimensión sapiencial de la Realeza alfonsí,’ *Alcanate: Revista de estudios Alfonsies* 9 (2014-15): 109, 115, 120-21, 134.

placed as the guiding hand of *poderío real absoluto* in royal documents, justifications expressed in terms of royal interests should be understood against this background.³³

Of course, upholding justice was itself an important royal obligation.³⁴ It, along with ensuring peace and promoting the public good, constituted one of the three pillars of good government.³⁵ In these accounts however, the king is not shown making judgments himself, but rather setting the wheels of justice in motion.³⁶ And that role points to another ongoing evolution in political discourse. From the late fourteenth century onward, the question of what it meant to govern the realm became an object of intensified consideration.³⁷ Certainly, the concept of governing, what good government looked like, and ideas about the king's role in achieving it, had deeper roots than that.³⁸ But new urgency arose in a context of institutional change, the

³³ Rucquoi, "De los reyes que no son taumaturgos," 33.

³⁴ Diego de Valera's somewhat later *Doctrinal de príncipes* describes the duty of kings to *castigar* both *ecesos* and *delitos*. Diego de Valera, *Doctrinal de príncipes*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 187. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 421. Sánchez de Arévalo likewise insisted a prince must *punir* and *castigar* those who disturb the peace of the city, and must guard and execute the laws. Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, *Suma de la política*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 282, 299. On the other hand, the *Doctrinal de los caballeros* deplores that people who cause *asonada*, a form of uprising, had chosen to trust their own strength over the king's *justicia*. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 196.

³⁵ Nieto Soria identifies the public or common good as the newest element in this tríflecta. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 147-148, 224-225. García de Valdeavellano identifies the common good in terms of the maintenance of peace, defending the kingdom, defending the faith, and preserving justice. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 390, 410. See also Black, *Political Thought*, 24-25, 125; Carrasco Manchado, "¿Cultura política o cultura 'de la política'?" 28; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 153; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 41-42. At the *Cortes* of Valladolid, which met in 1440 in the midst of yet another internal dispute, the king was urged to be merciful so that "public affairs can be ordered with good policy and governed in truth and justice. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos de León y de Castilla*, vol. 3 (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1865), 369. For Suárez Fernández however, public, in practice, mostly meant the nobles. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 11.

³⁶ Paz Alonso points out that acts of justice were often also acts of government. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 314. See also Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 418; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 560; Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 87-8, 94. Also, Salustiano de Dios points out that the *Consejo* had a role to play in cases, judicial or not, involving contests between the interests of the powerful, as it certainly did in the narratives considered here. On the other hand, internally, distinction between matters of justice and matters of grace became stronger in the fifteenth century. In particular, it became important to make sure *letrados* were involved in matters of justice. Dios, 121-124, 425.

³⁷ The terms *regimiento* and *gobernación* were most common. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 738; Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla*, 129-130. Pérez de Guzmán lamented that Castile since the 1420's had bad *regimiento*. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 25, 119-20.

³⁸ Black, *Political Thought*, 187; Crawford, *The Fight for Status and Privilege*, 24; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 738; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 410; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 110-155;

continued rise of *letrados* in administration and, not insignificantly, long periods of royal minority or incapacity in Castile.³⁹ And in general, the centrality of the crown and court in political life made how affairs there were managed more significant.⁴⁰

Traditional visions of government, moreover, tended to envision maintaining the status quo.⁴¹ That idea was still prominent in the fifteenth century.⁴² But in these accounts at least, it is possible to follow how changes in judicial procedure made space for the king and his authority to play more active roles.⁴³ That vision of a more proactive king offered new ways of justifying

Michel Senellart, *Les arts de gouverner: Du regimen médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1995).

Diego de Valera referred to the *oficio del rey* separately from the person. *Doctrinal de principes*, 187. But that did not mean the king could step back entirely. Royal responsibility to ensure good government was stressed in the *Partidas* and affirmed in the *Cortes*, such as in the *Ordenamiento of Briviesca* in 1387, which insisted he must make sure his people are “well ruled in peace and justice, and must correct and improve those things which may be contrary to good government.” p.2, t.1, l.6; *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:362. Pérez de Guzmán complained that King Juan took no part in *regimiento* and left that *cargo* to the constable. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 119-120.

³⁹ In the 1380’s, attempts to define the *Consejo* delineated which matters the king had to be involved with and which not, while royal minorities, from 1390 to 1393, and again from 1406 to 1419, heightened the urgency of this issue. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 93, 132. For how the *Consejo* and “good government” were associated with one another, see *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:332-35, 382. And once again, political institutionalization and centralization occurred despite royal weakness. The *Consejo* became a vehicle for nobles to influence government even as it expanded the capacity of that government. Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado,” 147.

⁴⁰ The concept of the *corona* helped to distinguish between reigning and just ruling. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 139. See also Bádenas Zamora, “Los casos de corte,” 1033, 1044-45. Indeed, in that context, the ruler personally was less significant. Bertelloni, “La construcción de la figura del Emperador,” 1614; Björn Tjällén, “Teaching Virtue through the Law: Justice and Royal authority in Giles of Rome’s *De Regimine Principum* (c.1280),” in *Virtue, Ethics and Education from Late Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Andreas Hellerstedt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 73.

⁴¹ De Stefano, “La sociedad estamental en las obras de Don Juan Manuel,” 329-354; Molas Ribalta, “The Impact of Central Institutions,” 20. Sánchez de Arévalo and Eiximenis, for instance, continued to cast justice as to giving each their due, according to status, while Arévalo also stressed that the prince could not take the goods and *faziendas* of anyone without *orden judicial*. Eiximenis, *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 109; Sánchez de Arévalo, *Suma de la política*, 299-300.

On the other hand, there was a shift away from the *Cortes*, and toward the king alone, in promulgating new laws in fifteenth century Castile, which was connected with a more active vision of kingship. And, like *poderío real absoluto*, that too began to take off in the 1420’s and 30’s. Black, *Political Thought*, 115; Crawford, *The Fight for Status and Privilege*, 24; Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 62, 79; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 13; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 92, 204, 794. For an example of explicit royal law-making, see a 1428 royal effort to legislate against abuses of *emplazamientos* at the royal court. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 141, 375.

⁴² Firnhaber-Baker, “From God’s Peace to the King’s Order,” 19; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 1.

⁴³ García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 682, 695; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 128. Active royal lawmaking and governance were also linked. Even if of limited effect, legislating maintained appearances of governing. Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 120. See also Bertelloni, “La teoría política medieval,” 29; Rucquoi,

losses of power and, as I discuss in the following chapter, promoted new ways of conceiving what it meant to lose power itself.⁴⁴

But for now, thanks to the terminological and discursive developments noted above, fifteenth century chroniclers gained firm bases to explicitly depict strongly defined royal authority acting, legitimately, in its own interests.⁴⁵ Although accounts in both traditions were framed in terms of justice, examined in a larger context, chroniclers depicted proactive royal management of political problems alongside findings of guilt and attendant punishments. Reflecting strengthened expressions of royal authority, the king's commands, serving what were cast as his interests, worked distinctly within chronicle narratives as justified executive forces in the separation of person and power.⁴⁶

"Privanza, fortuna y política," 347; Vidotte, "A justiça e a produção do Direito em Castela no século XV," 336, 344-8.

A hint of proactive roles for royal justice appeared in Ayala's account of Juan I's confrontation with the *infante* Alfonso. In his description of *infante* Alfonso's fall, he insisted that the king asked the *Consejo* to consider not only what Alfonso had done, but what he might do in the future if set free. *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 4, pp. 93-94. Indeed, the role of the *Consejo* was significant there, and continued to be in the fifteenth-century narratives. It combined political and judicial functions, which was also a role of a "governing king," who often acted through or with the *Consejo*, in fifteenth century chronicle narratives.

⁴⁴ Among the tools of a governing king were royal *pragmáticas* and *ordenamientos* issued at court, bypassing the traditional legislative forum of the *Cortes*. Still, *Cortes* meetings saw frequent complaints, and royal responses, regarding the administration of justice. That continued in the fifteenth century. But, royal initiative also grew in this regard. For example, in February of 1427, Juan II issued a *pragmática real* stressing the importance of following laws regarding the administration of justice. AGS Patronato Real, leg. 69, n. 13.

⁴⁵ And with distinctive consequences interpreted in terms other than punishment in reaction to crimes. In the chronicle narratives, the more explicit invocation of royal power as an executive force served as a tool for this governing king to intervene unilaterally, without waiting for someone else to bring a case. Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 59-60. See also Giordanengo, "Du droit civil au pouvoir royal," 17; Martínez Martínez, "Ecos cronísticos del rey-juez medieval," 354.

⁴⁶ Celina A. Lértora Mendoza, "Maquiavelo: Razón de estado y realismo político," in Roche Arnas, *El pensamiento político*, 499; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 241, 253, 283. Justice and administration overlapped, and of course so did politics. Paz Alonso describes justice as politicized, though some kind of *proceso* was necessary, it did not have to be an impartial one. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 267. In such a context, Nieto Soria describes the purpose of justice, or at least one purpose, as being to transform realities into *derecho*, more than making reality fit with an abstract code. Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y genesis*, 229. That is similar to his take on new royal legislation, especially with regard to the functioning of institutions, which he describes as a political illusion, designed to hide the maneuverings of a dominant group with capacity to act behind a veil of formalism. Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 121.

The *Crónica* Tradition

I look first to the accounts of the *Crónica de Juan II* tradition to identify these ideas at work and analyze their impact. Returning to the downfalls of the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos, both the fifteenth century *Crónica de Juan II* and its sixteenth century reworking describe them as intertwined, with the king's detention of the one also cast as the prelude to written orders for the arrest of the other.⁴⁷ As discussed in the previous chapter, their depictions of these events placed Enrique's arrest at an in-person encounter between the king and the *infante*, specifically at a *Consejo* meeting, and stress certain ceremonial trappings, like the raised dais on which the king and council sat.⁴⁸ That encounter was the scene of several royal commands, each of which they attributed to the king's *merced*.⁴⁹ Both the earlier account and its later reformulation used that versatile term to describe the force behind the king's intention to "learn the truth" regarding the accusations, and also his order to arrest the *infante* Enrique though not, directly, Ruy López Dávalos.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 13-14, pp. 282-287; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 11-12, pp. 416-18.

⁴⁸ The *Consejo* was an institutional venue where government and justice very often overlapped. Its impact was already seen in Ayala's later narratives, but it was stronger in the *Crónica* tradition narratives thanks to the greater definition of the king's other actions through it. Also, in the *Crónica* tradition the king's actions there show distinctions between justice and governing. Indeed, setting justice in motion sometimes appeared as just another one of the governing responsibilities he carried out through the *Consejo*.

⁴⁹ *Merced* had many meanings in fifteenth-century Castile. Here, as a force at work against the *infante* Enrique, it meant something like "the king's will." In other contexts, being in the king's *merced* meant that one was in his good graces, while it could also be used to refer to a grant that a king gave to a subject. Calling such a grant a *merced* emphasized the role of the king's will in deciding what his subjects held from him.

⁵⁰ Regarding the investigation, the chronicles, beginning with the contemporary account and followed by the later reformulation, read: "Primo: Vos decides bien, que yo sepa la verdad de este fecho, é esa es mi intencion, é así es mi merced de lo hacer;" "Muy bien dicho es que yo sepa la verdad deste hecho, y esta es mi intención, é así es mi merced de lo poner en obra." Regarding the arrest, the respective lines are: "é en tanto que se sabe el verdad, pues tanto toca á vos este fecho, mi merced es que seades aquí detenido;" "pero en tanto que la verdad se sabe (pues esta caso á vos toca) es mi merced que seais detenidos vos é [others]." Regarding Dávalos's arrest, the older *Crónica* says: "Otrosí el Rey mandó dar públicamente sus cartas...donde quier quel Condestable Rui Lopez Dávalos pudiese ser habido, que fuese preso;" while the later reads: "y el Rey mandó dar sus cartas en pública forma...mandando que donde quiera que el Condestable Ruy Lopez Dávalos pudiese ser habido, fuese preso." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 13-14, pp. 282-287; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 11-12, pp. 416-18.

Overall then, the *Crónica* tradition accounts depict both that projected inquiry, and the immediate move against the *infante*'s person, as taking place by royal command according to the king's *merced*.⁵¹ Though the term *merced* itself was not new, its use highlights the role of the king's own wishes, and authority, in bringing about these results.⁵² Also, the *Crónica* tradition accounts directly associated neither the king nor his *merced* with raising the prospect of ongoing procedural justice. Instead, they insisted that the *infante* Enrique made that suggestion.⁵³ He asked for an investigation, and then for the king to rule against him if found guilty, an outcome he suggested was unlikely.⁵⁴

At the same time, the *infante* recommended a similar procedure in response to the charges against the absent constable, Ruy López Dávalos. But the earlier and later manifestations of the *Crónica* also describe justified losses and limitations imposed on both figures. The king decreed those measures against his rivals despite the fact that Enrique framed his request in a way that suggested "the truth" of their culpability for the charges made against them, to be discovered in the course on an inquiry, was not yet known.⁵⁵ Overall then, the *Crónica* tradition

⁵¹ Such an intention also played a role in their accounts of the Count of Luna's fall in 1434. According to the older *Crónica*, he had been denounced to the king for conspiracy, after which Juan ordered a secret *pesquisa*. It confirmed the charges to be true, after which the king "le mando prender," or ordered his arrest, and he was led off to detention. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1434 ch. 1, pp. 387-9.

⁵² It stresses action taken based on what the king wanted or needed, not in response to what the target had been found responsible for.

⁵³ The *Partidas* distinguish between acts of pity, mercy and grace. *p.7, t.32, l.3*. And Ayala used it when recounting the *infante* Alfonso's clash with King Juan I. But he mostly used it in the sense of the *infante* returning to the king's *merced*, or good graces, not a force behind royal action.

⁵⁴ The king responded that it would be in his service to do so, so he would know what response would correspond with his service. The process was cast in terms of the king's needs, not Enrique's misdeeds. That was important for justifying proactive royal measures, in that it did not depend on a target having committed any particular criminal act.

⁵⁵ According to the *Partidas*, something judged by sentence ought to be held to be truth. *p.3, t.17, l.1*.

accounts present the proposed procedure as being for the benefit of the accused, to clear their names, rather than a necessary factor to open up their persons and possessions to royal action.⁵⁶

Losses placed before a definitive sentence can be interpreted simply as extensions of the powers of courts and judges in the opening stages of *procesos*. However, neither version of the *Crónica* depicts these actions as simply routine.⁵⁷ In both, further explanation, and justification, accompanied the seizures. Starting with the *infante* Enrique, the king explained the order for his arrest in *Consejo* on the basis that he had associated with people who had acted in ways that were to his “great disservice and harmful to my kingdoms.”⁵⁸ That phrasing casts the king as concerned principally with his own interests.⁵⁹ In fact, the most specific terms associated with guilt and punishment came not from him, but from the *infante*.⁶⁰ Although King Juan acted through forms that could lead to a finding of the *infante*’s criminal responsibility, the chronicles

⁵⁶ That is not unique to *Crónica* tradition. Recall the 1438 letter to Murcia about Pedro Manrique’s escape, in which the turn from the *via de justicia* was put down to his decision not to defend himself. Yet, no chronicle offers much detail about defenses, planned or effected. Their focus remained on the king. Gómez Redondo, “Discurso y elocución en la *Crónica de Juan II*,” 243.

Also, clearing his name was not just a matter of pride, since a tarnished reputation could have legal consequences. Massimo Vallerani, “La fama tra costruzioni giuridiche e modelli sociali nel tardo medioevo,” in *La Fiducia Secondo i Linguaggi del Potere*, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Mulino, 2007), 110-111.

⁵⁷ Putting pressure on property was also a way to get people who had defied a summons to respond. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 174. And abuses in this process, both calling people to court and seizing property, were a frequent cause of complaint. See, for one of many examples, Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 180, 448-453.

⁵⁸ “vinieron á mi noticia algunas cosas que algunos de los caballeros que han estado con vos trataban en gran deservicio mío, é daño de mis reinos.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, p. 283; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 11, pp. 416-17. He was named in the letters about the Granada conspiracy.

⁵⁹ This pattern appears in both traditions. Here, the use of “disservice” to characterize the actions of a target is similar to fourteenth-century usage. But the enumeration of specific misdeeds was less in evidence than it was in the accounts of the fourteenth-century chroniclers. And in any case, it justified specific royal commands to seize, not a judgement or even the beginning of a *proceso*. In contrast to justifications based on what would be in the king’s service, it was still reactive. But overall, it contributed to a vision of justice, and separations of person and power mediated by it, in which what mattered was meeting the king’s needs, not punishing the deeds of the accused.

⁶⁰ For Dávalos as well. In the older chronicle, he demands “Si el [Dávalos] en tales cosas como estas ha torpado, a mi placera que vuestra señoría proceda contra el por muy gran castigo.” In that same narrative, he had earlier referred to the alleged crimes as a “cosa tan mala e tan fea.” In the later *Crónica*, he asks “si por verdad se hallare en tales yerros haya caído, a mi placera que vuestra señoría mande proceder contra el por la forma en que las leyes de vuestros reinos lo disponen.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, p. 283; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 11, pp. 416-17.

suggest he did not rely on such a finding to justify action against him. Instead, they depict him stressing the impact of Enrique's alleged conduct on himself and the realm.⁶¹

Royal commands and royal priorities remained central after the arrest, when both accounts move on to the sequestration of the *infante* Enrique's possessions.⁶² For instance, when explaining the seizure of his castles, the king's decision to take them in hand rests on his recognition that, "since the *infante* Don Enrique was thus imprisoned and detained by the king, it was fitting that his towns and fortresses should not be in his control."⁶³ The chronicle narratives do not fold this action into processes of justice as a simple procedural step. Instead, it formed part of a continuing process of royal decision making, based on his own evaluation of the unfolding political circumstances, to manage the situation his previous commands had created.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Though the older *Crónica* also characterizes the letters, saying they suggested Ruy López Dávalos had conspired with the king of Granada "in the disservice of God and the king, threatening the destruction of the land of Andalucía and the Kingdom of Murcia." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, p. 284.

The rhetoric of service and disservice, which set the terms in which that impact was expressed, was very important. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 410; Gibello Bravo, *La imagen de la nobleza castellana*, 141-153; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 146-7; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 42. Though as a royal chronicle, that is perhaps to be expected. When describing the Count of Luna's fall, the earlier *Crónica* also does not stress the criminal nature of his actions. Instead, it portrays him as untrustworthy and ungrateful, saying he had misused the many boons the king had given him, and then tried to seize Seville in conjunction with the *infantes* of Aragón. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1434 ch. 1, p. 388. That focus on ingratitude was by no means new. It was an integral part of Sánchez de Valladolid's account of Álvaro Núñez Osorio's fall, for example. But, there it intensified his condemnation for a specific crime, treason. In this account, there no specific crime was stressed. That said, in January 1431 the count had made a *pleito homenaje* with King Juan. Like with Diego Gómez de Sandoval, his treatment can be interpreted in light of his breaking a specific agreement, not just general disloyalty. The *Crónica*, however, does not stress the pact in this case. AGS Patronato Real, leg. 7, n. 155.

⁶² *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 20, pp. 296-298; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 14-16, pp. 419-20. Within the chronicle narratives, there is a shift in focus here from the *infante* Enrique's public arrest to analysis of motivations and decision-making whose supposed context is less clear. That distinction applies in other accounts as well.

⁶³ "En tanto que el Infante don Enrique así era preso é detenido por el Rey, convenía que las sus villas é lugares é castillos é fortalezas non estuviesen por él, é ordenó el Rey por esta manera..." That is the older phrasing, the later *Crónica* says: "Porque estando el Infante preso convenia dar Administrador á la Orden [de Santiago]," and "En tanto que el Infante estaba preso, el Rey determinó de tomar todas sus fortalezas." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 20, pp. 296-298; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 chs. 14-16, pp. 419-20.

⁶⁴ Decisions made, moreover, while the ultimate disposition of the possessions was unsettled. However, it should be noted that the chronicle does not describe this evaluation as a "public" justification made by King Juan. That is a reminder that using chronicle accounts means distinguishing between a chronicle message and a royal message mediated by the chroniclers. When the way they do that can be compared with documentary evidence, the chronicles of both traditions are generally in accord with it. But in any case, it is not necessary to accept that this really was the king's reasoning, even though it is certainly plausible. The chronicler interpreted this action in those terms, and associated it with the use of royal authority in a way that earlier authors such as Ayala did not.

Similarly, when describing measures taken against Ruy López Dávalos after the orders for his arrest, and pending the resolution of his *proceso*, the *Crónica* tradition accounts describe a command “to take the castles he held on the frontier with the Moors.”⁶⁵ This particular loss at royal discretion stood apart from the extensive additional seizures he faced. Instead, the king’s directive was identified as a response both to the constable’s alleged conspiracy with the king of Granada, and to his flight to Aragón, suggesting that this step had to be taken right away for reasons of its own, independent of the potential findings of the ongoing *proceso*.⁶⁶ Although connected to the still unproven accusations against López Dávalos, in the context of the narratives as a whole, this command represented a distinct and self-contained action, responding to immediate royal needs or interests without having to wait for that as yet incomplete process to establish his guilt.⁶⁷

Royal authority protecting royal interests, intertwined with but distinct from justice, also permeates both *Crónica* tradition narratives of Diego Gómez de Sandoval’s clash with the king. Both the earlier *Crónica* and its later reformulation specifically describe the seizure of his fortresses, in particular Castrogeriz. As they tell it, the issue of the count’s strongholds had

⁶⁵ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 15, pp. 288-9; 1422 ch. 20, pp. 298-300; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 12, pp. 417-18; 1422 ch. 17, p. 420.

⁶⁶ That led, instead, specifically to confiscation. “El Rey, visto cómo el Condestable Don Ruy Lopez Dávalos así era ido de su reino sin su mandado...visto otrosí lo contenido en las cartas de Granada...envió mandar tomar todos los castillos fronteros de moros que tenía;” “Y el Rey, vistas las cosas hechas por el Condestable Don Ruy Lopez Dávalos en lo que parecía por las cartas susodichas...embió tomar todos los castillos que él tenía en frontera de Moros.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 17, pp. 291-292; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, p. 418.

That is also the charge Pérez de Guzmán emphasized. However, he added that although the letters were later revealed to be forgeries, Dávalos received no restitution, showing his fall had been more about greed for his possessions than zeal for justice. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 34. That overlaps with the *emplazamiento*, in which the *fiscal* urged that Dávalos should face the immediate seizure of his possessions since he was a danger, clouded by “great suspicion with great evidence.” Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 58. That special justification was included despite the fact that kings possessed broad powers to justify taking possession of fortresses. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 184-85.

⁶⁷ i.e., if the letters were true, leaving frontier castles in his hands would be too great a risk. That is not to say that kings could or did not act this way before. Kings did have substantial authority over fortresses. But the *Crónica* narratives associate that action with specific royal interests and commands, separate from the ongoing procedures.

soured relations between him and King Juan since 1429.⁶⁸ They recount it distinctly, however, from their later treatment of his trial and sentence. In fact, the king's consultation with his learned advisors, and the opening of a *proceso*, occurred only after the seizure of Castrogeriz and other castles.

Instead, these royally ordered measures were explained in terms of the king's perception of his immediate needs.⁶⁹ Indeed, those explanations stressed the hypothetical dangers of the count's possession of fortresses, more than any specific crimes on his part. The earlier *Crónica* insists that from early 1430, given his association with the *infantes*, "it seemed to him [King Juan] that it was not a good thing that he [Diego Gómez de Sandoval] should hold any fortresses in his kingdom from which disorders and uprisings could be waged, or from which any disservice could come to him."⁷⁰ And both that account and its later reworking suggest that the king's proposal for the count to give up his fortresses, made during the negotiations between the two men, was an effort to allay royal fears about his intentions.⁷¹ Later, when Diego Gómez refused the king's call to court and fled, the king's first step was to arrange the surrender of the stronghold of Castrogeriz, since "it seemed to him that it was not safe that any strong castle in

⁶⁸ Which, recall, was when the *infantes* invaded Castile in an effort to oust Álvaro de Luna once again.

⁶⁹ Although an *emplazamiento* and other letters would have been broadly public, the *Crónica* tradition accounts do not say how publicly the king's perceptions were, supposedly, discussed. But by choosing to include them, they fold them into their interpretations of the event. Within the narratives, both reasons described as public and chronicler interpretations work together to justify these royal actions, taken on his authority.

⁷⁰ "É como este Conde fuese crianza é fechora del Rey don Fernando de Aragon, é del Rey de Navarra, su fijo, aunque todas las mercedes, honra é estado que tenía, del Rey lo había é de lo suyo, había el Rey razon de dar alguna fe á las sospechas que de él se decían. É por ende, parecióle que non era bien que él toviese fortalezas algunas en su reino por donde se pudiese facer tal bollicio é levantamiento, de que deservicio alguno le pudiese venir." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 10, pp. 192-5.

⁷¹ "porque de él non hobiese razon de sospechar, que entregase estas dos fortalezas á un caballero que por el rRey las toviese, é le ficiese por ellas pleito homenaje en cuanto durase la guerra que él había con los Reyes de Aragon é de Navarra." "el Rey acordó de le embiar decir que porque dél se decían algunas cosas que en su deservicio hacia, lo qual él no creía, que le rogaba é mandaba, porque se quitase dél toda sospecha, entregase las sus fortalezas...tanto que durase la guerra entrél é los Reyes de Aragon é Navarra." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 11, p. 481. And this measure was also to be conditional, lasting only for the duration of the internal conflicts.

the kingdom should be in his hands.”⁷² According to these depictions, a formal finding of guilt and an attendant punishment were not necessary to seize the count’s possessions, at least the ones in which the king was most interested, and nor was a specific misdeed necessary to justify it.

To be sure, kings did have, in principle, broad authority over castles.⁷³ Moreover, although the seizures were authorized before an *acusación* was placed against the count by the king’s *fiscal*, the gap between those actions in the narratives is very small, still leaving them closely connected. But the sentence that each eventually describes at the end of the *proceso* did not bear directly on Diego Gómez’s possessions or even prescribe a personal punishment in response to enumerated crimes.⁷⁴ Instead, it declared him “to be and to have been disobedient and rebellious toward the king and his commands.”⁷⁵ That framing, also characterizing his actions as contrary to the king’s service, identified the count himself as generally disloyal more than it singled out criminal actions for which he should be punished.⁷⁶ The sentence appears to

⁷² “parescióle que non era segura cosa que por él estoviese castillo fuerte ninguno en su regno.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 1, pp. 253-5; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 1, p. 490. In one sense, this measure was reactive. But the explanation offered by the *Crónica* tradition accounts rests not on what Sandoval did, but what the king thought he might do in the future. Also, the term *cierta ciencia* was connected with ideas of *poderío real absoluto*. Though not used directly here, the king taking action based on a sense of what would be best for the realm is in keeping with that idea.

⁷³ When compared with the fourteenth-century accounts however, the dynamics of the castle issue in these narratives, and also those of Ruy López Dávalos’s fall, are different. In the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, the king’s command to Álvaro Núñez Osorio was presented as an abrupt demand, while in the *Crónica de Pedro I*, Ayala depicted his confrontation with Alfonso Fernández Coronel as being more about the king’s desire to seize Alfonso Fernández rather than Aguilar itself. In these later situations, the *Crónica de Juan II* presents the king’s efforts to seize castles as responses to his evaluation of their political or strategic significance, not personal confrontations between the king and the holders of the fortresses.

⁷⁴ Beyond paying the costs of the proceedings.

⁷⁵ Both accounts say, before reaching this determination, the sentence recalled his refusal of the king’s summons and his involvement with the *infantes*. Such actions could be described in criminal terms, justifying specific punishments. In the *Fuero Real*, one of many articulations of a similar principle, those who did not obey a summons were subject to a monetary penalty and the possibly of even harsher measures. Palacios Alcaine, *Alfonso X el Sabio: Fuero Real*, 4.

⁷⁶ In terms of how the *Crónica* tradition accounts present the whole disagreement between Diego Gómez de Sandoval and the king, this finding justified the royal distrust, which had been raised long before, more than it laid out a specific punishment for a specific misdeed.

legitimize or reinforce actions already taken rather than prescribe new consequences.⁷⁷ After all, the king's principal goal, seizing his fortresses, had been achieved by other means.⁷⁸

In these accounts from the *Crónica* tradition, specifically invoked royal authority arranged significant separations of person and power. Moreover, it did so in response to justifications that depended on royal needs in specific political contexts established by the chronicles. Rather than responding to what were defined as criminal acts on the part of targets, the king acted according to his own interests, often called his "service." As such, these narratives turn the authorization, and justification, of separating person and power from a matter of crime and punishment to one of necessity or even expediency. Put another way, in the *Cronica* tradition, depositions were defined not only, or even primarily, as a judicial matter, but as an explicitly political problem to be solved by the king's authority.

The *Halconero* Tradition

The chronicles of the *Halconero* tradition also stress the action of royal authority in relation to the downfalls of the *infante* Enrique and Diego Gómez de Sandoval. However, in comparison to the accounts of the *Crónica* tradition, none of the chroniclers responsible consistently and explicitly differentiated them, and their consequences, from judicial procedures

⁷⁷ Indeed, justice here appears somewhat subordinate to the other royal measures already taken, confirming or justifying them perhaps, but not doing much on its own. Compare that to Sánchez de Valladolid's earlier account of Álvaro Núñez Osorio's fall, in which royal justice, though coming after practical losses had already been arranged, nonetheless was put forward as the source of specific penalties.

⁷⁸ This is an example, in the *Crónica* tradition, of such actions being legitimized by association with justice, yet also distinct from it. Justice served as one tool among many in the king's efforts to manage affairs.

and their results.⁷⁹ But still, the ways in which they described royal authority at work, and the justifications for its use, have much in common with their contemporary cousins.⁸⁰

First, when rather briefly recounting the *infante* Enrique's arrest, the *Crónica del Halconero* singles out the king's command, "yo vos mando," as the catalyst which put his imprisonment in motion.⁸¹ The *Refundición* describes a similar scene, but more explicitly highlights royal authority by insisting the king declared his *voluntad*, or royal will, that Enrique be arrested.⁸² The king's will could simply be used as a synonym for royal wishes, but it also could be endowed with a stronger legal force, thanks to the new language of *poderío real absoluto*.⁸³ Given that there was no place in either narrative for Enrique to defend himself, the latter meaning was more prominent here. He was not on trial, or even offered one, but simply informed of what the king had decided to do with him.⁸⁴

Further adding to that sense, these accounts each describe the king defending those decisions by insisting that they were based on what was "complimentary to my service" and the

⁷⁹ That is mostly because, for the 1420's downfalls, neither clearly describes ongoing judicial procedures. In the 1420's the accounts of this tradition tend to offer only very sparse descriptions of events in comparison with the *Crónica* tradition accounts, and they have very little to say about Ruy López Dávalos at all. However, in their coverage for the 1430's, their more detailed narratives do frame them in terms of judicial procedures. And, the *Halconero* accounts also focus more on personalities than institutions. Together, these consistent characteristics can account for the difference.

⁸⁰ And as I will explore in the next chapter, led to the same kinds of consequences

⁸¹ "yo vos mando que seades detenido." *Crónica del Halconero*, 7-8.

⁸² "mi voluntad es que seáys detenido." *Refundición*, ch. 17, pp. 44-46.

⁸³ For the royal will, see Francisco de Paula Cañas Gálvez, "Música, poder y monarquía en la Castilla Trastámara (1366-1474): Nuevas perspectivas de análisis," *Revista de musicología* 32, no.1 (2009): 372; Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 115; Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 335; Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 96; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 51-58, 65-67, 100; Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto," 172; Gueneé, *States and Rulers*, 67-8; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 96-97.

More broadly, when discussing why subjects ought to obey their rulers, Sánchez de Arévalo compared such obedience to how "los elementos y cosas baxas obedecen la voluntad y movimiento del cielo," or "how lower things obey the will and movement of the heavens." *Suma de la política*, 304.

⁸⁴ Both accounts do briefly suggest that he did offer some defense, but offer no specifics. That is quite different from the depiction in the *Crónicas*, in which the *infante* Enrique offered a more vigorous defense. But in the more institutionally focused accounts of that tradition, Enrique's defense was to be based on an investigation and, perhaps, a *proceso*, two things in which the *Halconero* accounts are also not interested.

good of the realm.⁸⁵ That manner of justification cast his commands not as reactions to any criminal actions on the *infante* Enrique's part, but measures serving the needs of the king and the kingdom.⁸⁶ Indeed, since wider judicial procedures played hardly any role in these narratives, the absence of any sense of reactive justice is significant. Although the royal order came from a king in the midst of his *Consejo*, he was not judging and punishing, but commanding in direct terms to arrange the affairs of the kingdom according to his interests and responsibilities.⁸⁷

Furthermore, in their accounts of Diego Gómez de Sandoval's disempowerment, the *Halconero* tradition chronicles put forward a *Consejo* consultation in the aftermath of his flight as a pivotal moment. That meeting led to the appointment of two judges to review the count's conduct and propose an appropriate response. They, in turn, consulted "certain gentlemen" about the advisability of sequestering his possessions.⁸⁸

The *Crónica del Halconero* recounts that the judges, presenting the matter to the *Consejo*, framed the issue by asking whether "since don Diego Gómez de Sandoval was absent from the Kingdom of Castile in the Kingdom of Navarre, if they thought it was in the king's

⁸⁵ "que cumplen a mi servicio e al pro e bien de mis reynos;" "conplideras a mi servicio y al pacífico estado y bien de mis reynos. *Crónica del Halconero*, 7-8; *Refundición*, ch. 17, pp. 44-46. In neither account were the *infante* Enrique's actions described on their own. In contrast, the *Crónica* accounts provided more specific reasons for why that step was in the king's service. That is a consistent difference between the two traditions. And, although the lack of procedural description may be put down to brevity, this lack of detail for the deeds of the accused extends into the longer 1430's narratives as well. But all stress that Enrique's arrest served the king's needs.

⁸⁶ There are several parallels between the treatment of Enrique's arrest and the later arrest of the Count of Luna. According to the *Crónica del Halconero*, after confronting the count, the king ordered him away from his presence, telling him to go with another noble, García Manrique, who would tell him "some things on my behalf." It then explains that others were arrested too, since the king had received "información e verdad" from Seville that they had tried to act in his disservice. Some of his collaborators were sentenced and executed, since they had acted in the king's disservice by planning to empower themselves over Seville, rob the land, and give it over to the king's enemies. The *Refundición* sets a similar scene, but says that the king simply asked Manrique to tell the count that it was the king's will, *voluntad*, that he be arrested. It then describes that his collaborators were sentenced and executed, saying only that the *razón* was they had acted in the king's disservice. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 158, p. 149; *Refundición*, ch. 86, p. 147.

⁸⁷ The *Halconero* accounts place the king in *Consejo* when giving these orders, a venue where justice and government overlapped very directly.

⁸⁸ In the *Crónica del Halconero* the appointment of the judges, and thus their subsequent discussions with the *Consejo* and their *proceso*, was "por mandado del rey." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 65, pp. 77-78. In contrast, the *Refundición* attributes the appointment to the agreement of the king and *Consejo*. *Refundición*, ch. 57, pp. 105-6.

service for his goods, and the fortresses of Castrogeriz and Saldaña, and his towns and villages and offices and payments he received from the king to be sequestered.”⁸⁹ Expressed in that way, the judges identified the count’s flight as the most significant factor on which the *Consejo* should base its advice. The *Refundición*, however, stresses that his absence was a result of a specific act of disobedience as well. The king, it insists, had appointed the judges to perform their review in light of the fact that “the count, having been called by the king’s letters to come to his *merced*, had not wanted to do so.” Furthering that work, they then asked the *Consejo* “if according to justice his possessions ought to be sequestered,” and it determined they should be.⁹⁰

Regarding this incident, the *Crónica del Halconero* suggests the king relied on a “royal service” justification, similar to accounts of the *infante* Enrique’s detention, in response to Diego Gómez’s absence. In effect, the king, aided by advisors, evaluated and then arranged a response to the circumstances created by the count’s disloyalty and, more directly, his flight.⁹¹ The *Refundición*, for its part, envisions a process to find the “just” response to specific misdeeds on Sandoval’s part. The two accounts also differ over the force which put those seizures into effect. The *Crónica del Halconero* insists that the judges, appointed by the king, gave the critical order. In contrast the *Refundición* does not specify its precise origin in personal terms, though it does place the command in the context of a *Consejo* meeting and, also, following the judges’ inquiries. The first interpretation offers a picture of a governing king, working through justice

⁸⁹ “E según pareció por sus dichos ante la merced del rey, todos dixeron que era servicio del señor Rey que fuesen secrestados.” Also, note that in the accounts of this tradition the castles were not singled out, despite the broader authority kings had, in theory, to dispose of them. Instead, they were treated simply as one type of possession among many. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 65, pp. 77-78.

⁹⁰ “fueron preguntados...sy de jsuticia se debían secrestar sus bienes. E todos acordaron, en presencia del Rey, que se debían secrestar en que su merced ordenase.” *Refundición*, ch. 57, pp. 105-6.

⁹¹ Royal service as a way of evaluating and justifying political actions was by no means new. However, here royal service did not just characterize a particular action, but justified it on its own. For instance, in Ayala’s description of *infante* Alfonso’s fall, his actions were described, multiple times, as being contrary to the king’s service. In the *Crónica del Halconero*, however, “service” described the actions the king planned to take, not the actions Sandoval had taken.

and its forms but not dependent on judicial findings for legitimacy, separating person and power in a unique situation. The second envisions a ruler taking more reactive measures, though the practical losses were discussed, justified, and ordered before the culmination of the *proceso*.

Still, both accounts describe specific justifications for royal commands advanced in a dedicated *Consejo* consultation, all set in motion by the king. And this general sequestration of Gómez de Sandoval's possessions coincided with the start, not the end, of a *proceso* against the count. Although associated with the initiation of a judicial process that went on for some time, the sequestrations and the deliberations preceding them were distinct actions.⁹² Moreover, like their *Crónica* counterparts, both go on to describe the findings of the *proceso*. But no further losses of possessions, or any specific crimes beyond Diego Gómez's failure to answer the king's summons, appeared.⁹³

Given that lack of specific penalties, the sequestrations justified and authorized at the *Consejo* meeting, separate from the meager findings and undefined results of judicial procedures, were the most significant losses in both narratives. Practical losses of power did not follow from justice. Instead, both the initial seizures and further judicial proceedings were initiated at the same time, by royal command. Also, and particularly in the *Crónica del Halconero*, they were defined as part of an ongoing response to a general political situation as much as response to a specific, completed criminal act on the count's part.⁹⁴

⁹² The seizures, especially in the *Crónica del Halconero*'s telling, can be interpreted as simply a step in an ongoing *proceso*. But they were not presented as automatic or routine, and also received justification of their own.

⁹³ That could be a crime of course, but when it was used in fourteenth-century accounts, it was always accompanied by other crimes, perhaps to justify the summons. Here, rejecting the summons stood on its own.

⁹⁴ In strictly procedural terms, late medieval judicial procedure has been interpreted as becoming more concerned with establishing the facts of the case and responding as prescribed rather than interpreting and dealing with particular situations. Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 79-80. Of course, that is a generalization. However these fifteenth century narratives, in comparison with their fourteenth-century forbears, show if anything more concern for the "big picture" of a situation. Formal judicial procedures remained an important part of the narrative, but only a part.

Overall, the accounts of the *Halconero* tradition cast royal authority as a distinct force, in a narrative if not always terminological sense, in the separation of person and power. But given the absence of Ruy López Davalos, and the general brevity in their coverage of events before the late 1420's, it is difficult to make a distinctive characterization of how the *Halconero* chronicles dealt with justifying those separations. With Diego Gómez de Sandoval, the justifications offered were closely tied to his alleged actions, certainly more than in the *Crónica* accounts, but they were also cast as inconvenient for the king rather than specifically criminal acts for which he must be punished.⁹⁵ However, considering how chronicle narratives of both traditions deal with Diego de Sarmiento's downfall helps interpret these differences between them.⁹⁶ That is not to say all differences between them have to be, or can be, reconciled. But both do depart from their predecessors in similar, if not identical, ways.

Diego de Sarmiento: Proactive Measures and Governing via Justice

The accounts of the arrest of Diego de Sarmiento, the ensuing *proceso* against him, and the deal which brought it to a close have been singled out because they offer a particularly advantageous opening to discuss how separation of person and power could be legitimized as a proactive measure which was not dependent on the misdeeds of targets.⁹⁷ That said, the *Crónica* tradition narratives do identify Sarmiento's dealings with the *infantes* as the reason for the king's decision to arrest him, while the chronicles of the *Halconero* tradition stress his resistance to

⁹⁵ There is an important internal difference here too. The *Crónica del Halconero* uses service and related terms exclusively. However, the *Refundición*, when describing the *Consejo* consultation, claims the counselors considered what would be "just," not just what was in accordance with the king's service.

⁹⁶ And between the two *Halconero* tradition accounts.

⁹⁷ Neither tradition deals much with what they identify as public justifications for this incident. Indeed, the way it is described gives the whole affair a somewhat furtive air. But, the accounts of each tradition tend to interpret the king's actions, and motivations, in broadly sympathetic ways.

royal commands in the days leading up to his arrest.⁹⁸ Actions of both types can be understood in “criminal” terms, justifying the judicial response that ensued.⁹⁹ However, in the *Refundición*, King Juan’s evaluation of the *adelantado*’s character played a critical role in explaining both the arrest and his desire to keep Sarmiento imprisoned. Adopting that standard endowed the monarch with a powerful justification largely independent of any specific misconduct on his target’s part.

The *Refundición* attributes the king’s initial decision to move against Diego de Sarmiento to the fact that he “was very annoyed with him, because he was a troublesome knight and did not wish to comply with his letters and commands.”¹⁰⁰ And later, when discussing the deal struck to mitigate his treatment between the king and the *adelantado*’s relative, the Count of Ledesma, it points to his status as “a very tumultuous man” to explain Juan’s insistence on his continued confinement in that agreement’s terms.¹⁰¹ Twice, the king’s supposed perceptions of Diego de Sarmiento’s temperament, rather than the demands of the law as established through judicial procedure, or even his own or the realm’s interests in a particular circumstance, helped to

⁹⁸ “por cuanto le fuera dicho que se carteara con los Infantes...é tenía sus fablas con ellos en deservicio del Rey.” *Crónica Juan II*, 1431 ch. 27, pp. 315-16. In the later *Crónica*, the “deservicio” was not mentioned. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 24, pp. 500-501.

“el qual andaba fuydo del señor Rey, por quanto no quería conplir sus cartas ni sus mandamientos.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 101, p. 113. That is in keeping with the priorities of the traditions. The *Crónica* narratives offer some explanation of what Diego de Sarmiento had been doing, while the *Halconero* accounts focus more on the king.

⁹⁹ That is, the not uncommon charges of both a refusal of a royal summons and conspiracy.

¹⁰⁰ “E por quel Rey estaba muy enojado dél, porque era caballero travieso e non quería cunplir sus cartas y mandamientos.” *Refundición*, ch. 68, pp. 125-6. When reporting Álvaro de Luna’s appointment as constable, the *Refundición* attributes it to the fact that Dávalos “andaba yrado del Rey.” Though not a characterization of Ruy López Dávalos per se, it also looks to personal factors, rather than legal ones, in accounting for the king’s actions. It does not present this breakdown in the relationship between Dávalos the king as a public justification however. *Refundición*, ch. 19, p. 47.

Also, comply is a specific term. In response to royal commands, reluctant recipients might claim that they obey, acknowledging royal authority, but for various reasons would not actually comply with, or *cumplir*, an order they were given. Rucquoi, “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos,” 25.

¹⁰¹ “Pero porque este adelantado era onbre mu bollicioso, mandó el Rey que todavía quedase preso.” *Refundición*, ch. 73, pp. 130-31. Perez de Guzmán used similar terminology, such as when he described Pedro Manrique as “bellicose,” and “ambitious to command and govern.” *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 84.

support a decisive royal intervention against a subject.¹⁰² Indeed, even after formal judicial proceedings ended without a finding, those perceptions served as explanatory factors for the *adelantado*'s continued detention at the king's discretion.¹⁰³

This narrative is not the first in which character evaluations or royal discretion featured in removals from power.¹⁰⁴ The important element is not that they appeared, but the purposes they served within it. Characterizing Sarmiento in that way justified his being kept in jail when justice could not keep him there, by looking to what he may do, given his character, not what he had done and could be punished for.¹⁰⁵ So, while that form of justification overlaps with other strategies based on assertions of the king's needs or his interests to a degree, it constitutes an explicitly proactive, as opposed to reactive, basis for the use of royal authority. And beyond that, it also helped to engineer the limitation of a subject's capacity to act based, unambiguously, on the king's wish or discretion, not the demands of justice.¹⁰⁶

That said, the *proceso* Diego de Sarmiento faced, even though it was soon halted and was not the formal basis on which his ongoing detention depended, played an important role. The

¹⁰² And in addition the statement that he did not wish to obey the king's commands is itself a little odd. That is to say, one again, the specific nature of his disobedience was not stressed, and indeed it is not clear that he even directly defied any specific order. The *Crónica* presents a somewhat more concrete charge, but barely. Conspiracy was a good way to target people.

¹⁰³ "Pero que era su merced que él estubiese preso, fasta en tanto que él entendiése que cunplía a su servicio mandarlo soltar." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 119, p. 126. Both accounts of the *Halconero* tradition are direct about Juan's intervention in stopping the *proceso* in comparison to the *Crónica* accounts. As is often the case, the king intervened more directly as an individual in their narratives, but not to the exclusion of judicial processes.

¹⁰⁴ For instance, Sánchez de Valladolid described Alfonso XI calling Álvar Núñez Osorio ungrateful. But that was at a posthumous trial, serving to justify a judgement of treason, whereas here it explained a much less clear resolution. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 126, pp. 219-220.

¹⁰⁵ The explanation for the intital arrest was reactive in nature, but the reason for the continuing detention did not depend on anything that actually was said to have occurred. He was not a criminal to be punished for specific things, but an unreliable character the king wanted to neutralize, and he was described as doing so in very direct terms. Also reputation, or *fama*, had legal significance. Cavallar and Kirshner, *Jurists and Jurisprudence*, 325-6; Jesús Ángel Solórzano Telechea, "Justicia y ejercicio del poder: La infamia y los delitos de lujuria en la cultura legal de la Castilla medieval," *Cuadernos de historia del derecho* 12 (2005): 315-21, 327; Vallerani, "La fama," 105.

¹⁰⁶ Even though such procedures were, the *Refundición* later asserts, begun against him. That emphasizes how they are not, in this account, a uniquely powerful tool in the way they were in earlier narratives.

Count of Ledesma, Sarmiento's relative, intervened on his behalf and the king compromised, since he could not afford to offend the count. And as defined by the *Refundición*, that compromise was a generous act of royal clemency, one which would have significance only if the prospect of something decidedly less clement was in view. Still, the chronicle suggests that the king got what he needed, and had used his discretion to arrange affairs to his satisfaction.¹⁰⁷

More broadly, justifying royal orders in terms of how a target's nature, not just actions, might impact royal interests is not unique to the *Refundición*'s treatment of the Sarmiento incident. For example, in their accounts of Diego Gómez de Sandoval's fall, chronicles of both traditions describe the sentence against him as largely devoid of specific material consequences. Of course, he had fled and his power base, or at least key elements of it, had already been seized. But even then, the sentence did not specifically reference or confirm any of those losses. Instead, it found that the count was disobedient, a rebel, or a disserver of the king.¹⁰⁸ However, although the sentence did little on its own to separate person and power, it did serve to support the actions already taken by royal authority, acting in its interests, by casting Sandoval as a type not to be trusted with the kind of power of which he had already, in practice, been stripped.¹⁰⁹

Finally, returning to Diego de Sarmiento's fall, the direct "character judgement" justification, as a means of depicting a target as broadly unworthy of trust, is peculiar to the *Refundición* account. But as for the force that authorized his imprisonment in the long term,

¹⁰⁷ The royal clemency behind the deal pulled its result into judicial processes as a kind of conditional pardon. The king turned to justice, and then away from it, or to another aspect of his judicial powers, to get what he wanted. But the justifications that united both actions were not based on acts described in criminal terms, but rather the king's evaluation of Diego de Sarmiento's character and what he might do in the future.

¹⁰⁸ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 30, p. 321; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 27, pp. 501-502; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 105, pp. 116-17; *Refundición*, ch. 59, pp. 109-11. All four chronicles, across the traditions, characterize the sentence in this way.

¹⁰⁹ Trust, institutional changes notwithstanding, was an important qualification for positions of power both practically and theoretically. García Marín, *El oficio público*, 325-337, 344-346. See also Descimon, "Power Elites," 103-106; Wolfgang Reinhard, "Introduction: Power Elites, State Servants, Ruling Classes, and the Growth of State Power," in Reinhard, *Power Elites and State Building*, 13.

portrayals of the incident in both traditions attribute it to royal discretion of some sort. For instance, the *Crónica del Halconero*, after describing the end of the *proceso* and the return of Sarmiento's sequestered possessions, explains that the king still wished for him to remain in prison and tailored the agreement with the Count of Ledesma to that effect. For its part, the earlier *Crónica de Juan II* also engages with the relationship between the aborted *proceso* and Sarmiento's enduring confinement. It explains that a pardon had been requested but the king did not see fit to give one outright. Nonetheless, he decided to show some leniency by insisting only on his detention. In this telling, the king achieved his objective by limiting the full rigor of justice, at his discretion, in the service of his needs.

In both traditions, after having secured Sarmiento's immediate detention, initiating judicial procedures helped to arrange a deal with the Count of Ledesma which formalized his long term fate. Indeed, following a *vía de justicia* to its end, or establishing guilt for specific crimes, was not necessary for the king to achieve his objectives and, more to the point, to be shown to do so in a reasonable way.¹¹⁰ Despite some differences, in both the *Crónica* and *Halconero* tradition accounts, matters of personal guilt and punishment were divorced from the king's efforts to curtail Diego de Sarmiento's capacity, in this specific moment at least, to act against his interests.¹¹¹

The Traditions Compared: Authorization and Justification

In the accounts of both fifteenth century royal chronicle traditions, royal authority and interests played distinctive roles in enacting and justifying removals from power.¹¹² The *Crónica*

¹¹⁰ After all, the *Halconero* accounts, and the older *Crónica*, describe his detention as an act of royal mercy.

¹¹¹ But his discretion owed much to the fact that he was not deciding whether the target could possess something, but whether he should be allowed to act at a particular moment.

¹¹² That happens with the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos in both *Crónica* accounts, Diego Gómez de Sandoval in the accounts of both traditions, and Diego de Sarmiento in the *Halconero* tradition chronicles as well

tradition accounts consistently depict them working alongside, but separately from, ongoing judicial procedures and their potential findings. Indeed, in several instances, they describe the king setting *procesos* in motion, and commanding seizures or other measures to curtail the capacity of a target to act, at the same time and with similar terms of command. The *Halconero* accounts are somewhat less consistent in differentiating between royal commands and ongoing processes of justice. Yet when they do, they maintain similar distinctions to their counterparts.¹¹³ Overall, compared among themselves, both chronicle traditions express, in comparison to their predecessors, ways of describing and justifying royal actions against troublesome subjects independent of formal findings of guilt and attendant punishments.¹¹⁴

Further highlighting those distinctions, they both place the conduct of *procesos*, and determinations of guilt and punishment, in the hands of figures other than the monarch.¹¹⁵ In that sense, these accounts echo narratives of justice in Ayala's late fourteenth-century chronicles, where a shift in royal roles loosened connections between crime, guilt, and loss. Relatedly, separations of person and power were spread out within fifteenth century narratives, as well as their fourteenth-century forebears, and associated with particular royal interventions.¹¹⁶ But those

as the older *Crónica*. So, though all accounts do not have each of these elements, both traditions do register those distinctions.

¹¹³ And even without them in the *infante* Enrique narratives, looked at in comparison to the *Crónica* accounts, they also show a strong role for royal authority and justifications expressed in terms of royal needs.

¹¹⁴ Losing power and being stripped of it are not necessarily the same thing. In the *Halconero* tradition, the flight of the targets of royal wrath often played a big role. Before the sequestration of Sandoval's possessions, both report that, before he left, he ordered those possessions to put themselves at the king's disposal. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 60, p. 73; *Refundición*, ch. 56, p. 104. Nevertheless, both depict the king deciding what to do with his possessions in the aftermath. Also, although Dávalos and Sandoval both "got away," the *Crónica* accounts suggest that the king wanted to secure them in person. Even though some people abandoned power in practice, judicial processes were still depicted as involved in getting them to flee, and deciding what to do with their possessions afterward.

¹¹⁵ Not all narratives include this element, but at least one in each of the principal accounts does. In general, the monarch's personal protagonism declined in the early fifteenth century. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 135. So did the importance of personal lordship of the king. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 738.

¹¹⁶ That is, spread away from formal sentences. According to Paz Alonso, sentences were generally short and did not need to delve very deeply into the legal reasoning behind them. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 75, 260. See also Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 120.

earlier depictions did not endow the invocation of royal power with a distinctive vocabulary. And even more importantly, justifications were cast in mostly reactive terms, based on the alleged crimes of the targets.¹¹⁷

In contrast, the later narratives offer distinctive new expressions for both the authorization and justification of royal action, spurred by evolving terminology associated with royal power and royal roles. Chronicler adaption to it, intertwined with the enduring “structural” consequences of the fourteenth-century institutional reforms, created a new framework for separating person and power. In particular, royal interventions were marked by invocations of royal authority in order to summon, seize and imprison, not to judge and punish in response to specifically enumerated crimes. Instead, they were backed by novel justifications of their own. Royal actions taken against targets were cast as being in the interests of the king or realm, rather than focusing on how the target’s actions had been against them. As such, these narratives suggest a king confronting ongoing problems, or even warding off potential ones, as much as reacting to trouble already caused.¹¹⁸

Moreover, in a broader sense, studying these chronicle narratives in comparison with their predecessors forms a bridge between different bodies of scholarship dealing with royal power and roles in the fifteenth century. In fifteenth century accounts, findings of guilt and punishment had declined in importance, and more aggressive royal authority opened more

¹¹⁷ That said, recall that with respect to the first confrontation with the *infante* Alfonso, Ayala included King Juan’s fears about what Alfonso might do in the future among his reasons for seeking a more permanent resolution to his status.

Also, “service” was a crucial term for characterizing political actions. That is a link between the fourteenth and fifteenth-century accounts. Quintanilla Raso, “Relaciones contractuales y propaganda de estatus,” 100.

¹¹⁸ The notions of service and disservice remained important, but there was less emphasis on identifying specific actions of the accused as crimes, or defining their conduct as such, in comparison with the fourteenth century-accounts. Instead, justifying the whole process against the accused, justice and the invocation of authority through it, was geared more toward establishing that actions had affected the king and kingdom. And in some cases, only that the actions being taken were in his interests, shifting the justification from the target to the deposer.

possibilities for separating person and power. Such a change fits very well with the conclusions of studies focused on the new legal claims to royal power coming from the crown and its lawyers. Yet, other works emphasize limits on that power and how, in practice, those new claims did not necessarily serve as settlers of debate, but one more rhetorical tool within it.¹¹⁹ As expressed in royal chronicles, explicit interventions of royal authority did play a distinctive role in separating person and power. But the invocation of that authority had distinctive justifications attached to it. New powers did not sweep all before them, but called for new ways to legitimize their use.

Altogether, despite some differences between themselves, fifteenth century royal chroniclers, of both traditions, portrayed judicial processes as tools kings could use to govern their realms. Deploying them, they proactively stripped resources of power from political rivals, rather than taking them after judging and punishing targets for their crimes.¹²⁰ In the next chapter I discuss how, as the king's authority and interests gained prominence in narratives of separation of person and power, so too did the consequences of actions taken on that basis. Fifteenth century chronicle accounts consistently characterize those consequences as interruptions of a target's ability to act or suspensions of access to resources supporting power, as opposed to the outright losses of possession that followed from sentences of guilt and punishment. That gave rise to new ways of conceiving what losing, and having, power could mean.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto," 191-2, 201-212, 222-3; Nieto Soria, "La nobleza y el 'poderío real absoluto' en la Castilla del siglo XV," 247, 254.

¹²⁰ When there was such a *proceso* and sentence, the king was not closely involved in them, and nor does the depiction of those elements detract from the other roles he did play. The distinction is strongest in narratives with both, but even without both, royal roles were portrayed similarly across the accounts of both traditions.

¹²¹ Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política," 131.

Chapter Five

New Conceptions of Power and its Loss

Fifteenth-century royal chronicle narratives of the separation of person and power are often framed in terms of royal justice unfolding along a *vía de justicia*. Assimilating new conceptions of royal power and roles, those accounts describe proactive, governing kings working through such a *vía* to invoke royal authority, in the service of royal interests, in order to enact and legitimize depositions. These newly defined powers and justifications were associated with, and could act alongside, processes for determining guilt and establishing punishment for crimes, but were ultimately distinct from them. However, as royal authority and interests gained prominence as ways of authorizing and justifying removals from power, so did distinctive consequences associated with their invocation.

Looking back to mid-fourteenth century chronicles, losing the possession of resources supporting power, closely connected with personal punishment, was the most significant way of describing person and power being pulled apart.¹ Those losses, moreover, were referred to in terms that suggested they were to be understood as definitive and permanent.² To be sure, in Ayala's late century accounts, permanent losses of possession, whether enacted or contemplated,

¹ Though as discussed in chapter one, in Ayala's accounts of late century removals, the tight connection between guilt, punishment, and loss began to break down. However, he still described losses in more or less the same terms as before, both in comparison to his earlier narratives and to those of the mid-century chronicler, Sánchez de Valladolid. Immediate and contingent losses may have been arranged before, but fifteenth-century accounts have a distinct language for them.

² Some targets, of course, were executed. But beyond that, the types of losses which these accounts highlight, and associate with legitimizing procedure and justifications, could also be followed by the redistribution of seized possessions to new holders.

became less important, if they appeared at all.³ But despite his adaptation to new forms of justice, he did not associate otherwise prominently described royal commands, separate from determinations of guilt and punishment, with consequences defined in particular ways.

In contrast, those responsible for the royal chronicles of both fifteenth-century traditions consistently characterized the consequences of similarly defined royal actions in distinctive terms, which suggested the measures should be understood as temporary or conditional.⁴ Also, in the context of ongoing political struggles, they often specifically served to negate or undermine the capacity of royal opponents to work against what were identified as royal interests. So, not only do chronicle narratives of this era contain new expressions in comparison with earlier accounts, they also describe kings pursuing goals defined in new ways. More specifically, these royally authorized and justified measures interfered with a target's power base by denying them liberty, interrupting their ability to legitimately command subordinates, or suspending their access to resources of power, and not by revoking formal possession of specific resources.⁵

The connection between more prominently invoked royal authority, acting in royal interests, and particular, consistent consequences clarifies the presence of a new register for characterizing the separation of person and power in the fifteenth century. After all, permanent losses of possession following formal sentences did not disappear, but continued to exist alongside that novel pairing. But the connection between the new consequences, and the most

³ In a literal sense, given that the narratives unfold along a *via de justicia*, they came after the earlier measures, if at all. Also, having been left in the hands of others, they were less associated with the king, which is of particular importance in *crónicas reales*.

⁴ Terminological changes are significant, but even more important are broader conceptual changes, discernible in narratives overall. Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política," 133; Freedden, "Conceptual History, Ideology and Language," 132; Steinmetz and Freedden, introduction to *Conceptual History in the European Space*, 31.

⁵ Here, I am concerned with discourses of power, or how people conceived power. Berkhofer, Cooper, and Kosto, introduction to *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe*, 1-10; Adeline Rucquoi, "Auctoritas, Potestas: Concepts of Power in Medieval Spain," in *Ideology in the Middle Ages: Approaches from southwestern Europe*, ed. Flocel Sabaté (York: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), 51-72.

important royal interventions in these accounts, also meant that those consequences, the ones most directly associated with royal actions, gained importance. As such, these narratives not only describe, but highlight, interruptions of a target's ability to act or make use of resources supporting action, and in so doing advance a sense of power as something to be exercised rather than possessed.⁶

In a broader sense, new ways of articulating what it meant to lose power must be understood against the backdrop of the power bases of Castile's fifteenth-century nobility, and the terms in which they conducted their frequent battles to defend and expand them.⁷ Noble power in a practical sense came to be based on "shares" in the resources and powers of the crown, helping to place the king, at least nominally, as an arbiter of power.⁸ Gaining and keeping

⁶ Ideas about possession and use of property, and rights and powers connected with them, especially political power, were part of a large and important medieval discourse, among lawyers, theologians and political theorists (who often were one and the same). Santiago Argüello, "Los dos aspectos de la teoría del *dominium* y el valor de la tradición jurídica en Tomás de Aquino," *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica* 2 (2017): 392-93, 399-407; Maurice Barbier, "Pouvoir et propriété chez Thomas D'Aquin: La notion de *dominium*," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 94, no. 4 (2010): 655-7, 668; Bayona Aznar, "Las expresiones del poder," 16, 28-30; Ladero Quesada, "El ejercicio del poder real en la Corona de Aragón," 32; Martínez Ruiz, "Propiedad y Poder," 60. See also Monsalvo Anton, "Poder político y aparatos de estado," 106; Juhana Toivanen, "Peter Olivi on Political Power, Will, and Human Agency," *Vivarium* 54 (2016): 26.

⁷ Between the 1390's and the 1430's, a "noble oligarchy" of relative newcomers consolidated against the backdrop of the clash between King Juan and Álvaro de Luna, on the one hand, and the *infantes* of Aragón and some of their allies on the other. The power base that supported the *grandes* of the fifteenth century was different in character than that which had supported the *ricohombres* of the fourteenth, since it was built in different ways. Moxó, "De la nobleza vieja a la nobleza nueva," 359; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 23-27, 49. Also, although the nobility did dominate the field when it came to government for much of the fifteenth century, influential *letrados* made the case that in fact they should do the work of "governing" while nobles should focus on the defense of the realm. Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 366-7, 372.

⁸ In a study of the Lara family, Doubleday considers early fourteenth-century contests for power as being over land. Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 67, 81. That, however, was no longer the case by the fifteenth century, where power over people counted for more. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 56. Indeed, before the *infante* Enrique's release in 1425, in a letter to Murcia King Juan threatened those who helped him and his supporters with confiscation of all their possessions, and at the top of the list were "lugares" and jurisdictions, followed by offices, with lands coming later. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 86, 254-55. More broadly, see Barbosa Schiavinato, "Cronística medieval em Portugal," 309; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 51.

The concrete subject of this fifteenth-century dialog was the resources of the Crown, which meant money and jurisdiction more than landed property, but there were ideological implications as well. Bayona Aznar, "Las expresiones del poder," 30-35; François Foronda, "La privanza dans la Castille du bas Moyen Âge," 176-197; François Foronda, "La privanza, entre monarquía y nobleza," 73-132; Monsalvo Antón, "Poder político y aparatos de estado, 134, 137-8.

such shares depended upon an ability to influence the distribution of that largess.⁹ Moreover, the nature of the shares meant that nobles who secured them were entrusted with office, other forms of jurisdiction, payments, or other resources that formally belonged to the crown.¹⁰ An influential argument holds that this dynamic facilitated the articulation of views among the “new nobility” that they shared in the exercise of royal responsibilities, asserting themselves as collaborators in royal government and the exercise of crown authority.¹¹

But working through the lens of royal chronicle narratives shows another driver of new conceptions of power besides nobles adapting to changes in their own power bases.¹² Novel expressions of the king’s authority advanced by personnel at court also provided ways to frame the application of royal power against nobles, whose own roles had become more closely associated with it.¹³ So, although aristocrats may have pushed a new, “exercise” based sense of their function by exploiting their own involvement in government under the umbrella of royal authority, arguments from a more royalist perspective shifted in ways that also took advantage of that proximity. In particular, chroniclers defined power and its loss as a problem of capacity for action, rather than personal rights to possessions, jurisdictional lordships, or other bases of power.

⁹ By favor, persuasion and, sometimes, force or the threat of force.

¹⁰ Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 58; Alfonso Franco Silva, *La fortuna y el poder: Estudios sobre las bases económicas de la aristocracia Castellana: S. XIV-XV* (Cadiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 1996); Ladero Quesada, *El siglo XV en Castilla*, 74; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 27. Indeed, according to Alonso de Cartagena, Spanish vassalage was a relationship defined principally by receiving money from a lord. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 263-264. See also Sánchez Sánchez, “Las formas del poder en la feudalidad tardía,” 136.

¹¹ The phenomenon of influential nobles trying to influence royal “government,” was not a product of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries per se, but became more significant and received much firmer definition as an activity. Grabowska, “The Rhetoric of Power in Juan Manuel’s *El Conde Lucanor*,” 46.

¹² Another alternate view is proposed by Samuel Claussen, who interprets it as a kind of assimilation of the more directly military ideals of knighthood into government under the Trastámara. Rather than defend against external enemies, they defended public order, or the public good more broadly. Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 30, 49.

¹³ Although they pushed for more influence, in doing so, they were also pulled in to the “state.” Zmura, *Monarchy, Aristocracy and the State*, 30.

And in their narratives, that made nobles susceptible to more forceful, but legitimate, interventions by monarchs.¹⁴ The new expressions of royal authority and roles advanced after 1420 were critical in that effort, but they did not work simply by imposing themselves over all other viewpoints. Within royal chronicle accounts, disputes about losses of power were redefined, pitching the figure of a governing king, and nobles hoping to govern, into clashes, and compromises, over its exercise.¹⁵ And defining battles in those terms gave monarchs, or those who influenced them, a very strong basis to prevail.

A New Vocabulary of Loss

The *Crónica de Juan II* and *Crónica del Halconero* tradition accounts serve once again as the primary basis of my analysis. And, since I continue to work with the same four major incidents that were laid out in chapter three, the narrative outlines drawn there remain relevant, and are referred back to as necessary.¹⁶ In contrast to the previous chapter, however, rather than focusing on the forces that authorized, and justified, the separation of person and power, I analyze the consequences of their application, and the implications of those consequences for how power, and its loss, were conceived. Also, like in chapters three and four, behind the direct analysis of fifteenth-century narratives lie comparisons with Ayala's late fourteenth-century

¹⁴ For instance, Ladero Quesada stresses that most of the grants made by late medieval monarchs were not formal alienations of resources, but delegations of authority. Likewise, despite de facto hereditary office, Pérez-Bustamante notes the enduring capacity of monarchs to give and take office. Ladero Quesada, *El siglo XV en Castilla*, 74; Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno*, 98. For the limitations of this capacity, see Monsalvo Antón, "Poder político y aparatos de estado," 111-114, 157-8.

¹⁵ In a rhetorical sense at least. In practice, the confrontations of this era were often more about clashing bands, with the king, and his nominal power, in the middle. Still, the fact in these accounts losses of power were mediated through royal justice and, more broadly, under the umbrella of royal authority, is significant, and shows the at least nominal importance of that authority. Ladero Quesada, *El siglo XV en Castilla*, 67; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 11, 179, 199; Villarroel González, "Las deposiciones y sus ritos," 212; Watts, *Polities*, 4-5.

¹⁶ As do the supplementary accounts of the removals of the Duke of Arjona and the Count of Luna, addressed in footnotes. Moreover, the accounts of the different traditions are analyzed in relation to one another in much the same ways, supported with the insights of additional sources about both the specific removals in question, and contemporary political discourses and terminology more broadly.

work, but now focused on how they characterized the major losses resulting from moments of royal intervention. In chronicles of both fifteenth-century traditions, the terms used to describe those losses departed from Ayala's example in specific, similar ways.¹⁷

Accounts of both traditions not only describe, but highlight, temporary seizures, suspensions, and restrictions. They may be associated with a *vía de justicia*, but did not depend on formal findings of guilt and resulting penalties.¹⁸ That is not to say that rulers could not take, or that chroniclers did not describe, actions of this kind before. After all, both arrest and pre-trial seizure could be construed as powers of a court throughout the period in question.¹⁹ But fifteenth-century chroniclers referred to them with a distinctive terminology and, more importantly, endowed them with identities and legitimacy of their own in comparison with their fourteenth-century predecessors.²⁰ Moreover, they are the losses most directly associated with

¹⁷ Ayala did uncritically describe late fourteenth-century kings taking measures to seize possessions apart from formal findings of guilt and punishment, but had no distinct vocabulary for them. In the fifteenth century, similar "gap" were also filled, since the ruler was not just described as taking the possessions of subjects, but doing so in a particular way and with characteristic attached justifications and processes.

¹⁸ In Owens' study of an important legal case I will discuss in the following chapter, he notes the opinion of postglossators that monarchs had power to take property if they had a public cause to, but only with compensation. Owens, *'By My Absolute Royal Authority'*, 163, 166-7. On the one hand, that suggests possibilities open to an active, "governing" king, but on the other shows the continuing utility of turning to judicial procedures which, if they resulted in a formal finding of guilt and attendant punishment, would make compensation unnecessary.

¹⁹ Imprisonment was not a usual long-term punishment for crime. But it was a fate that befell nobles with some frequency. Regarding those who fled to avoid such an outcome, Alonso de Cartagena discussed laws pertaining to the possessions of those who had been formally expelled. In the accounts of both traditions, however, figures like Diego Gómez de Sandoval were described more as fugitives than as exiles, though he was described as an exile in other sources, like *Generaciones y semblanzas*. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 88. And the ways in which chronicles describe the treatment of those who left the realm do not match with those prescriptions. See also Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 260; Di Crescenzo and Fisher, "Exile and Imprisonment in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," 13-14.

²⁰ Also, in Sánchez de Valladolid's account of Álvaro Núñez Osorio's fall, the king got what he wanted before beginning the "trial," which was carried out by the king personally and occurred in a single moment. These later accounts are different in that the king got what he wanted, as the chronicles describe it anyway, in the course of a trial unfolding along a *vía de justicia*, in which the ultimate resolution, if one occurred, was not critical and was often reached without the direct involvement of the king.

royal action. Like the personal guilt and punishment of the target, formal and long-term losses of resources of power may be significant in these narratives, but did not have to be.²¹

More specifically, the newly prominent term “sequestration” featured in all four principal narratives as a distinctive action resulting from royal orders.²² It occurred before the formal sentences which remained, for the most part, necessary to authorize outright confiscation on a permanent basis.²³ Alongside that new expression, moreover, chroniclers also employed older, related terms like *embargar*.²⁴ And in addition to using terms suggesting that losses should be

²¹ Of course, not all losses involved possessions per se. Prison was one consequence noted above, and offices too were taken. Offices may have valuable resources attached, but are distinct from possessions, and monarchs had broad formal powers to revoke them at will. Barraqué, “Les idées politiques de Francesc Eiximenis,” 541; García Marín, *El oficio público*, 82; Porras Arboledas, Ramírez Vaquero, and Sabaté, *La época medieval: Administración y gobierno*, 69-74; Torres Aguilar, “Sobre el control de los oficiales públicos en la Castilla bajomedieval y moderna,” 172. Pérez-Bustamante, in a study of territorial administration, describes monarchs giving and taking offices for a variety of political and personal reasons. Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno*, 98. Diego de Valera, in his *Tratado de las armas*, declared it treason to refuse to give up an office when the king wants to take it and give it to another. Diego de Valera, *Tratado de las armas*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 127. However, loss of office was not often stressed in chronicle accounts. See also García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 701.

It also should be noted that in some ways, lordships, a key part of what was stripped in many instances, were principally a matter of jurisdiction, and thus also overlap with the powers of an office. But by office, I mean specific, named posts of responsibility. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 518; Ladero Quesada, “Aristocratie et régime seigneurial,” 1353.

²² It was not used that way in the fourteenth-century accounts. Sequestration could last a long time, but was still a technically temporary status. For example, in 1447 a royal official who had been given sequestered goods was ordered to hand them over to Álvaro de Luna, who had been granted them permanently. Calderón Ortega, *Alvaro de Luna*, doc. 115, 363. In contrast, in the aftermath of the defeat of the *infantes* at Olmedo, confiscated goods were passed out to the victors directly. Calderón Ortega, doc. 113, 357-60; doc. 114, 360-62. Moreover, it was distinct from terms like “confiscation.” As Owens summarizes, rebellion did not mean automatic confiscation of property without trial, but certainly could justify sequestration. Owens, ‘*By my Absolute Royal Authority*’, 161.

²³ Castrillo Llamas, “La tenencia de fortalezas en la Corona de Castilla,” 1321-23; Cavill, “Heresy, Law and the State,” 282-3; Vieri Mazzoni and Francesco Salvestrini, “Strategie politiche e interessi economici nei rapporti tra la Parte Guelfa e il Comune di Firenze. La confisca patrimoniale ai ‘ribelli’ di San Miniato (ca. 1368 - ca. 1400),” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 157, no. 1 (1999): 12-13.

²⁴ The term was used throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:193, 538. In fourteenth-century chronicle accounts it often appeared in the context of kings in conflict with bishops. A monarch could not seize diocesan property and jurisdictional rights outright, but could certainly seize control of them temporarily. In those contexts however, judicial procedures were not pursued. In these accounts, that action was brought into such procedures and their associated legitimacy, while at the same time those procedures became a vehicle for that longstanding to power to be put into effect. *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1360 ch. 21, pp. 509-10.

But its usage then, and later, was broader than that. At the *Cortes* of Palencia in 1431, the representatives petitioned the king that, having heard he had “mandado embargar” the lands of vassals who had not responded to his calls to war, and that now that he intended to *privar* them of those possessions, they asked him not to do so without their first being “heard.” *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:103.

understood as temporary or contingent, they explicitly referred to kings suspending a target's ability to "use" their resources of power. Most often, that meant an interruption of their formal right to benefit from them materially or to exercise jurisdiction that may come with them.²⁵ The notion of such suspensions was not new, but they received new prominence, and were associated with formal procedure and justification, in these fifteenth-century accounts. And finally, the prominent place of imprisonment as a major consequence faced by targets of royal wrath also contributed to a sense of action curtailed over possession lost.²⁶

Although emphasis on new types of loss did not mean that other views were replaced entirely, the nature of the losses of power singled out in these accounts suggests that new roles for royal authority underpinned more nuanced and contextual, and certainly more varied, conceptions of what power, and more particularly separating person and power, could mean.²⁷ Also, looking beyond the specific terminology to the broader course of the narratives, judicial procedures became paths for monarchs, in the short term, to stop others from using resources of power in ways contrary to their interests, as much as they were ways to strip permanent

²⁵ Noble power bases were also more dependent, in the fifteenth century, on grants of jurisdiction, incomes, office, and direct payments from the crown. Such things, especially the payments, being not necessarily owned, were more open to being "suspended." But changes in the role of royal authority, and its expression, were more impactful in chronicle narratives than changes in the nature of the lost resources.

²⁶ Imprisonments certainly occurred, and were chronicled, in the fourteenth century. However, the fifteenth-century accounts, of both traditions, closely associate them with royal authority acting in its interests. Similar to the Diego de Sarmiento incident, it occurred after the turn away from judicial procedures, carried out at the king's discretion. That said, it was contemplated as a legal punishment in the *acusación* against Ruy López Dávalos. Also, in *Generaciones y semblanzas*, Pérez de Guzmán listed a large number of unfortunates from the first half of the fifteenth century and the fates they suffered, "exile" and imprisonment featured heavily, whereas deaths were rare. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 138-39. Iglesia Ferrerios, in a long-term study, concludes that death sentences were relatively rare for those of status. Iglesia Ferrerios, *Historia de la traición*, 168. See also Verreycken, "The power to pardon in late medieval and early modern Europe," 6.

²⁷ Of course, differences between the circumstances and the status of the key figures behind each narrative have to be considered as a factor underlying those more varied views. But in comparison to fourteenth-century accounts, new terms were used consistently, even if describing different specific situations.

possession of resources from guilty targets.²⁸ Though mediated by procedures described in judicial terms, these chronicles describe kings exercising power in order to stop others from doing so themselves.

The *Crónica* Tradition

Within royal chronicle narratives, the invocation of royal authority to serve royal interests worked specifically to arrange suspensions of the ability of deposition targets to exercise power. Beginning with the first of the four *Crónica* tradition deposition accounts, depictions of the *infante* Enrique's 1422 disempowerment established clear distinctions between the temporary and permanent consequences faced by the *infante*. Returning to the confrontation at the *Consejo* meeting in Madrid, after the *infante*'s arrest according to the king's *merced*, both the *Crónica* and its later reformulation describe a series of orders to seize his possessions. Afterward, the king decided they were to be placed "in sequestration," including several specifically into the hands of his brother, the *infante* Juan.²⁹ The term sequestration specified that these losses should be understood as temporary and unsettled.³⁰ And beyond the use of that term, both the earlier *Crónica* and the later reworking cast their transfer to the *infante* Juan as conditional. The king's move was presented as a measure to provide for the management of Enrique's possessions while

²⁸ In comparison to the fourteenth-century narratives, there were few death sentences, or even serious threats of execution, in any of these accounts. Lower ranking collaborators may suffer such a fate, but those of higher rank avoided it. There are circumstantial reasons for this, based in particular on the rank of a target and whether or not the deposer was able to take them in custody. But as a result, the losses discussed below occurred in situations where the former holder was, and would continue to be, alive.

²⁹ "mando que los tuviese como en secuestración el infante don juan." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 20, p. 296. "el rey quiso que las tuviese en secuestración el infante don Juan." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 16, pp. 419-20.

³⁰ Although not stressed in the chronicle accounts, after the *infante* Enrique was released in 1425, he also had his possessions returned. A royal letter to Murcia from that year commanded, among other things, that the *secrestadores* who had held them in the meantime should be prepared to give an account of their administration. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 96, 271. For another, less punitive example of sequestration as a temporary state, in 1450 King Juan sequestered the castle of Bélmez into the hands of Gutierre de Sotomayor, Master of Alcántara, for a period of four months due to a dispute between the city of Córdoba and the town of Bélmez. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, caja 285, n. 11.

their imprisoned holder's ability to do so was curtailed, a matter of administrative change, not loss or transfer of ownership.³¹

Also, at the same time as the *infante* Enrique's arrest, both accounts claim that he demanded an inquiry, and a possible *proceso*, to determine whether or not he was guilty of the accusations made against him. But those demands were associated with determining the *infante*'s personal fate, not that of his possessions. According to both the contemporary *Crónica* and its later reformulation, he begged the king to "pass sentence against me," without any mention of them.³² So, separately from a determination of guilt and punishment, and at that point in the narratives only a hypothetical one at that, the king, after invoking his authority to imprison a rival, managed the consequences of that still unsettled situation for his target's possessions. Reinforcing the sense of unsettledness and contingency behind those consequences, each account insists that those who had supported Enrique's detention requested of King Juan that, "if his will should at any time be to release the *infante* Enrique," then "he should not do so except on their advice."³³ Although they demanded to be consulted, the phrasing of the demand implied that his confinement should be considered an unsettled state, dependent only on the king's discretion.

Although they did not describe his detention and material losses as formal, firmly established punishments, both accounts put forward the *infante* Enrique's imprisonment, and the

³¹ He was still titular holder. In the earlier narrative, that temporary, unsettled sense was reinforced by the specification that the *infante* Juan's possession was to last only while his brother's imprisonment endured. Both also note that Juan specifically was chosen to soothe tempers within the royal family, and keep "family" possessions from going to others. In other words, they suggest that someone had to take over the castles, and Juan was chosen because of his family connection. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 20, pp. 296-8; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 16, pp. 421-22.

³² Passing sentence against both a person and their goods, or *bienes*, was a common phrase in Ayala's accounts. He used it, for instance, in describing Alfonso Fernández Coronel's deposition. It does not disappear here, but the two consequences, to person and to goods, were separate. That is similar to the treatment of Diego Gómez de Sandoval's immediate loss of possessions, and his sentence, across the accounts of both traditions.

³³ "en caso que su voluntad en algun tiempo fuese de soltar al Infante don Enrique...que lo non ficiese, salvo de su consejo dellos." That framing attributes its continuance, or end, to the king's wishes. The later *Crónica* uses similar terms but does not mention possessions. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 21, pp. 298-300; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 17, p. 420.

loss of his ability to access his resources of power, as the principal consequences of this very significant political event.³⁴ Space remained for a more definitive decision regarding Enrique's fate, determined by ongoing judicial procedures. But the king's post-arrest orders were at least as important, and within the narratives at least, caused the principal setbacks Enrique faced. King Juan, using royal authority to manage an unfolding situation, stopped the *infante* from making use of his power base and generally limited his freedom of action.

A similar dynamic underlies the treatment of Ruy López Dávalos's losses in the *Crónica* tradition accounts. The constable's fall was closely intertwined with that of the *infante* Enrique, and like in their treatment of the *infante*, they each described him suffering immediate, but also temporary, losses at the king's hands. In this case, a formal sentence was ultimately handed down. But long before that determination, following an unsuccessful arrest attempt ordered at the same time as Enrique's confinement, the king issued a series of orders to sequester Ruy López's towns and fortresses.

Also, regarding money found in one of those fortresses, King Juan "ordered [it] should be placed in sequestration."³⁵ The *Crónica* accounts then report that following the sequestration of those funds, the king placed them into the hands of allies who had supported him in the political struggles following his majority.³⁶ Entrusting sequestered property into the care of others was not uncommon. But in this instance, he bestowed them upon those to whom he intended to grant

³⁴ When describing the 1425 discussions about freeing the *infante* Enrique, both versions of the *Crónica* tradition referred to the *prisión* of the *infante*, a state in which he had remained since his arrest. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1425 ch. 5, p. 360; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1425 ch. 3, p. 430.

³⁵ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 17, pp. 291-93; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, pp. 418-19.

³⁶ The beneficiaries were the same figures who had supported him in moving against the constable. The seizures were justified in terms of the king's interests and needs and, in this instance, the *Crónica* narratives also depict the king using the spoils of those seizures to reward those who supported him. In Sánchez de Valladolid's account of Juan Alfonso de Haro's downfall, the king made decisions both about guilt and the disposition of his property. But in these accounts, the king decided about sharing out at least some of the seized property, even before the sentence, which was attributed to others, was pronounced. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 35, p. 263.

them more firmly, by *merced*, if it was ultimately found that Dávalos deserved to lose his possessions for good. That phrasing further reinforces the temporary and unsettled nature of the material consequences the constable faced. They had been ordered pending, very specifically in the case of the sequestered funds, a more permanent decision regarding his guilt and, if necessary, the appropriate punishment.

But the exact terms the chroniclers used to describe those losses as a whole suggest more than just temporariness and contingency. For example, the earlier iteration of the *Crónica de Juan II* uses the term *embargar*, along with sequestration, when describing the king's commands regarding the disposition of towns that had been under Ruy López Dávalos's jurisdiction. That term referred specifically to an inhibition of his ability to benefit from their incomes or to exercise authority over them.³⁷ And although the later reformulation of the *Crónica* does not use that specific word, both accounts describe other royal commands sent directly to the places formerly under the constable's control, ordering that they "should not receive the constable," or "pay him any taxes."³⁸ Formal possession had not been taken away from him, but as the political confrontation unfolded he was denied the "use" of his rights and powers.³⁹

³⁷ In general terms, towns like this count as a possession. But, he did not own these places, instead possessing jurisdiction over them.

³⁸ "El Rey envió sobre esto á la tierra de Pedro Manrique, á mandó embargar todos sus lugares é villas é ponerlos en secrestacion en ciertas personas; lo cual se fizo así, é eso mesmo fueron tomados e secrestados los lugares del Condestable, é aun algunos bienes que fueron fallados;" "mandó el Rey que non acogiesen ende al Condestable, nin á su mandado, nin le obedeciesen ni recudiesen con rentas algunas." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 15, p. 289; 1422 ch. 17, p. 291. "El Rey, como supo la partida del Adelantado Pero Manrique, embió luego secrestar todos sus lugares é bienes, é así mesmo todo lo del Condestable Ruy Lopez Dávalos;" "é mandó el Rey que en ninguno destos lugares no acogiesen al Condestable ni le acudiesen con rentas algunas." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422, chs. 12-13, p. 418.

³⁹ In the earlier account, the king was said to have given the sequestered frontier castles to others to hold. But places not on the frontier were not transferred to new guardians, just ordered not, in their sequestered status, to obey or receive Ruy López Dávalos.

Taken together, the consistent use of sequestration and *embargar* shows consideration for the differences between temporary and permanent seizure.⁴⁰ Seizures of the first type were depicted as a powerful, and rapid, means of interfering with a royal rival's power base. However, the narratives also describe them, especially the sequestration of his funds, as effective pending a determination of whether he deserved to lose them outright. Indeed, although the king had put those seizures in motion, *confiscation* remained dependent on such a finding. After a gap in their accounts, when both return to describe the constable's sentence, handed down in 1423, they declare that after the accusations against him had been proven, the judges determined he deserved to lose his possessions. It was only then that the word confiscate entered either narrative, and only afterward were his possessions formally, and definitively, shared out to others.⁴¹ Confiscation following the sentence had a specific significance, but it was just one measure among many through which, under the umbrella of justice, the *Crónica* tradition accounts show the king denying Ruy López access to resources of power in the short term, justified by appeals to royal interests and responsibilities.

Although those distinctions were strong in the accounts of the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos's downfalls, in those of Diego Gómez de Sandoval's disgrace, property and its possession were, in general, less significant issues.⁴² As discussed in chapter four, the *Crónica*

⁴⁰ Also, when things that were only sequestered were given to others to hold, they were described as being placed in (*en*) their hands, whereas things that were shared out after confiscation were given to (*a*) a new holder. Both the terms of seizing, and re-granting, reinforce the distinction between the two types.

⁴¹ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 5, p. 319; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1423 ch. 6, pp. 424-425. The sentence also distinguished between personal and material punishment. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 106. Significant evidence of that effort to redistribute his possessions survives. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, caja 136, n. 52; caja 286, n. 27; caja 393, n. 27; caja 1749, n. 1; caja 3315, n. 1; car. 100, n. 15.

⁴² That is also similar to their treatment of the Duke of Arjona. Neither account discusses the fate of his property at the time of his arrest, although when describing his death the following year, both note that some of his possessions were then given to the Count of Luna. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 4, p. 182; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 13, p. 482. Beyond that, in March 1431, Juan II issued a *provisión real* that the fortress of Santibañez, which had been held by the count, be given over to a new guardian, Alonso Pimentel. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, caja 415, n. 66.

tradition accounts depict the king's commands after the count fled the realm in 1431 as, mostly, serving to put a *proceso* in motion. However, its eventual result, a sentence handed down in 1432, said little about what he might lose.⁴³ But the specific issue of Sandoval's possession of key fortresses was prominent throughout both narratives, and after the count's flight, one of the first royal actions they both describe, and the only material loss they stress, was the king's order to seize the castle of Castrogeriz. In doing so, King Juan accomplished the objective he had, supposedly, had in mind from the start of his problems with the count, namely to neutralize this specific aspect of his power in the context of a tricky political situation.⁴⁴ In fact, in neither account was he even said to want to take possession of Castrogeriz or his other strongholds permanently, but only for the duration of his conflict with the *infantes* of Aragón and their allies.⁴⁵

That goal, to be sure, did not necessarily call for judicial procedures or a sentence, since the king's purpose was not to punish or to formally strip the count's possessions wholesale.⁴⁶ Rather, he sought an immediate and temporary intervention to reduce Diego Gómez's capacity to threaten him in a specific circumstance, which both accounts say had been accomplished by other means. Although the king did employ judicial procedures which led to a sentence, that finding's terms, like his purposes, were not about dispossessing the guilty party in a general sense. It contained little regarding Sandoval's property or any other penalties he should face.

⁴³ The earlier account describes the *fiscal*, when making his *acusación*, claiming that Diego Gómez de Sandoval had fallen "en penas" thanks to his flight, but they were not specified, and the sentence they did not mention any. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 3, pp. 256-7.

⁴⁴ Recall the account, in both versions, of the king's threat of justice before the walls of Peñafiel in 1429. The king was on campaign and, as the chronicles tell it, needed access to Peñafiel before he could advance further. After the town surrendered, the justice threat was not carried out. In 1431, justice appears as something of a last resort, after a series of ultimately unsatisfactory negotiations, including the one in 1429, which proved Sandoval could not be dealt with more amicably.

⁴⁵ Castrillo Llamas, "La tenencia de fortalezas," 1307-12.

⁴⁶ As discussed in chapter two, kings had strong legal bases for such demands without them. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 177-81.

But the way both narratives of the *Crónica* tradition treat the incident points to another way in which the close connection between royal authority and particular kinds of loss pushed new understandings of what it meant to have, and lose, power. In comparison to Ruy López Dávalos's sentence, where a determination of guilt justified quite specific confiscations, this one served another purpose. Though it did not mandate specific losses, it cast Diego Gómez de Sandoval as unfit to have access to power, even though the resources supporting it, in the form of fortifications for instance, had already been stripped from him by royal command.⁴⁷ That is to say, it was not an active part of arranging losses, on either permanent or temporary terms. Instead, it was a retroactive condemnation of a figure who had already been subjected to a targeted intervention of royal authority, which met specific and temporary goals defined in terms of royal interests. The judicial trappings may have helped in justifying or explaining that effort, but these accounts focus on the king securing what he wanted in a particular political moment, not punishing Sandoval for individual crimes or seizing possessions on a permanent basis.⁴⁸

Finally, the *Crónica* tradition accounts of Diego de Sarmiento's downfall also suggest a more exercise-based, and contextual, conception of power and its loss. As noted in chapter four, each narrative attributes the king's initial suspicion of the *adelantado*, in 1431, to his cooperation with the *infantes*. And like in their depictions of the Sandoval confrontation, the fate of the resources of power he possessed, as a whole or in particular, was not a major concern in either

⁴⁷ Certainly, trust was a major foundation of political relationships and fitness for responsibility. According to Jose García Marín, most offices were considered public in character, yet holding one also entailed a personal relationship of trust with the granter. García Marín, *El oficio público*, 325-337, 344-346.

⁴⁸ Framing narratives in terms of justice had a legitimizing purpose, but what justice did materially was very different from its role in fourteenth-century accounts. Indeed distinctions between sequestration and confiscation can be interpreted as reflections of ordinary powers of a court in a case where loss of property was at stake. In this incident however, the difference with fourteenth-century accounts was due to more than just direct adaptation to an expanded legal procedure and new terms. Here, the formal findings of a judicial process had little to do with loss of possessions at all. That was described elsewhere, and as occurring on a different basis. More broadly, a general tendency in late medieval justice was for crime to be conceived more as a public problem. In the accounts of this incident, so was the punishment. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 91.

iteration of the *Crónica*. Indeed, the king turned away from the *proceso* he had set in motion, which would have been important for targeting his possessions on a permanent basis. But the royal interests at stake were not defined that way.

Both the contemporary *Crónica* and its later reformulation depict King Juan achieving some limitation on the *adelantado*'s political machinations, which they described as the source of royal concern in the first place. As such, they define the power at stake in terms of what royal interests were said to be at the time, namely that Diego de Sarmiento would no longer be able to engage in the collaboration with the *infantes* which had caused the king's suspicion. And to achieve that, the king most directly targeted his capacity to act, not his possessions. Moreover, that somewhat undefined limitation was maintained at royal discretion, a consequence of his decision to turn off a *vía de justicia* and make a deal, not a specific loss of possession associated with a formal sentence at the end of one.⁴⁹ In fact, royal forbearance in that regard was cast a key factor in forcing the settlement with Sarmiento's influential relative, the Count of Ledesma. The agreement mollified the count while, nonetheless, still securing the *adelantado*'s ongoing imprisonment.

Altogether, the first and last two sets of narratives focus on different consequences, because each depicts the king managing what the chronicles describe as his political needs or interests in specific situations. The first two narratives show him bringing the prime movers of the conflicts that followed his majority to heel, as that contest was being settled in 1422 and 1423. That had serious consequences for the possessions of both targets, which the king then had

⁴⁹ That departure from a *vía de justicia* was very strongly expressed in the older version, though in the later reworking it was only implied. Moreover, in the original, it occurred fairly quickly after the arrest and initiation of legal proceedings, while the later reworking implies a longer timeline.

to manage pending, perhaps, a more formal decision regarding their guilt for recent events.⁵⁰ The next two depict the king addressing more specific political needs in the midst of the ongoing conflicts between 1429 and 1432, which meant that the power, or capacity, he targeted was also more specifically defined. However, in all four instances, King Juan turned to judicial procedures to mediate applications of royal authority, through which he caused immediate consequences for his rivals.

And those consequences were defined as temporary, contingent, or both. In the first set, determining whether the *infante* Enrique or Ruy López Dávalos would lose their seized possessions in the long term was a separate process, while in the second set, such considerations were not a major concern. Put another way, the king explicitly, but not permanently, seized his rivals' possessions, asserting royal power to prevent them from enjoying their benefits. Relatedly, his efforts also secured their imprisonment or drove them from the realm, curtailing their freedom of action. Looked at in the larger context of the narratives, the immediate losses the targets suffered impacted most directly their ability to act, or exercise power, as opposed to the possession, or not, of specific resources.

The *Halconero* Tradition

The accounts of the *Crónica del Halconero* tradition draw less consistent distinctions between royal authority deployed in the service of royal interests and more traditional judicial

⁵⁰ And the immediate, if nominally temporary, distribution of those seized possessions was also described in terms of meeting the king's political needs in their accounts of both the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos. Also, Dávalos, as a new man who had risen thanks to the favor of Enrique III, was in a weaker position than the well-connected *infante*. In terms of immediate capacity to cause political problems, one had been contained and the other driven out, but King Juan also had allies to reward, so Dávalos lost his possessions permanently whereas Enrique did not.

pronouncements than their *Crónica* tradition counterparts.⁵¹ Likewise, distinctions between temporary and contingent losses, and more permanent losses of possession, are not as explicitly drawn. But although they do not, on the whole, differentiate the two in obvious terminological terms, the ways in which they characterize the consequences they stress create a similar, close association between invocations of royal authority in the service of royal needs and temporary, contingent losses of power. With the prominence of the former, the latter became prominent as well.⁵²

Beginning with the *Halconero* tradition accounts of the *infante* Enrique's detention, following his 1422 confrontation with the king in Madrid each has little to say about the process or justification behind the king's command. But in terms of its consequences, the significant result of that meeting was, more than anything else, his imprisonment.⁵³ Indeed, no seizures of Enrique's possessions were described at all, leaving only this curtailment of his freedom of action.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Especially so for events in the 1420's, which are very sparsely covered. Moreover, neither version pays much attention to Ruy López Dávalos, while what coverage they do offer does not interpret his fall as a result of royal justice.

⁵² At the expense of formal sentences and explicit losses of possession. Although there may not be strong distinctions drawn within specific narratives, the losses that they do emphasize were defined as temporary and contingent, in similar terms to the *Crónica* accounts.

⁵³ *Crónica del Halconero*, 8; *Refundición*, ch. 18, p. 45. The *Refundición* also refers to this event, in retrospect, as Enrique's *prisión*. *Refundición*, ch. 20, p. 48. That is also how Enrique's fate was described in a 1425 document, referenced above, announcing the return of his possessions. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 96, 271. According to the *Crónica del Halconero* the Duke of Arjona died *preso* in 1430, while both *Halconero* accounts also note that the Count of Luna died *preso* or in *prisión* in 1438. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 34, p. 56; ch. 225, 252-3; *Refundición*, ch. 86, p. 147. Pérez de Guzmán used the terms *preso* and *desterrado* to describe fates of several prominent figures in the first half of the fifteenth century, while he also described the *infante* Enrique as having been imprisoned. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 88, 138.

⁵⁴ In their description of the Count of Luna's arrest, both accounts mention the sequestration of some of his possessions following his imprisonment. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 158, p. 149, *Refundición*, ch. 86, p. 147. Despite the reports of sequestration in the *Halconero* accounts, they insist that nothing was shared out to others permanently until after he died, and no judicial proceedings were described after the arrest and sequestration. In 1438, the king lifted the *embargo* on Cuéllar, one of the places sequestered in 1434. The town, with jurisdiction and its rents, had been given into the hands of García de Sese, who now had to hand it over to Álvaro de Luna, who had received it from the king on a permanent basis. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 48, 167-68.

In principle, in late medieval legal thought imprisonment was most often conceived as a temporary measure imposed pending a final judicial decision, not usually a punishment in its own right.⁵⁵ With high profile political figures however, confinement could serve many purposes and be quite enduring. After all, judicial procedures could be drawn out, often intentionally, and in that sense such detention could be drawn out as well.⁵⁶ It therefore provided a way to secure unruly subjects, placing targets in a kind of legal limbo while avoiding more drastic punishments. Moreover, long-term “house arrests” in generally comfortable conditions were not infrequently worked out in agreements between monarchs and other political players to avoid or mitigate the consequences of justice, even if they were not directly imposed by a sentence. As discussed in the previous chapter, in both traditions the deal behind Diego de Sarmiento’s detention was cast as dependent on the king’s discretion.⁵⁷

So, both in a formal judicial sense, and as a negotiated point in political contests more broadly, imprisonment had a distinct role as a measure to contain royal rivals.⁵⁸ Neither *Halconero* account directly distinguishes between immediate, and contingent, consequences Enrique faced and permanent decisions regarding his fate and that of his possessions. But, the result they stress conforms more to the former.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Though not always. Ruy López Davalos’s *emplazamiento*, for example, called directly for his imprisonment.

⁵⁶ That could be an example of the king using the *vía de justicia* for things other than “justice,” in the sense of actually reaching a formal culmination of a case. It is similar to the depiction of the *infante* Enrique’s treatment in the *Crónica* tradition accounts. They claim an investigation was begun, but he was never formally tried, and not pardoned either, between 1422 and 1425, but still kept confined the whole time.

⁵⁷ But not always. The Count of Luna, for instance, was imprisoned for four years before his death. Among the *Halconero* accounts, neither describes any ongoing procedure after the arrest and sequestration, and an attempt by his sister to negotiate was rebuffed. In their depictions, the imprisonment was simply at royal command.

⁵⁸ In Ayala’s accounts of the *infante* Alfonso’s first downfall, he ended up being imprisoned for a long time. However, that was not singled out as a consequence on its own or the subject of a specific deal.

⁵⁹ Enrique’s release in 1425 was described in both chronicles as being at the king’s command. Though not conveying a sense of royal discretion like the *Crónica* tradition accounts, there was no hint of a pardon either. *Crónica del Halconero*, 10; *Refundición*, ch. 20, p. 48.

Moving on to their accounts of Diego Gómez de Sandoval's downfall, in this case the chronicles of the *Halconero* tradition do consider the treatment of the disgraced count's possessions. Their seizure, as discussed in chapter four, was associated with invocations of royal authority acting in royal interests. More specifically, both accounts of the *Halconero* tradition describe the process by which, after his flight from the realm in 1431, the king set in motion a *proceso* against the rebellious count. But at the same time that judicial process was set in motion, however, they also report the sequestration of his possessions.⁶⁰ Moreover, after the sequestration, the king and his counselors discussed how those possessions should be shared out, with the advisors suggesting they should go to whomever he should designate.⁶¹ Although the *proceso* continued, the king's direct role ended here, using his judgement to decide the disposition of Sandoval's sequestered property.

Regarding that ongoing *proceso*, both *Halconero* narratives refer to the content of the *emplazamiento* summoning Diego Gómez de Sandoval to defend himself. In particular, it included a final clause which suggested that other penalties, "the penalties into which those who are called by their king and natural lord and are defiant toward his commands fall," could be on the table if he continued to avoid the king's justice. But like in their *Crónica* counterparts, the sentence he eventually faced mandated no further penalties.⁶² Indeed, it was most directly concerned with defining the count's status relative to the king. Though calling Diego Gómez a rebel and disserver may not work to directly strip resources of power away from him, it could

⁶⁰ Though by then Diego Gómez de Sandoval was gone from the realm, the king was still depicted consulting his *Consejo*, with the aid of legal professionals. Flight did not, in this telling, justify seizure on its own.

⁶¹ In other words, they could be "put to work" immediately as rewards. "todos dixeron que era servicio del señor Rey que fuesen secrestados, en su mano o en qui en él mandase." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 65, pp. 77-8. "E todos acordaron, en presencia del Rey, que se debían secrestar en quien su merced ordenase." *Refundición*, ch. 57, pp. 105-6.

⁶² Unlike the *Crónica* accounts however, they present it alongside the rest of the incident, even though it was not handed down until 1432.

validate the immediate, temporary seizures already carried out by casting him as unfit to be entrusted with such power.⁶³ Still, it did not alter or elaborate on those seizures, meaning that the only losses of possessions either account highlights were associated with royal commands issued at the outset of judicial procedures, and described in temporary and contingent terms.

Finally, in their treatment of Diego de Sarmiento's undoing, both *Halconero* tradition accounts, at first, describe only his detention on the king's orders in 1431. However, after a brief gap in their narratives to discuss unrelated intervening events, they abruptly note that a *proceso* begun after his capture, but which they had not mentioned at that time, was halted by King Juan. Moreover, at the same time as that royal intervention to bring an end to the *proceso*, each also insists that the king ordered the return of Sarmiento's possessions. No seizures had been described at the time of his arrest either, but the ways in which each chronicle describes their return strongly suggests an end to temporary measures, authorized in the course of the now halted *proceso*, designed to prevent the *adelantado* from benefitting from possessions to which he enjoyed formal title.⁶⁴

That sense is strongest in the *Crónica del Halconero*, in which the specific term *desembargar* described the return.⁶⁵ And emphasizing not only the temporary nature of the measures thus ended, but also their association with disrupting his ability to make use of resources of power, that same command allowed Diego de Sarmiento to once again receive payments from towns and villages under his jurisdiction.⁶⁶ The *Refundición*, in contrast, simply uses the term "return." But like the *Crónica del Halconero*, the order to restore the *adelantado*'s

⁶³ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 105, pp. 116-17; *Refundición*, ch. 59, pp. 109-11. Indeed, the charge, or the animus behind it, may have stuck. The *Crónica del Halconero* describes the later truce noted above, which denied a pardon to Diego Gómez, and also to the Count of Luna. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 212, pp. 234-5.

⁶⁴ There is a short gap, a few chapters in length, between the arrest and the return in both accounts.

⁶⁵ That is, to bring an end to an *embargo*.

⁶⁶ "e mandóle desembargar todas sus villas e lugares, e la tierra e mercedes que dél avía, e que le rendiesen con las rentas." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 119, p. 126.

possessions after the premature end of the *proceso* suggested that their seizure should be understood as having been on a temporary basis as well.⁶⁷

However, the seizure and return of his possessions, mentioned only in retrospect, were not the main consequences of this episode. Despite the cancellation of the *proceso*, the results of the king's initial orders, Diego de Sarmiento's detention, remained in place. The *Refundición*, recall, explains Sarmiento's continued detention in terms of the king's evaluation of his character and his capacity for causing trouble. The *Crónica del Halconero* does not offer such an evaluation, but it, along with the *Refundición*, stresses the potential role of royal judgement in ending, or extending, the *adelantado*'s confinement. Emphasizing the contingent nature of his situation, the *Crónica del Halconero* reports that "it was his [the king's] *merced* that he would stay imprisoned, until he thought it would be in his service to order his release."⁶⁸ The most significant, and enduring, consequence he faced was the loss of his liberty and, by implication, freedom of action. And that confinement, due not to justice but to an agreement with the Count of Ledesma, would endure for as long as the king judged it necessary.⁶⁹ It was not a set punishment for any particular misdeed, but a calculated measure dependent on what would serve the king's interests in a specific situation.⁷⁰

Altogether, the *Halconero* tradition narratives are less internally consistent in their characterizations of losses of power, following invocations of royal authority, than the *Crónica*

⁶⁷ "mandó tomar sus bienes y las mercedes de tierra que dél avía." *Refundición*, ch. 123, pp. 130-1. In both cases, the ending of these royal measures presents a kind of mirror image to the seizures depicted in the *Crónica* tradition narratives of Ruy López Dávalos's fall.

⁶⁸ "Pero que era su merced que él estubiese preso, fasta en tanto que él entendiese que cunplía a su servicio mandarlo soltar." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 119, p. 126.

⁶⁹ Similarly, in the 1438 letter to Murcia about Manrique's imprisonment discussed in chapter two, his detention was not to extend beyond two years, but if the king thought it in his service to release him before the two year term, he could. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 202, 499.

⁷⁰ Although the *Refundición*, as discussed at greater length in the previous chapter, expresses those interests in terms of Sarmiento's undesirable character, whereas the *Crónica del Halconero* focuses more directly on the king's wishes. Both interpretations are in keeping with their accounts of other removals.

tradition accounts. Also, they distinguish less clearly between temporary losses of exercise and permanent losses of possession. But when the terminology they employ, and the narrative context in which they employ it, are taken into account, they articulate a temporary and contingent, and even exercise based, approach to describing power and its loss. For example, the measures highlighted in their depictions of each of the depositions, whether imprisonment, sequestration, or *embargo*, suggest temporary and contingent losses of the ability of the targets to exercise power. Moreover, since none of the accounts in the *Halconero* tradition stress the permanent stripping away of specific resources mandated by a formal sentence, losses defined in that temporary and contingent way stand out as the most significant.

The Exercise of Power

Other studies dedicated to politics and political culture, particularly with respect to the higher nobility, have identified conceptions of power stressing exercise over possession during the fifteenth century. These works tend to interpret them as a function of the resources supporting noble power. Building from that base, they consider them in terms of how different political groups conceived and expressed their own or others' expected roles in government, or in the context of interactions between monarchs and subjects in the legal sphere.⁷¹

⁷¹Another thread focuses on the instability of even very great "estate." Pérez de Guzmán mused that it was easier to gain power than to keep it, and that the fortunes Castile created, it also destroyed. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 88.

But loss of power was also connected to loss of status. Reinhard, "Introduction," 14. Diego de Valera, quoting Bartolus, said nobility was a quality that could be gained and lost, including "por delicto," but also insisted that even if a person secured a dignity by evil means, if it was given by prince it still conferred civil nobility. Diego de Valera, *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 93, 101. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 406-08.

Chronicle narratives do not generally address that issue directly, but despite ups and downs, people were rarely cast completely from aristocratic ranks. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 79-103, 152-64. According to Watts, lords had unstable holdings, but remained lords. Watts, *Polities*, 97. Generally, that matches with the importance of resources, whether in terms of possession or "use," and not status, in characterizing losses of power in chronicle narratives.

For example, observable by the first half of the fifteenth century, the concept of tyranny underwent a shift toward definitions casting it as a matter of misconduct, pushing out others which presented it as a matter of illegitimate title. Both were traditional connotations of this kind of misrule in medieval political thought, which could mean either the rule of a person who had no legitimate right to do so, or subjection to a leader who governed badly, usually cruelly or in the pursuit of their own private interest over the public good. But in Castile, during the first half of the fifteenth century, the second meaning gained an ascendancy over the former which it had not earlier enjoyed.⁷² That shift is attributable to an important turn in Trastámara propaganda in the late fourteenth century, de-emphasizing allegations of illegitimacy, and stressing those of misconduct, as the justification for the overthrow of King Pedro by Enrique II.⁷³

More directly related to the issue of noble power lost at royal hands, the resources on which noble political power was based, and the terms on which it was held, underwent significant changes beginning in the fourteenth century and intensifying in the fifteenth.⁷⁴ As bases of power shifted away from the possession of specific resources toward the ability to share in royal “government,” new ideas about noble status, and the roles those with that status were supposed to play in the political life of the realm, were articulated.⁷⁵ For instance, Nieto Soria

⁷² José Manuel Nieto Soria, “*Rex Inutilis y tiranía en el debate político de la Castilla bajomedieval*,” in Foronda, Genet, and Nieto Soria, *Coups d'état à la fin du Moyen Âge?*, 73-92. Diego de Valera, later in the century, advanced a conduct focused view of tyranny. He did so, however, in a “mirror of princes,” so that could be a function of the genre. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 174, 188. In his *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, however, Caesar was named a tyrant by virtue of the fact the he had no right to “reinar e señorear.” *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, 97.

⁷³ Thanks to the marriage of Enrique III and Catalina de Lancaster, who was Pedro’s granddaughter, thus uniting the two family lines. In that context, earlier suggestions of illegitimacy or allusions to heresy were downplayed in favor of his allegedly cruel and arbitrary conduct.

⁷⁴ That owed much to specific political events in those years. Indeed the triumph of the new noble oligarchy in the 1430’s occurred due, in part, to the Luna-*infantes* conflict. In particular, a major redistribution of resources occurred in 1430. The major chroniclers of the era were closely involved in those events. For his part, Pérez de Guzmán, likely with a degree of unwarranted nostalgia, deprecated what he considered a too close, and relatively recent, connection between wealth and power. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 34, 48-9.

⁷⁵ Quintanilla Raso interprets the change in the context of the evolving nature of the nobility’s power base, while I look to new claims about royal authority, acting through the processes of justice. Also, she considers power through how nobles presented themselves in pacts, whereas here I examine chroniclers depicting royal power

breaks down a contemporary “knightly” view of the purpose of the nobility in relation to the crown.⁷⁶ It casts the main function of nobles as ruling the realm, and maintaining the status quo, in cooperation with rulers as much as in subjection to them.

Observable in embryo by the late fourteenth century, these ideas solidified during the factional conflicts of the fifteenth. For example, studying the language of inter-noble pacts, María Concepción Quintanilla Raso argues a sense of “privilegio de función” gained ground among Castile’s nobility as their own power bases became more tied to the crown, associating their status not with what they had, but what they did.⁷⁷ In particular, she attributes it to hereditary office holding, but many resources on which nobles depended involved some sort of share in crown functions and resources, contributing to that self-conception.⁷⁸

Of course, such a close association of noble power with that of the king, or crown, could conflict with claims to *poderío real absoluto* guided by forces like *cierta ciencia* and the royal will. However, in these royal chronicle narratives, the justified action of royal authority most

working against such figures and their power. Diego de Valera connected office to status, writing that a king could make a man noble by granting him an office that came with dignity, or just giving him the status and rights directly. *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, 98. For his part, Pérez de Guzmán claimed that Pedro Manrique, the man who was imprisoned in 1437 and then escaped in 1438, was at odds with the king, at times, not because he wanted to disserve him, but because he was ambitious to “aver poder.” He connected that effort with the great role in the *regimiento* of the realm which he at times enjoyed, during which he grew his estate. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 83-84.

⁷⁶ Cesar González Mínguez, “Crisis sucesoria y conflictividad social durante el reinado de Fernando IV de Castilla (1295-1312), in Nieto Soria and López-Cordón Cortezo, *Gobernar en tiempos de crisis*, 339-368; Nieto Soria, “Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara,” 22-34; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 112-20; Remedios Moran Martín, “Alteza..mercenario soys. Intentos de ruptura institucional en las Cortes de León y Castilla,” in Foronda, Genet, and Nieto Soria, *Coups d’état à la fin du Moyen Âge?*, 93-114. In this vein, Alfonso de Cartagena wrote that a knight must value his life little in times when defense of the law, the service or honor of his king, or the good of the land was at stake. Alonso de Cartagena, *Questión de caballería*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 242.

⁷⁷ Suárez Fernández identifies the nobility in Castile as a self-consciously political class. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 27. See also Quintanilla Raso, “Élites de poder, redes nobiliarias y monarquía,” 958-59. That applies especially, but not uniquely, to the very wealthy magnates called, increasingly, *grandes*. Alonso de Cartagena discussed the prior term for such people, *ricohombre*, which he called old fashioned. According to his review of the treatment of that status in the *Partidas*, their role was conceived as being to advise rulers. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 48. The old term, associated with wealth and its benefits, gave way to a less specific “greatness.”

⁷⁸ Despite the role for office holding in encouraging this sense of purpose however, losses of specific offices were not often significant in chronicle narratives. According to Monsalvo Antón, high office was more often the result of power and influence, not a source of it. Monsalvo Antón, *Historia de la España medieval*, 41.

directly leads to consequences which prevented noble targets from “functioning” in such a way. Such invocations accomplished that, or sought to, by cutting them off from the resources or powers that supported their ability to do so legitimately.⁷⁹ Even as nobles associated themselves and their power with royal authority, royal authority was “redeployed” to oppose them when it served the king’s, or his allies’, interests.

The enduring importance of framing deposition narratives in terms of royal justice was critical in that process, associating new claims to power with a much older, and exclusive, royal responsibility. But the king’s role in those procedures, as the chronicles of both traditions cast it, was not to judge and punish. Instead, it was to advance royal authority against the target’s capacity to act and, at times, manage the consequences. That avoided the lingering association of permanent loss with formal justice, allowing chronicles to portray a monarch getting around, if not overcoming, the limits that link had imposed on legitimate interventions against the power of subjects in earlier accounts. At the same time however, it redefined what losses of power were most important within the narratives.⁸⁰

Expanding on this theme of royal power advancing alongside royal justice, Nicholas Round’s study of Alvaro de Luna’s 1453 downfall examines how the institutional, legal, and ideological claims of the crown were deployed, both in a technical sense and in the realm of broader propaganda, to systematically unmake and delegitimize the great *privado*’s power. Though ultimately found guilty, sentenced, and executed, he was first separated from the resources of power that he had secured from the crown. On the one hand, that reflects the distinction, prominent in the *Crónica* tradition and present, if less consistent, in the *Halconero*

⁷⁹ Or by curtailing their liberty through imprisonment.

⁸⁰ That is, the chronicles do not just present a king playing a new role or asserting new powers. What was at stake in the contests in which he played those roles, or asserted those powers, was also redefined.

accounts, between “pre-trial” actions taken on royal authority and the results of formal justice. But the strong presence of royal authority also impacted the purposes and consequences of that justice.⁸¹ Round observes that throughout the process, at least as much emphasis was placed on asserting royal authority as was placed on identifying, and punishing, Alvaro de Luna’s crimes.⁸² Indeed, his eventual sentence and execution were cast not so much as a means to penalize him, but as a way for the king to assert his rightful role in exercising royal power after years of alleged usurpation. In that case, justice had become a way to end a conflict not over the possession, but the exercise, of power.⁸³

Ultimately, study of chronicle narratives also suggests links between these different approaches to understanding power in fifteenth-century Castile. In particular, it brings together new ways of conceiving power based on the changing status of the nobility, on the one hand, with royal justice as a proactive force to uphold royal authority against the pretensions of powerful subjects on the other. In chronicle accounts, royal authority acted quickly to attack others’ ability to exercise power, more rapidly than judicial processes could strip formal possession. That suggests that the new exercise based views of power arose not just from changing noble power bases, and their own self-conception, but by new “tools” available to royal deponents, and what they were best equipped to target.

⁸¹ Round calls the king’s will, often invoked, a “constitutional force.” Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 114.

⁸² Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 115. He also argues that the deployment of the institutional and ideological might of the crown against Álvaro de Luna, and the inability of Luna or his supporters to combat it with argument, betrays an enormous ideological advantage in its favor. See also Paul Freedman, “Ideology and Social Order,” in Sabaté, *Ideology in the Middle Ages*, 39-50.

⁸³ Looking more generally, Suárez Fernández considers fifteenth-century political conflicts as being about how *poderío real absoluto* was to be exercised, and that nobles liked strong theoretical royal power, but sought to exercise it themselves. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 11, 179, 199.

That redeployment of royal authority was one way in which it, and its advocates, could maintain ascendancy over noble claims.⁸⁴ And in a broader sense, it helps to reconcile the seemingly contradictory trends that, despite frequent political weakness and a general loss of resources to the nobility, the crown and royal power were able to not only assert, but solidify, a place as central reference points of political life.⁸⁵ Chronicle narratives pit the exercise of royal authority by kings against the ability of its targets to exercise power, or act politically, themselves. In theory, that is a battle royal authority, bolstered by royal justice, would usually win.⁸⁶

Conclusion

In fifteenth-century royal chronicle narratives, the power of royal deposed served to arrange immediate results, stressed regardless of whether further losses of possession, or other penalties, are described. That consistent focus, both within and across the different chronicles, speaks to the significance of these temporary, often contingent interruptions in the ability of a target to act or access the means to support action.⁸⁷ To be sure, earlier accounts, especially Ayala's narratives of late fourteenth-century removals, did describe some losses of power before

⁸⁴ As does the royal connection with justice, noted above.

⁸⁵ The seeming contradictions of that dynamic are a major subject of study. Ultimately, the contradictions are not, in practical if not ideological terms, as great as they might appear. These powers were often put to work to the benefit of the powerful nobility, ultimately in a way that was beneficial for them at least as much as it was for the crown. But, I am mainly concerned with the ideological end of the spectrum, and with matters of legitimacy. It may have been in the interests of nobles to cooperate, but that does not explain the specific terms in which their cooperation was expressed.

⁸⁶ The crown had theory on its side. While nobles resisted by action, often effectively, they, to the extent that there was a unified "they" to speak of, did not successfully advance theoretical alternatives to strong royal power in the western monarchies. Even if it did not always work in practice, as I will discuss in chapter eleven, it did help to shift the terms of political debate in its favor.

⁸⁷ Certainly in comparison with fourteenth-century accounts. Alonso de Cartagena, quoting from the by then venerable *Siete Partidas*, wrote that *caballeros* ought to be honored in their *cosas*, except by order of the king or by reason of justice. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 42. Royal orders grew in importance, but alongside that, the importance of *cosas*, or at least formal possession of them, was less important in these later accounts than in their fourteenth-century predecessors.

a projected *proceso* and sentence. But these accounts do so using specific terms that Ayala did not use.⁸⁸

More importantly, looked at in the context of the unfolding narratives, losses of power responded directly to the interests of a “governing” king. Those interests were defined differently according to incident, or between accounts of the same incident in different chronicle traditions. But in any case, in contrast to fourteenth-century accounts, the consequences of the measures they justified were more nuanced, and more context specific, than a general, reactive, stripping of possession.⁸⁹ A king’s needs, as opposed to a target’s deeds, not only justified action, they also determined how the principal consequences faced by targets were defined.⁹⁰ What mattered was not that a target lost what they deserved to lose, but that the king got what he needed in a given situation.⁹¹ In both traditions, that most often meant preventing targets from acting against him.

For example, the accounts of the two traditions have very different takes on the power at stake in the Diego Gómez de Sandoval incident. The *Crónica* accounts focus on possession of specific fortresses, which they had described as a cause of concern for several years, whereas the *Halconero* narratives look to the seizure of his power base more broadly after the count’s flight

⁸⁸ For him, losses of power were expressed as losses of possession. Also, those terms appeared in early fifteenth-century literature as well. For instance, *Los doce trabajos de Hércules* describes a king depriving his sons of the “administración de los bienes,” administration of their possessions, and “el uso de los riquezas,” the use of their property. In context, it appears the king was only doing this to teach them a lesson, hence the temporary sense, but the language used is similar to that in chronicle narratives for more contentious seizures. Villena, *Los doce trabajos de Hércules*, 35.

⁸⁹ That said, overall the *Halconero* accounts present a more general dispossession for targets of royal wrath, whereas the *Crónica* narratives offer narrower interpretations of the power at stake. The generally simpler *Halconero* chronicles maintain a stronger association of loss of power and loss of possessions, in comparison with the more “institutional” *Crónicas*. It should also be noted that more centralized does not necessarily mean more institutionalized. Monsalvo Antón, “Poder político y aparatos de estado,” 126.

⁹⁰ Nieto Soria casts Trastámara kings as conflict resolving judges, in which reconciliation and pardon played as big a role as punishment. Nieto Soria, “Conflicto como representación,” 40, 45.

⁹¹ In a more general sense, Gaines Post discusses a very early “reason of state,” or “reason of government,” based on the assertion of urgent need and the use of “right reason by the highest authority.” Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 283, 301.

to Aragón. But the losses both traditions highlight are in keeping with the king's priorities as defined in the context of their broader narratives. In neither tradition was loss of power principally about Sandoval losing possessions as a punishment for acts he committed, but the king curtailing his ability to work against royal interests, whatever those might be.⁹² And in both traditions, that meant arranging temporary and contingent losses of capacity to act.⁹³ As such, isolating royal authority and interests as the force and justification behind separations of person and power also raised the profile of their most direct consequences, and promoted a new conception of what losing, and having, power meant.

That close association between the unique consequences discussed above, and the distinct ways of authorizing and justifying royal action discussed in chapter four, highlights this new discourse of power and its loss, and sets it apart from the fourteenth century focus on judgement and punishment. It also served to magnify the centrality of the crown, its authority and its institutions as a central reference point of political life. But as far as chronicle accounts of separations of person and power are concerned at least, new royal claims did not work by simply steamrolling over traditional limits. Instead, they redefined the terms of debate in contests over power, to open a new path that skirted those limitations.

Indeed, that redefinition extended beyond royal-noble confrontations of the type on which I have focused to this point. Even members of the nobility themselves adopted it, and the associated invocation of royal authority, for their own purposes. But first, I turn to consider the enduring role of guilt, judgement and punishment in fifteenth-century chronicle accounts of

⁹² Beyond the fortress itself, Diego Gómez de Sandoval oversaw the *merindad* of Castrogeriz, a regional administrative unit, in 1428. ARCV Pergaminos, caja 23, n. 6.

⁹³ The material consequences the *Crónica* accounts describe match the king's broader objectives throughout their coverage of the long dispute between him and Diego Gómez de Sandoval. The specific terms both *Halconero* accounts employ establish that temporary sense. See also Castrillo Llamas, "La tenencia de fortalezas," 1299.

removals from power, and in political debates surrounding them. Their enduring presence, but altered role in comparison with the accounts of the fourteenth century, further solidifies the significance of this new conception of power and its loss.

Chapter Six

Possibilities and Limits of New Conceptions of Power

In fifteenth-century royal chronicles, of both the *Crónica de Juan II* and *Crónica del Halconero* traditions, royal authority acting in its own interests deprived subjects of power, conceived as the capacity to act on a temporary and contingent basis. That stands in contrast to their fourteenth-century predecessors which, on the whole, stressed more definitive stripping away of the formal possession of resources which supported positions of prominence. However, like findings of guilt and punishment at the end of judicial *procesos*, the permanently conceived losses of possession they authorized did not disappear from later chronicle narratives or fifteenth-century political disputes more broadly.¹ But although they endured, they played roles distinct from royal interventions against the capacity of noble rivals to exercise power.

In particular, they were more associated with, and limited to, efforts to “transform” the results of the immediate, temporary royal actions targeting exercise into long-term arrangements.² Most importantly, they were significant for passing immediately, but temporarily, seized possessions or posts to new holders on a firm basis. The new royal interventions freed monarchs from constraints imposed by older forms of justice, opening new paths for effective, and legitimate, actions against royal rivals in the midst of ongoing crises. Permanent losses of possession, in contrast, came to serve as a means to close those interventions, managing their

¹ Permanent is a relative term. For one thing, measures defined as temporary or contingent could in practice last a very long time. Also, the exact composition of noble power bases throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however defined, were unstable. Defining power in ways that facilitated more, and more active, royal intervention in some circumstances did not necessarily mean that the positions of individual nobles became less secure. Martínez Ruiz, “Propiedad y poder,” 72.

² Although imprisonment was also a way to temporarily curtail the ability of rivals to act, in this chapter I focus more specifically on actions against possessions.

consequences by, potentially, legitimizing a new distribution of resources after the immediate threat from the disempowered had been neutralized.³

Also, that process was often more significant for recipients of seized goods than for rulers themselves. Chronicle accounts frequently describe ongoing judicial procedures as having been initiated by royal orders, but then entrusted to others. They may, or may not, return to describe a resolution to them. But the king, the central figure in a *crónica real*, was separated from that resolution, his most important interventions complete. Turning from interventions to consequences, the results of those procedures were, likewise, less significant for the royal subjects of these accounts. Ayala's late century narratives still described distinct actions by kings, and their consequences, as occurring under the shadow of possible future justice. But in these later accounts, that prospect loomed much smaller over the immediate royal interventions which, ultimately, had the most significant material consequences for targets.

Indeed, that change in the figures for whom formal judicial resolutions, and their results, were significant further emphasizes the presence of a new sense of power and loss in fifteenth-century chronicles. Though it did not eliminate older ones, it was distinct from them. Moreover, the displacement of old conceptions of power and loss, alongside the articulation of new ones, highlights how those new ways of justifying and characterizing the separation of person and power buttressed a "governing" king against powerful nobles.⁴ Determinations of guilt and

³ Looking back to the fourteenth century, formal and enduring loss of possession was closely associated with justice. That did not change in normative terms in the fifteenth century. However, this change in emphasis worked to circumvent that issue, from the point of view of a deposing monarch, because possession was not what was at stake.

⁴ The rise of new "exercise" based views of power has been associated with the self-conception of the new, post 1390's nobility as it encroached on royal roles. Here, I stress its benefits for rulers, or for those in a position to use royal power for their own goals, and associate it with new claims of royal authority.

punishment mandating loss of possession became just one weapon, with a much more specific purpose, in a more extensive royal arsenal.

A Hybrid Approach

In the years 1429 and 1430, the possessions of the *infantes* of Aragón in Castile were seized and redistributed after an abortive attempt to drive Álvaro de Luna from court and reassert their own position.⁵ That process received particular attention in both major fifteenth-century royal chronicle traditions. However, each describes temporary losses authorized and justified by royal authority, and the basis on which they could be shared out to new holders, in somewhat divergent terms. And they also each depict the nature of the losses authorized during those years somewhat ambiguously, in particular with regard to the basis on which their later recipients were to hold them after their redistribution.

That ambiguity opens a door to examine the relationships between the two different ways of conceiving power and its loss noted above. But accounting for that ambiguity, and understanding its significance, requires looking beyond chronicle narratives. Its importance becomes most apparent in the context of legal disputes over possessions that had been seized by rulers and then redistributed into new hands. Those contests could last long after the initial expropriation, and thus continued long after royal chroniclers had, usually, moved on to other matters.⁶ They may depict the initial seizures, and the beginnings of judicial procedures, by the

⁵ After their intervention in 1429.

⁶ That is not to “fill out” the chronicle narratives or look at what they could have said. Rather, it is to take situations marked by a collision of concepts that is a source of ambiguity in the chronicles, especially those of the *Crónica* tradition, and to consider them alongside perspectives from sources that deal more directly with those concepts as debated in disputes over long term possession of places seized by royal authority.

command of their subject, the king. But disputes between those who lost possessions and their new holders were not, unless the king was dragged into the disagreement, their concern.⁷

As such, contemporary disputes over taken and redistributed possessions are also considered in comparison with chronicle accounts. Points of ambiguity hinted at in some narratives were also, in more explicit terms, at the center of legal contests in which the capacity, and limits, of royal authority to dispossess subjects were key points of contention. Disagreements between town governments and members of the nobility, over possessions seized from town jurisdiction by royal command, offer particularly good opportunities to explore the issue, along with more general complaints about that practice presented in venues like the *Cortes*.⁸

Sentences, Punishments, and Separating Person and Power

Alongside exercise-based conceptions of power in fifteenth-century chronicle narratives, formal losses of possession, connected to sentences declaring guilt and mandating punishment, remained.⁹ They are particularly prominent in the *Crónica* tradition accounts. For example, in their depictions of the 1422 downfalls of both the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos, after describing the temporary and contingent losses they suffered, more permanent arrangements, based on what the target may be found to deserve following contemplated judicial procedures, remained a possibility. Indeed, their accounts of the latter instance, where such procedures culminated in a formal finding of guilt, draw strong distinctions between pre-trial sequestrations

⁷ The fourteenth-century removals studied in chapter one also involved the death of targets who, naturally, would not have been in a position challenge anything. But executed people could have heirs, and the death of the original participants by no means brought an end to disputes.

⁸ Insights from a long-lasting legal dispute over the possession of Puebla de Alcocer, seized from Toledo by royal authority in the 1440's, will play a major role in that effort. As for the towns, they could act as "lords," and town governments, or their members, were political actors as well. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 543.

⁹ They did so in both, but particularly in the accounts of the *Crónica* tradition. That is in keeping with their more institutional and legal perspective, while the *Halconero* narratives rely more on personal motives and relationships, and focus more narrowly on the person of the king.

and other temporary acts, and the confiscations authorized by the sentence. But elsewhere distinctions were not so clearly drawn, even when losses of both types were described.¹⁰

Certainly, chroniclers who articulated a new sense of power and its loss were not thereby forced to abandon older ones entirely. Yet, a closer look at the sometimes ambiguous relationship between those two senses within their narratives shows that, even if new views did not eliminate old views, as their presence increased the role of those older conceptions shifted, and shrank, in comparison with the parts they played in fourteenth-century accounts. A need for formal findings of guilt and attendant punishment did not restrain or limit legitimate royal action in later chronicle accounts or debates, certainly not as strongly as it had in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* or even Ayala's work. And the presence or absence of such findings was mainly significant for other parties, not for authorizing or legitimizing consequential royal interventions. Altogether, they served different and more limited purposes, mainly for figures other than kings

In chronicle accounts of the 1429 seizure of the possessions of the *infantes* of Aragón, and their later distribution to royal supporters in 1430 at Medina del Campo, the two concepts overlapped in such a way that older views were displaced.¹¹ Both events were major political milestones, with the redistribution contributing to the consolidation of a budding "noble oligarchy" of a few great lineages.¹² But for my purposes, what matters most is that discrepancies between the narratives of each tradition, and ambiguities within the *Crónica* accounts in particular, principally appear when characterizing the transfer of seized possessions to new holders. In contrast, seizures authorized by royal authority acting in royal interests were

¹⁰ The temporary sense, conveyed by terms like "sequester" and *embargar*, and also by the implication that despite royal orders the ultimate disposition of seized things was yet to be decided, was fairly constant. But, depending on chronicle account, explicit distinctions between them and losses described in more permanent terms, as a result of confiscation for instance, are less consistently drawn.

¹¹ García-Gallo refers to the "confiscations" of 1429. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 784.

¹² Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 211.

depicted in shared terms, and without the hints of controversy that clung to their subsequent transfer.

1429-30 in the Chronicles

In 1429 the *infantes* of Aragón and their allies began a political and military intervention in Castile.¹³ The confiscations of 1429-30 were ordered in response to that action, which did not go as the *infantes* had hoped. They did not act alone, and many figures allied with them faced ruin as well. However, I focus on the consequences endured by the *infantes* Juan and Enrique, which received the bulk of chronicler attention.

According to the earlier iteration of the *Crónica de Juan II*, as conflict opened in 1429 King Juan undertook several actions, on his own authority, to impede the ability of the *infantes* to legitimately make use of resources supporting their power in Castile. For example, he ordered letters sent to all the *infante* Juan's possessions, commanding them not to obey him.¹⁴ Shortly afterward, he issued commands to sequester the *infante* Enrique's possessions as well.¹⁵ Both these depictions of immediate, yet temporary and conditional, royal intervention echo others in this tradition, in particular the treatment of the *infante* Enrique and Ruy López Dávalos in 1422.

As the chronicle narrative unfolds, the *infante* Juan, finding little support in Castile, soon retreated.¹⁶ But Enrique, more firmly based in Castile than his brother, continued to fight from

¹³ Álvarez Palenzuela, "El precio de la guerra," 62.

¹⁴ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 15, pp. 69-70.

¹⁵ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 18, p. 78. Both those orders were issued in the midst of an ongoing conflict in which both *infantes*, Juan and Enrique, were in arms against the king.

¹⁶ Álvarez Palenzuela, "El precio de la guerra," 67. The *infante* Juan was king of Navarre by virtue of his marriage as well as a major Castilian landholder. But his royal status was less important than it might seem. Kings could be held as traitors when in a situation like Juan's. For instance, Charles of Navarre's clash with the King of France in the fourteenth century, in which he was tried for treason, was used by Pedro López de Ayala as an example when discussing the fate of the *infante* Alfonso.

the fortress of Alburquerque, near the Portuguese border.¹⁷ As a result, the chronicler's attention moved there. A document identified as a royal letter sent to the defenders of that fortress in late 1429 is inserted into the narrative.¹⁸ It is identified as a response to an attempt by the *infante* and some of his followers to *desnaturar* from the king, meaning they had attempted to declare themselves unbound from allegiance to him.

According to the inserted letter, the king rejected the legality of that attempt, and countered with an announcement that the *fiscal* had instead accused them of disservice to the king.¹⁹ Further, he insisted that the *fiscal* had urged him to proceed immediately against the defenders, in both their persons and goods, and recommended that he use an accelerated *proceso*, as his predecessors had done in similarly urgent cases. However, he decided instead to summon them to defend themselves at court, since he did not wish to have to sentence them for something as terrible as treason. To close the letter, he promised that he would pardon the defenders and order that their possessions and offices be *desembargado* if they gave up within a specified time period.²⁰

But this offer was rejected, and shortly afterward the chronicle inserts another letter, in the king's voice, identified as a public message describing the conduct of the *infantes* since the beginning of the war sent in early 1430.²¹ This time, the king recalled that after the *infante* Enrique's first rebuff of his overtures, he had gone to Alburquerque in person, hoping his

¹⁷ Also involved was the *infante* Pedro, younger brother to Juan and Enrique. However, he was a secondary figure. The main confrontation was between Enrique and the king.

¹⁸ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 48, pp. 157-163.

¹⁹ The *procurador fiscal*, or *fiscal* for short was, in this context, somewhat analogous to a public prosecutor. However the role was formally defined as being to represent royal interests in court.

²⁰ In promising that pardon, he invoked his *poderío real*. Indeed, he promised to uphold it even in the face of the *leyes, fueros* and *derechos*. Royal claims to power extended to mercy as well as punishment, and this situation shows one of the many ways in which those claims could, in some circumstances, be advantageous to nobles.

²¹ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 1, pp. 169-76. The later reworking of the *Crónica* only includes this one, not the first. The two accounts are very similar, and that omission would be in keeping with the latter's abridged state.

presence would remind its defenders of the “reverence and obedience” they owed him. Once there, he made another, though slightly less generous, offer of leniency, saying all the followers would be pardoned, and he would allow the *infante* to be heard “with justice,” if he surrendered. But the *infante*, with great “disobedience and rebellion,” rejected him one again. Therefore, with great *razón* and *justicia*, he could condemn them all according to the laws of his kingdoms. Nonetheless, the king decided to offer the defenders thirty more days to come before him, and promised he would hear them “according to justice.” After that however, he would command that they be proceeded against with the full rigor of the law.²²

At an impasse, King Juan left Alburquerque and went on to Medina del Campo. Once the deadline had passed, the king assembled the *Consejo* there to consider how to proceed against the *infantes*, and those with them, for the disobedience they had committed against him.²³ The chronicle suggests that the *Consejo* was divided, principally between those who favored a harsh punishment, “as far as the law allowed,” which would serve as an example to others, and those who advocated leniency.²⁴ Ultimately, the chronicler insisted that since the king’s office was principally to “punish and reward according to what one deserved,” King Juan determined that the *infante* Juan should “feel some punishment,” and that Enrique should suffer a “great penalty” for what he had done.²⁵ On the other hand, he believed that royal supporters had earned rewards

²² The others were granted forty days to leave the *infantes* and be pardoned. The king also promised to order the restitution of their offices and goods, though if they did not come, he would proceed against them and their possessions according to the penalties set out by law. The inserted text of the letter claims this was proclaimed to the defenders by heralds, to the sound of trumpets, while the king was surrounded by *grandes*. In legal terms, this represented a *juicio in rebeldía*, where a sentence was handed down even though those charged did not respond once summoned. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 82.

²³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 2, pp. 177-179. See also Álvarez Palenzuela, “El precio de la guerra,” 90.

²⁴ Due to, for the *infantes* themselves, their close relationship to the king.

²⁵ “sentir un daño,” “gran pena.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 3, pp. 179-81. In his *Exortación de la Paz*, Diego de Valera expressed a similar view, saying the king should punish vices and reward virtues. Diego de Valera, *Exortación de la paz*, ed. Mario Penna, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 80. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 409.

for their service. Therefore, he confiscated the *villas* and *lugares* of the rebels and granted them to loyalists.²⁶

In this account, sequestration and other orders defined in temporary or contingent terms were followed by confiscations, then redistribution. In the *Crónica* accounts of other depositions, when confiscation was discussed it was distinguished from sequestration, but also placed after a sentence. Here however, the description of the situation is murkier. The *infante* Enrique, who had been summoned by the king and advised of what penalty would ensue if he did not obey, was certainly described as sentenced.²⁷ But the *infante* Juan's fate was much less clearly defined. He was not included in the threats made before Albuquerque, and was not noted as a subject of *Consejo* consultation before the king's decision to confiscate his possessions.²⁸ But still, the chronicle does not suggest that the confiscation order or the grants to new holders were problematic.

Its later counterpart, however, describes a degree of uncertainty surrounding these seizures. Although as usual it overlaps with the older account very closely, when describing the 1430 confiscation at Medina del Campo it does not include a justification of the order in terms of the king's duty to punish and reward according to a subject's personal merit or, indeed, any explicit justification at all.²⁹ And subsequently, it suggests that one potential recipient of the king's largesse, court official Fernando Díaz de Toledo, did not want to take what was offered to

²⁶ With respect to the grants, he made *merced* of them.

²⁷ Certainly, there are other examples in both the *Crónica* and *Halconero* tradition accounts of kings passing judgement in situations where targets were defending fortresses. Similar narratives are found in fourteenth-century royal chronicles as well. For instance, in 1429, Diego Gómez de Sandoval was threatened with such justice while at Peñafiel, while in the Alfonso Fernández Coronel confrontation discussed in chapter one, King Pedro passed sentence before the walls of Aguilar.

²⁸ Though the *Crónica* does say that the king had decided he deserved to feel some punishment, it does not clearly specify on what basis he decided to put that into effect. The placement of the decision in the context of the *Consejo* meeting could imply a sentence or some other formal finding, but it was ultimately ambiguous.

²⁹ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 chs. 1-3, pp. 476-479.

him because he disliked the prospect of being *heredero* to the *infante* Juan or the *infante* Enrique.³⁰ Although highlighting one reluctant recipient may not suggest a major controversy on its own, coupled with the less judicial framing of this narrative in comparison with the earlier account, it does suggest a degree of uncertainty about the status of the grants, despite the supposed confiscation.³¹

I will return to the implications of that portrayal shortly, but first, the accounts of the *Halconero* tradition also engage with these seizures. Returning to the beginning of the confrontation, the *Crónica del Halconero* reports that in 1429, at Atienza, the king consulted a supportive *Consejo* and decided that everything the invading *infantes* Juan and Enrique held in Castile should be “taken.”³² In what the chronicle calls a *repartimiento*, the king took most of their possessions for himself, but directed cash payments to which they had been entitled toward new beneficiaries right away.³³ Moving on to 1430, like in the *Crónica* tradition accounts the king went to Albuquerque to confront the *infante* Enrique.³⁴ After two surrender demands were rebuffed by the defenders King Juan, seated on a dais draped in black, declared that Enrique had thirty days to appear before him. If he did not, then he would be condemned as a traitor. Subsequently, a herald read this declaration, called a *sentencia*, to the defenders before the king marched off. Finally, in Medina del Campo, the thirty days having elapsed, the chronicle

³⁰ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 4, p. 479. Díaz de Toledo was a *converso* official who was associated with Álvaro de Luna. Cañas Gálvez, “Los burócratas como grupo de poder,” 394.

³¹ The accounts are also not very detailed regarding the specific things lost as a result of these orders. In principle, there was a difference between personal property and possessions held from the king. Personal property should need a sentence to be seized, though with the second type a cases could be made that kings had more leeway. p.3, t.28, l.1. But, sometimes that distinction blurred and, in any case, what Díaz de Toledo got, payments that had once gone to the *infantes*, would fall under the second, more flexible type. Morín, “Los castigos hereditarios,” 2.

³² *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 19, p. 39; ch. 22, pp. 42-43. The term it employs is *tirada*, which had no specific implications regarding the status of the seizures themselves.

³³ The *Crónica* tradition accounts describe a similar situation with respect to Ruy López Dávalos in 1422. Out of the explicitly sequestered possessions in those narratives, only money was shared out right away.

³⁴ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 27, p. 47; ch. 29, pp. 48-50.

recounts that he ordered a *repartimiento* of the possessions of both the *infante* Enrique and Juan.³⁵ The *Refundición*, for its part, mirrors the *Crónica del Halconero* account very closely for both parts of this incident.³⁶

Regarding the overall “shape” of these chronicle narratives, both traditions are in broad agreement. In particular, they each describe seizures of Juan and Enrique’s possessions in 1429, an intervening sentence against Enrique, but not Juan, followed by a general sharing out of their lost possessions in 1430.³⁷ That said, the *Halconero* tradition narratives note both seizure and limited redistribution in 1429, in the immediate aftermath of a *Consejo* consultation.³⁸ The *Crónica* accounts, in contrast, describe neither a consultation nor redistribution that year, only royal orders to seize or otherwise undermine the *infantes’* power base.

But ultimately, the most important discrepancy between the two sets of accounts involves the terminology used to describe the process of taking possessions from the *infantes*, and then giving them to others, in 1430.³⁹ The *Crónica* accounts surround that year’s Medina del Campo

³⁵ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 31, pp. 51-52. In 1429, he had kept them for himself, perhaps implying sequestration. Their redistribution, though the exact terms were not specified, represented a more serious intervention in that now others, not just the king and his authority, became involved.

³⁶ The principal differences are that the *Refundición* does not mention of a seizure of the possessions of the mastership before the Atienza sequestrations in 1429, and that it describes the *infante* Pedro’s possessions as having been confiscated at Medina del Campo as well as those of the other brothers. *Refundición*, chs. 41-46, pp. 80-90.

³⁷ Such a decision taken in consultation with the *Consejo* could be interpreted as a sentence, but none of them uses that term specifically. The important point, however is that as discussed above, lines between acts of justice and acts of government were often blurred. And in these narratives, so was the nature of their results. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 418, 459-61.

³⁸ Though the redistribution here was only of payments owed to the *infantes* and their allies. That still created a tie of loyalty and obligation, but less than grants of lordship, and they could be given and taken with more freedom. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 253-54, 257.

³⁹ This affair was certainly not the only one in which that was the case. For instance, in describing a 1448 incident in which several leading nobles were abruptly arrested, the later *Crónica de Juan II* and the *Crónica del Halconero* both leave the nature of what was done to the targets, and particularly their possessions, somewhat ambiguous. According to the *Crónica*, as controversy grew in response to this action, the king proposed sharing out their possessions, which would be a *pena* for the “guilty” and a *galardón*, or reward, for his supporters. But, at that point a speech, and then a letter, supposedly delivered to the king by Diego de Valera, are inserted into the narrative. In them, Valera urged that no such action be taken without first having a trial. But although the king was said to be pleased by this advice, the *Crónica* does not say he followed it. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1448 ch. 4, pp. 658-60. For its part, the *Crónica del Halconero* reports that some opponents of Álvaro de Luna, who was suspected of being behind the detentions, later tried to gain support for their cause among the nobility by complaining that the targets of

repartimiento with a degree of solemnity, and refer to specific confiscation orders before moving on to redistribution. In contrast, the *Halconero* narratives simply report that the remaining possessions of both the recently sentenced Enrique, and the less clearly treated Juan, were shared out to others.⁴⁰ More broadly, in their coverage of 1429, the *Halconero* tradition accounts employ general verbs for “taking” when discussing the seizures authorized that year.⁴¹ The *Crónica* accounts, in keeping with their general practice, use more specific terms that suggest a progression from 1429’s temporary losses to more permanent ones in 1430.⁴² Still, despite terminological differences, no account makes a direct suggestion of controversy or uncertainty over any of the royal measures in 1429.

Indeed, in the later *Crónica* at least, the first direct indication of controversy relates to the 1430 *repartimiento* at Medina del Campo. Crucially, the accounts of both traditions report that the *infante* Juan’s possessions were shared out to others then, despite the fact that none depicted him as having been subject to any formal sentence before that point. Elsewhere in the *Crónica* tradition accounts, the term confiscation was, when stressed, associated with formal sentences.⁴³

1448 had been “disinherited” without being summoned or “heard” properly. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 327, pp. 527-29.

Both chronicles, though in different ways, express some sense that permanent losses, arranged without process, led to controversy. Yet documentary evidence suggests otherwise. For instance, the count of Lemos received the guardianship of some property sequestered, not confiscated, from one of the targets in 1448. José Manuel Calderón Ortega, *Documentación medieval abulense en el archivo de la casa de Alba*, Fuentes históricas abulenses 50 (Ávila: Institución Gran Duque de Alaba, 2000), doc. 23, 61; doc. 31, 76.

⁴⁰ I say remaining because they both insist that some redistribution, of money payments, had already occurred in 1429. Indeed, they specify that in 1430 his “places,” rather than money, were the principal subjects of redistribution.

⁴¹ Such as *tirar* and *tomar*. That less explicitly legal terminology is not unusual for the *Halconero* narratives.

⁴² Álvarez Palenzuela, “El precio de la guerra,” 81-82.

⁴³ Particularly in the *Crónica* accounts, but not only there. At the *Cortes* of Valladolid in 1447, representatives complained that, in the aftermath of a major victory by the king and Álvaro de Luna over the *infantes*, lordships and other possessions had been stripped from their opponents and passed on to others, despite the fact that they had not been heard according to *derecho*. They requested that the king’s grants should not be complied with until that happened, no matter what derogatory clauses they may contain. The king responded that he had given those orders because this opponents crimes were notorious, but that anyone who wanted to claim innocence could come before him to receive restitution. Both formulations imagine guilt of some kind, but the *Cortes* petition

And recall that the later reworking of the *Crónica* also diverged from the earlier account by not describing the king's 1430 confiscations as a result of his duty to "punish and reward." That is the context in which, the *Crónica* insists, one potential recipient of a reward, Fernando Díaz de Toledo, declined it.

An Uncertain Inheritance: Implications

As characterized by the later *Crónica*, Díaz de Toledo's objection to accepting the king's largess in 1430 rested on his reluctance to become *heredero* to both Juan and Enrique. The use of the term *heredero* strongly suggests that the king's rewards should be understood as having been bestowed on an enduring basis.⁴⁴ To be sure, such reluctance on his part could be interpreted as political prudence, not wishing to offend powerful nobles who, despite the recent setback, retained important friends within, and outside, Castile. Yet in the *infante* Juan's case, neither the later *Crónica*, nor any other account for that matter, depicted a firm basis for such a permanent reward, based on a *proceso* and sentence, in the same way it did in other, similar circumstances.

This potential issue regarding the terms on which Díaz de Toledo would enjoy his reward, like discussion of the separation of person and power more broadly, is rooted in the changing relationship between justice, punishment, and loss driven by institutional developments and new expressions of royal power. But so far, I have focused on how they impacted depictions of rulers intervening in the power of their subjects, and the forms those interventions took. What

suggested a royal decision was not sufficient to establish it, at least not the point that the seized places could be passed on to others. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:558. See also Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 475.

⁴⁴ In contrast to holding them in sequestration. In the *Partidas*, *heredero* refers principally to the heirs of the deceased, not those who receive goods that had been confiscated. But there are also suggestions of broader uses. For instance, in 1445, after becoming Master of Santiago, Álvaro de Luna transferred title to many of his possessions to his son, Juan. The document establishing this transfer refers to Juan as his *heredero*. The meaning is somewhat ambiguous, as it could be referring to the fact that as his eldest son, he was ultimately Luna's heir, though in context he named him so directly before declaring his wish to transfer ownership to him. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 211, 349-51.

happened in the wake of those royal actions has not been a main focus, just as it was not for chroniclers. But that aftermath is significant for understanding the enduring role of royal justice, in the sense of formal findings of guilt and punishment, both in chronicle accounts and beyond them. Indeed, although the results of royal commands may undermine the capacity of targets to act, to take full advantage of the possibilities thus opened, possessions had to be redistributed to others.⁴⁵ Sentences following proper judicial process were important for doing that on a firm basis. They established that the previous holder had lost possession of the resources in question, not just the right to use or benefit from them.⁴⁶

In effect, chronicle narratives, and particularly those of the *Cronica* tradition, work with two, partly distinct conceptions of power and its loss. One, suspending the exercise of power, authorized by royal command in the service of royal interests, was a product of the fifteenth century. The other was the older tradition of more permanent losses of possession mandated by a judicial sentence.⁴⁷ But that distinctiveness is not just about the “work” that each did, but also for whom that work was most significant. Returning to Díaz de Toledo, the later *Crónica* attributes

⁴⁵ Or, to meet the demands of victorious factions. Olivier Canteaut, “Confisquer pour redistribuer: La circulation de la grâce royale d’après l’exemple de la forfaiture de Pierre Remi (1328),” *Revue historique* 658 (2011): 313-15, 318, 323; Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 58; Franco Silva, *La fortuna y el poder*, 265-308; Ladero Quesada, *El siglo XV en Castilla*, 74; Mazzoni and Salvestrini, “Strategie politiche e interessi economici nei rapporti tra la Parte Guelfa e il Comune di Firenze,” 59; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 27. Diego de Valera, advocating peace with the infantes in his *Exortación de la paz*, emphasized that kings must be generous, and part of being just was giving out just rewards. *Exortación de la paz*, 80.

Also, looking back to the accounts of the Ruy López Dávalos case, the redistribution of places to new holders, who were named, was not described until after describing a sentence mandating that his possessions be confiscated. Díaz de Toledo only received money payments, yet he still objected. In the *Crónica* tradition accounts of Dávalos’s fall, money was shared out among royal supporters before the sentence without comment. However, that money was specifically described as being in sequestration, whereas Díaz de Toledo was described as getting his payments on a permanent basis. Álvarez Palenzuela, “El precio de la guerra,” 72-3.

⁴⁶ By use, I mean loss of use in the context of legal proceedings. See *p.1, t.2, l.1-3; p.3, t.2, l.27*. Certainly, distinctions between possession and use were longstanding, but the prominent and well-defined role played by temporary losses of use or capacity in fifteenth-century chronicles, especially of the *Crónica* tradition, is not shared by their fourteenth-century predecessors.

⁴⁷ In principle, royal jurisdiction over property was to protect it, not dispose of it. Of course, when the possession in question was a royal grant rather than outright personal property the issue was more complex. Owens, ‘*By My Absolute Royal Authority*’, 162.

his reluctance to accept royal largess to doubts about holding on to possessions which had once belonged to such powerful figures going forward, not an objection to the seizures the king had already commanded in 1429.⁴⁸

Although an isolated incident, both within the later *Crónica* and because it is only found there, his objection evokes an important idea both in and beyond the chronicles.⁴⁹ In the *crónicas reales*, a new discourse of royal authority, working in its interests along a *vía de justicia*, also directed that authority toward specific consequences or, put another way, new ways of losing power.⁵⁰ The new claims served to build powerful cases for legitimate royal action, but they also had limits defined, in part, by the types of losses they were best equipped to authorize and justify. Díaz de Toledo's objection in the later *Crónica* illuminates one of those limits, not about what kings could take for themselves in the short term, but what they could give to others in the long term.⁵¹

Beyond the Chronicles: Disputed Possessions

The long term redistribution of possessions seized and then given to others gave rise to many contemporary disagreements. Disputes over such possessions played out in royal courts,

⁴⁸ The *Crónica*, it should be noted, does not offer a direct explanation of why he was supposedly reluctant to be *heredero*.

⁴⁹ And in fact, many recipients of largess in the early 1430's did have trouble later, amid an *infantes* resurgence in the late 1430's and early 1440's. Olivero Serrano, "Las Cortes de Castilla y el poder real," 233. See also Mazzoni and Salvestrini, "Strategie politiche e interessi economici nei rapporti tra la Parte Guelfa e il Comune di Firenze," 14-15.

⁵⁰ But the influence was not just one way. Those new forces also impacted royal justice and the purposes of its formal sentences as well. That process, as discussed above, was at work in the accounts of the Sandoval incident. And with regard to Álvaro de Luna's downfall, about which there will be more to say later, Round stresses that sentencing was as much an opportunity for the king to assert himself as it was a way to punish the favorite for what he had done. And regarding the 1430 seizures, in the older *Crónica* account the king explained his decision not just in terms of punishing his opponents, but also rewarding his supporters. That expression also associated the punitive qualities of justice with meeting other royal needs.

⁵¹ Of course, to give in the long term, they also had to take. But that kind of long term seizure was not the prime focus of any of the chronicle accounts, and certainly not the kind with which they most consistently associate the figure of the king. The long term disposition of seized possessions was an issue, but when chronicles of both traditions engage with it, none of them tend to treat it as the monarch's problem.

and the presence, absence, or legitimacy of judicial sentences could play a major role in contestation over their long term status. However, direct actions taken by monarchs, and the kinds of seizures they authorized, were mostly unchallenged. So, while the endurance of formal sentences, and their status as a matter of contention, constitutes a limit to new conceptions of power, it also confirms their influence in displacing older forms.

In particular, disputes over the seizure, and redistribution, of places under urban jurisdiction to members of the nobility offer a strong basis for considering that persistent, yet altered and limited, role. J.B Owens' work on a showdown over the lordship of the town of Puebla de Alcocer, between the city government of Toledo on one side and a succession of nobles descended from Gutierre de Sotomayor, Master of Alcántara, on the other, is a good starting point.⁵² In 1441, King Juan II had removed the town from Toledo's control, in direct response to the city's refusal to allow him entry in the midst of yet another political conflict involving the *infantes* of Aragón and Álvaro de Luna. He then moved to incorporate it directly into crown jurisdiction. But at the same time, he ordered the residents of Puebla de Alcocer to obey Gutierre de Sotomayor as his representative.

Thereafter, the situation of the town appears to have been somewhat uncertain, though Owens suggests that Toledo managed to reassert some control after the upheaval of 1441.⁵³ However, in 1445, the king granted the town directly to Gutierre de Sotomayor.⁵⁴ He authorized this action by invoking his *poderío real absoluto*, guided by his *cierta ciencia*, and justified by

⁵² Owens, *By My Absolute Royal Authority*, in particular chapter 2. See also J. B. Owens, "El largo pleito," 21. Puebla de Alcocer was, and is, a small town over one hundred miles away from the city of Toledo itself. It had come under Toledo's influence in the fourteenth century. As for Gutierre de Sotomayor, he will appear again in chapter eight.

⁵³ Owens, *By my Absolute Royal Authority*, 21.

⁵⁴ A great deal of documentation related to this grant, and other simultaneous grants, is preserved in the Archivo Histórico Nacional. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, caja 393.

his self-proclaimed urgent need.⁵⁵ Toledo quickly challenged the grant, but was not able to make much progress in either pressing their complaint or recovering control of the town.

Then, rebellion roiled Toledo again in 1449, and after reconciling with the king, the city government received a general pardon for its previous offenses, and a promise that everything confiscated from it by the crown would be returned, even if grants made to others had to be annulled to do it.⁵⁶ However, the Sotomayor family was firmly entrenched in Puebla de Alcocer, and several attempts to bring them to court to enforce that royal decision, both in the latter half of the fifteenth century and in the early sixteenth, were unsuccessful.⁵⁷ Each time, Toledo's representatives argued that both Juan II and his successor, Enrique IV, had ordered the town returned to Toledo and that the Sotomayor family were occupying it by force. They also cited a law promulgated at the *Cortes* of Valladolid in 1442, outlawing unilateral royal grants of municipal possessions to others, such as the one that, nonetheless, had been given to Gutierre de Sotomayor in 1445.⁵⁸ But, the strong political position of the new lords kept matters from reaching any firm conclusion.

Finally, a court case began in earnest in the 1530's, though it ultimately took years to unfold. The issues noted above were still relevant to the case-making of the two parties, but so

⁵⁵ "Necessity" was a longstanding justification for royal demands or measures beyond what was customary. Black, *Political Thought*, 153; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 428; O' Callaghan, *The Cortes of Castile-León*, 131-2; Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought*, 253. For example, in the 1290's, King Sancho IV invoked it to demand additional funds for defense against an invasion from Morocco. Those who did not comply were liable to have their sources of income seized until the amount demanded was collected. Asunción López Dapena ed., *Cuentas y gastos (1292-1294) del Rey D. Sancho IV el Bravo (1284-1295)* (Córdoba: Monte de Piedad y Caja de Ahorros de Córdoba, 1984), 342-366. That, however, was a different kind of demand than the outright seizure ordered in the Belalcázar situation, which much more directly altered the "status quo." But the term itself did not appear often in royal chronicles. In them, justifications were more specific, cast in terms of what I call interests, rather than blanket appeals to necessity.

⁵⁶ Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 41. There is some ambiguity as to whether this was intended only for the consequences of the 1449 revolt, or if it was to apply more broadly.

⁵⁷ Or, failing that, to get the king to review the case in *Consejo*.

⁵⁸ Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 50, 54, 57. For the 1442 law, see García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 785.

was the issue of Toledo's rebellion. Isolating one aspect of the case, the city's lawyers claimed that, though the king had placed Puebla de Alcocer under Gutierre de Sotomayor's control by virtue of royal authority in a time of crisis during the 1440's, no judgement declaring Toledo's government culpable of any crime meriting such a loss had ever been made. Thus, granting it permanently to him was illegitimate, and the city should get it back.⁵⁹ In the end, the court found that Puebla de Alcocer should be returned to Toledo, though Sotomayor's heirs won other, related cases dealing with possessions secured in similar circumstances.⁶⁰ Still, as the lengthy series of lawsuits suggests, win or lose, there were costs to having an uncertain title.⁶¹

But although the issue of guilt and punishment laid down by sentence sat at the heart of the suit, it mattered most to those who had to hold on to the possessions taken and re-given.⁶² In effect, King Juan authorized his supporter to take control of Puebla de Alcocer from what was, in the immediate context of the 1440's, a disloyal city. But his successors then allowed a forgiven Toledo's challenges and, ultimately, let the case work its way through the royal courts.⁶³ By

⁵⁹ That point was countered by a claim that royal *cierta ciencia* could justify nearly any action in times of crisis, in the service of the public good. Carrasco Manchado, "Léxico político en el Seguro de Tordesillas," 99-100, 122-23; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 117-118.

Also Sotomayor's lawyers argued that since there had been no sentence, Toledo might indeed be owed compensation, but from the king whose predecessor had ordered the suspect seizure, not from Sotomayor or his heirs. Overall, Owens believes the case turned on the legality, or not, of the expropriation of Toledo's land by Juan II based on *poderío real absoluto*, but for my purposes, that only became an issue as Toledo challenged the new holder, Sotomayor and his heirs, not the king directly. Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 157-70. See also Owens, "El largo pleito," 21.

⁶⁰ The process by which Toledo had originally come into possession of Puebla de Alcocer was also at issue, and helped to bring victory for the city. Toledo's representatives argued that the city had purchased control over the town two centuries earlier, which meant that it did not owe its lordship over the town directly to a royal grant. That, in turn, was used to argue that the king had less authority to seize it.

⁶¹ That is not to suggest that, had a sentence been issued, the seizure would have been unchallengeable. However, in the circumstances, Toledo's representatives seized on one's absence and, having done so, were able to sustain their case.

⁶² A not unreasonable expectation. For instance, in 1423, Álvaro de Luna and other *grandes* who had benefitted from Ruy López Dávalos's fall pledged mutual support in the event that he launched a *pleito* in order to reclaim his lost possessions. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 20, 53-58. Even in a case where a sentence was recorded, that did not mean its arrangements would last after the king and his allies got what they needed in 1422-23.

⁶³ That is an important part of Owens overall argument. *Poderío real absoluto* did not settle the issue, but set up a long running dispute between the city and Sotomayor's heirs in royal courts. In that dispute, the strongest

then, the immediate concerns stemming from the crisis of the mid-fifteenth century had long since ceased to be pressing for the crown. But Toledo, though victorious, had endured decades of dispossession, while Sotomayor and his heirs, even while they managed to hold the town for several decades, did so under circumstances that certainly caused a headache for them.⁶⁴ But despite all that, King Juan II's initial actions in the service of his interests in 1441 and 1445, though unpopular with Toledo, were not challenged in a meaningful way during or immediately after the crises that spawned them.

Of course, litigation over specific possessions may be expected to concern, principally, the parties directly involved.⁶⁵ But regarding the issue of kings unilaterally taking and redistributing urban possessions, this well-studied court case represents only one particularly thorny instance of a controversial practice undertaken by rulers pressured into doling out rewards in exchange for political support.⁶⁶ Indeed, complaints about it appeared in other contexts, such as in several *Cortes* proceedings from the early to mid-fifteenth century.⁶⁷ For example, at the 1447 *Cortes* of Valladolid, the seizure of villages from Toledo's control, and their subsequent

proponents of such views of power were Sotomayor's heirs, while the royal court itself was willing to entertain challenges to it. He uses that point to discuss how the idea of *poderio real absoluto* was not a royal trump card, but rather reshaped the terms in which political disputes were conducted and, above all, in how cooperation was mobilized. Also Crawford, in a study of the role of royal courts in disputes over *hidalgo* status, argues that although royal grants of status, like other actions, may be contested, the role that royal courts could play in resolving those contests was yet more evidence of growing crown centrality as an arbiter of power or, in this case, status. Crawford, *The Fight for Status and Privilege*, 23.

⁶⁴ J. B. Owens, "El largo pleito," 23, 26.

⁶⁵ The dispute was not irrelevant to rulers, who had to consider political circumstances as they decided whether or not they would allow it to be adjudicated. But, there was no question of Juan II or any later ruler recovering direct control of Puebla de Alcocer.

⁶⁶ Sometimes city control of lands in their *comarcas*, territory subject to the rule of city councils in many parts of Castile, was lost by outright force and usurpation. Maria Asenjo González, "Ciudades y poder regio en la Castilla Trastámara (1400-1450)," in Foronda, Genet, and Nieto Soria, *Coups d'état à la fin du Moyen Âge?*, 365-402; Ladero Quesada, "Aristocratie et régime seigneurial dans l'Andalousie," 1357.

⁶⁷ At Burgos in 1430, Zamora in 1432, Madrigal in 1438, Valladolid in 1442, 1447 and 1451, and Burgos in 1453. However, success was limited and, for much of the fifteenth century the towns, as political entities represented in by then centuries old *Cortes*, lost out to the nobility dominating the court and the much newer *Consejo*. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:86, 136, 329, 394, 536, 609, 671. In 1453, the city of Salamanca appealed to the king to have its lands restored in accordance with royal ordinances issued that year. BNE Ms. Micro. 15070; BNE Res. 233. See also Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469)," 230-2.

grant to the Master of Alcántara, was a subject of specific complaint. Here too, the protests encompassed not the king's own seizure, but his redistribution of the seized possessions to others.⁶⁸

That said, this particular complaint, unlike the court case, did not draw any explicit distinction between temporary and contingent seizures by the king, and longer-term ones based on confiscation. However, in other contexts similar to the removals of individual noblemen, complaints made in *Cortes* meetings did deal with that issue. For instance, at the *Cortes* of Palencia in 1431, the deputies informed the king that they had learned he had ordered the lands of vassals who had not responded to his calls to military service placed under *embargo*. Subsequently, they added that they had heard he intended to deprive them of those possessions, and they asked him not to do so without their being "heard" first.⁶⁹ Although the "embargos" were cast as direct responses to an unheeded call, and not a subject of direct criticism, this petition suggested that, for the *Cortes* delegates, further process was still called for in order to formally deprive the disobedient of those possessions on a permanent basis.⁷⁰

But fifteenth-century chronicle narratives, given their focus on the figure of the king, did not often deal with such long-term issues directly.⁷¹ Within their accounts of the separation of person and power, the king's role had shifted away, in comparison with their predecessors, from

⁶⁸ In a related case involving places taken from Córdoba's jurisdiction and given to Gutierre de Sotomayor, Juan II ordered two members of Córdoba's government to "consent" to his donation of those places to the master. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, car. 324, n. 8-9.

⁶⁹ The term employed is *privar*, a general term for taking possessions which, here, is implied to mean on a permanent basis.

⁷⁰ *Cortes de los Antiguos Reinos*, 3:103. Based on the timing of this appeal, it could be referring to ignored calls to serve the king against the *infantes*, but also to serve in the war against Granada waged that year. More significant though is the issue of what "being heard" meant. In an analogous situation, the *Crónica* tradition accounts report King Juan holding off on executing the threats he had made against the *infantes* and their allies in Alburquerque, hoping to give them an opportunity to be heard. That suggests judgments in absentia would not quite meet the definition. Nor would a *Consejo* decision, whether defined as a judgement or not, qualify in the absence of the target. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 460.

⁷¹ Fernández Gallardo, "La Crónica Real," 281-322.

the processes of justice and the attendant punishments to which the ultimate disposition of targets, and their seized possessions, were still attached.⁷² Looking a bit more broadly, fourteenth-century chronicles, *Cortes* proceedings, and works like Ayala's *Rimado de palacio* had all stressed the importance of kings not seizing possessions without "due process" and a sentence. But in these later accounts, considered alongside the perspectives of the Puebla de Alcocer case and the *Cortes* complaints, that general prohibition on seizure was more narrowly defined as "seize and transfer," establishing that a previous holder had lost a possession legitimately so that new recipients could hold it securely in the long term.⁷³

In fifteenth-century chronicles, the king was not cast as reliant on formal judgements to open up a target's power, in the newly highlighted senses of that term, to legitimate intervention.⁷⁴ They served as one tool among many for a proactive, governing king, who

⁷² I have focused on trials and sentences as the means to achieve that, but matters could be more complicated. As discussed above, in 1429 the *infante* Enrique was subject to an ultimatum, whereas his brother Juan was not. But, at the beginning of the war in 1429, the *Crónica* accounts insist that those helping the *infantes* had been threatened with the prospect of losing all they possessed. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 6, p. 47; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 4, p. 452. And that is not the only time such threats, suggesting a kind of judgment by default, were made. Similar ones were issued in 1440, for instance, to those who joined with some *grandes* who were planning "movements" in the realm. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 208, 509-10.

But even so, whether or not these war-time threats should be supplemented by formal procedures on an individual basis can be ambiguous. And older ideas continued to be expressed elsewhere. For instance, Alonso de Cartagena included the longstanding principle that subjects could *desnaturar*, renounce allegiance to a ruler or other lord, for disinheritance without due process. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 256. And Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo more actively expressed that "justice consists in not taking nor ordering taken the goods and estates of anyone without judicial order." *Suma de la política*, 300.

⁷³ Though the 1429-30 narratives convey a sense of uncertainty about the status of the possessions seized, that confusion was not about the legitimacy of the king taking immediate measures to arrange temporary losses in the context of an ongoing political confrontation. Instead, it was about the transfer of what was lost to others. Also, sequestration could be long-term. The issue is not just about timespan, but the nature of the transfer. García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 92; Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 29-30.

⁷⁴ That is not to say that kings had not, in practice, taken such steps before. But in fifteenth-century royal chronicles such actions received a distinct identity and basis.

worked through them, but did not depend on them, to act effectively.⁷⁵ That removed an important limit on legitimate royal action.⁷⁶

There were, of course, still limits on royal intervention, as the enduring if somewhat curtailed importance of determinations of guilt, sentences, and punishments in fifteenth-century chronicle narratives and other sources attests. At the same time though, that restricted significance was a result of a displacement caused by a new discourse of power, casting it as something exercised, and in which the ability to do so could be stripped away by royal authority acting in its interests. It allowed chroniclers to portray rulers approaching the problem of disempowering subjects in a way that had not been explicitly articulated before. In that context, permanent losses of possessions mandated by sentences were significant mainly for solidifying the transfer of resources of power to new holders, closing the interventions rulers had begun on other grounds.⁷⁷

Power Possessed and Power Exercised

Alongside new ideas about power and its loss focused on capacity to act, concern for outright, permanent losses of possession endured. Indeed, in fifteenth-century chronicles, they sometimes overlapped, leading to certain ambiguities regarding the terms on which person and

⁷⁵ Francesc Eiximenis, writing in the late fourteenth century, already offered a view that kings in his own day demanded more of their subjects than in the past, and respected their rights less. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 93, 738.

⁷⁶ Owens places his study in the context of a “consensus state,” in which concepts like *poderio real absoluto*, in the service of the good of the realm, served to rally support for royal action. See also Alejandro Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-16. And indeed, in each of the fifteenth-century incidents discussed above, royal deponents did succeed in gathering such support. The ambiguities surrounding the long term transfer of resources of power, however, emphasize that gathering enough backing to undertake such action, and establishing a basis on which to legitimize that action, were not the same thing. That shows a limitation on new views of power and loss.

⁷⁷ They had that function before. As noted in chapter one, passing on possessions to others on a permanent basis followed formal sentencing in both Sánchez de Valladolid’s and Ayala’s depictions of justice. But in fifteenth-century accounts, their emphasis on other types of losses, arranged by other methods, meant that actions of this type were more distinct in the narratives, when they appeared at all.

power were separated. That is particularly apparent when considering efforts to turn the results of immediate royal actions, based on royal authority and interests, into long-term arrangements.

Such ambiguity highlights the possibilities, and limitations, for royal authority to arrange the separation of person and power. However, in the face of new conceptions power, and the assertions of royal authority and interests behind them, the purpose of that older discourse was to solidify the redistribution of resources supporting power after they had been seized. It did not open subjects and their possessions to royal action, but closed out that action for, principally, the benefit of others besides the monarch. As such, although establishing losses of possession remained an important way of defining separations of person and power, the figure of an active, governing king exercising his own power, to prevent noble rivals from doing the same, was clearly distinct and, in chronicles of both traditions, more immediately significant. Finally, when considered in the context of broader political and legal disputes, the more limited role which remained for formal justice and permanent loss of possession stands out even more strongly.

Looking ahead, I move from considering the extent and limits of these new ideas in narratives of confrontations between kings and nobles, to establishing their influence in Castilian political culture more broadly. In the next two sections, I study the disempowerments of more distinctive figures, namely the masters of Castile's military orders and royal favorites. Despite holding power defined in different terms from most members of the nobility kings might seek to disempower, they too became subject to interventions to limit their ability to exercise power.

PART THREE

Chapter Seven

Depositions in the Military Orders: Kings and Masters in the Fourteenth Century

The masterships of the three principal Castilian military-religious orders of knighthood, Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcántara, were among the most important and distinctive positions in the realm during the later Middle Ages.¹ The office of master was defined in evolving, but ultimately consistent, written rules that enshrined the basic principles according to which these groups should be organized and the manner in which their members should live. Of particular importance was the idea that their masters should be elected, and if necessary deposed, by senior members of the orders themselves.² On the other hand, although masterships were technically ecclesiastical posts, they were also responsible to Castile's monarchs, who frequently intervened to arrange the election of preferred candidates and, sometimes, the removal of disfavored incumbents.³

However, in fourteenth-century chronicles, even when targeted masters were subject to royal justice, the masterships themselves were consistently treated as a separate issue.⁴ In contrast to the accounts studied so far, depositions of masters pitted royal institutional and ideological tools against positions with formal institutional and ideological bases of their own.⁵

¹ The Order of St. John, or the Knights Hospitaller, had a significant presence as well. But as part of an international order, the position of its leader in Castile was different.

² To be clear, each order was independent of the others.

³ As they did with many ecclesiastical posts. Indeed, the role of church resources and personnel, and royal control over them, is an important part of late medieval "state" narratives. Nieto Soria, "La configuración eclesiástica de la realeza Trastámara," 134-7.

⁴ A royal justice, moreover, that looked very similar to that discussed in chapter one.

⁵ That is not to say masters or the orders could set themselves up as independent. But unlike royal officials, masters did not formally serve at the pleasure of rulers and could not be simply dismissed by them. As such, the orders and their masters are often used as a lens to study power and power relationships in late medieval Castile. José Vicente Matellanes Merchán, "La estructura de poder en la Orden de Santiago, siglos XII-XIV," *En la España*

Examining their treatment in chronicles tests both the extent of, and the explanations for, evolving views of political power, as well as its relationship to new expressions of royal authority.

Despite the distinctiveness of the masterships, royal chronicle narratives of master removals share similar conventions with their depictions of the disempowerments of nobles and, ultimately, underwent similar developments. Regarding how the loss of the office was defined, fourteenth-century chronicles cast formal deposition or replacement of masters as the key moment of their removals. No account offers a sense of any kind of intermediate, temporary arrangements or measures designed to interrupt a master's ability to exercise his powers. Also, with respect to the means by which depositions were achieved, those same accounts portray rulers, even when applying behind-the-scenes pressure, working through the rules and institutions of the respective orders, at least nominally, to achieve their ends. Outside the limits of those forms, no fourteenth-century chronicle expresses any distinct register in which monarchs could intervene directly against masters. And finally, in terms of justification, legitimizing removals depended upon establishing the misdeeds of the incumbent, whether against kings or against the rules of the orders they led.

So, the unique nature of the masterships as offices, and positions of power, notwithstanding, accounts of master depositions in fourteenth-century royal chronicles are comparable to their accounts of the downfalls of those who held less firmly defined posts. The conceptions of power and its loss discussed in chapters one and two are not unique to accounts of the removals of "secular" nobles, but extended more broadly to contemporary political culture

Medieval 23 (2000): 293; Feliciano Novoa Portela, "Los maestros de la Orden de Alcántara durante los reinados de Alfonso XI y Pedro I," *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 29 (2002): 317.

and discourse. That is to say, the particulars of a noble's position did not determine, on their own at least, how chroniclers framed the issue of power and its loss.

Moreover, establishing that shared vision among accounts of different kinds of removals within a particular chronicle is vital for understanding, and explaining, the very different views expressed in chronicle narratives from the fifteenth century. Those later accounts also all acknowledge the distinctiveness of the stably defined offices of master. However, a similar combination of royal authority and interests, arranging temporary suspensions of exercise, to that which redefined their accounts of noble removals came to dominate accounts of master removals as well.

Sources and Approaches

But returning for now to Castile's fourteenth-century royal chronicles, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and Pedro López de Ayala's *Crónica de Pedro I* each depicted several master removals, from each of the major orders, between the 1320's and the 1350's.⁶ Below, treatment of the office of master itself is isolated, despite the fact that some incidents were about a mastership alone, while in others its loss was one aspect of the broader disempowerment of the person who held the post. But even so, both chroniclers treated them as distinct positions and their loss as a distinct event, highlighting their robust identity. Indeed, that identity makes studying accounts of master depositions a valuable means through which to test the conclusions reached in the previous sections. Narratives in which the loss of the mastership is one factor

⁶ The presence of order affairs, mostly when they overlap with royal politics, is considerable in both chronicles. Philippe Josserand, "Enjeux de pouvoir et traitement historiographique: Les ordres militaires dans la chronique royale castillane aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles," *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 25 (2002): 185, 189-92.

among several are ideal for isolating how royal justice, or authority, acted on this unique office in comparison to other types of power.

Also, royal documents and records from the archives of the military orders contextualize the chronicle accounts and the terminology they employ.⁷ But in normative terms, orders and their masters received little attention in the general works of political theory or in the Castilian legal codes which have been utilized so far.⁸ However, they did possess their own specific rules and regulations, beginning with papal bulls and royal privileges. Eventually, they developed them further in their own capitular legislation. The surviving legislation is mostly of a later date, but other documents are referenced below to gauge how the royal actions described by chroniclers worked through, around, or confronted the rules and institutional contexts of the orders.⁹ In addition, Francisco de Rades y Andrada's sixteenth century chronicle of all three orders, from their foundations to his own day, plays an important role.¹⁰ A member of the Order

⁷ The archives of the orders of Santiago and Calatrava are quite extensive, though much of Alcántara's have been lost. For a general survey, see María Jesús Álvarez-Coca González, "Los fondos de las órdenes militares del Archivo Histórico Nacional. Aportaciones a la historia de los archivos," *Boletín ANABAD* 46, no.1 (1996): 95-118; Juan Ramón Romero Fernández Pacheco, "Los archivos medievales de las órdenes militares en el Archivo Histórico Nacional," in *Órdenes militares y construcción de la sociedad occidental (Siglos XII-XV)*, ed. Raquel Torres Jiménez and Francisco Ruiz Gómez (Madrid: Sílex, 2016), 31-72.

⁸ For political theory, their absence from the classical and late antique models on which theorists so heavily drew may be a factor. Black, *Political Thought*, 22; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 645. However, their absence from normative legal sources is more interesting. That sense of the orders as a world of their own is also reflected in modern scholarship. For example, mid-20th century classics like García de Valdeavellano's *Curso de historia de las instituciones españolas* and also García-Gallo's *Manual de historia de derecho español* have little to say about them.

⁹ Papal bulls, communications with the Cistercians for Calatrava and Alcántara, and some royal grants have been published. Some collections include Antonio Francisco Aguado de Córdoba, Alfonso Antonio Alemán y Rosales, and José López Agurleta, eds., *Bullarium equestris ordinis sancti Iacobi de Spatha* (Madrid: Typographia Ioannis de Aritzia, 1719); Ignacio José de Ortega y Cortes, José Fernández de Brizuela, and Pedro de Ortega-Zúñiga y Aranda, eds., *Bullarium ordinis militiae de Alcantara* (Madrid: Tipografía Martín, 1761); Ignacio José de Ortega y Cortes, Juan Francisco Álvarez de Baquedano, and Pedro de Ortega-Zúñiga y Aranda, eds., *Bullarium ordinis militiae de Calatrava* (Madrid: Antonio Martín, 1759); Bonifacio Palacios Martín, *Colección diplomática medieval de la Orden de Alcántara (1157?-1494)*, vol. 1, *De los orígenes a 1454* (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 2000); *Libro del origen, definiciones y actos capitulares de la orden de la inlyta caballería de Calatrava* (Valladolid: Adrian Ghemart, 1568); *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago* (Madrid: Real Consejo de las Órdenes, 1791). Other documents are preserved in the Órdenes Militares section of the Archivo Histórico Nacional.

¹⁰ Francisco de Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de las Tres Ordenes y Caballerías de Sanctiago, Calatrava y Alcántara* (Toledo: 1572). Divided into three clear sections in the edition from which I cite, I will hereafter cite it as Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Sanctiago*, etc.

of Calatrava and close to King Philip II, he was appointed to the task after the orders had been absorbed by the crown and had access to their archives.¹¹

Finally, since the orders and their masters enjoyed ecclesiastical status, in some removals church institutions, and even the papacy, could be involved. But overall, no royal chronicler engaged extensively with these interventions, and none of them ever stopped an effort to remove or contain a master that coincided with royal wishes. Instead, church authorities were most often involved in settling disputes after the fact, or confirming what had been done. These interventions are acknowledged, but my focus is directed toward how chronicles depicted royal actions against the masters.

The Orders and their Masters

The military orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara were founded in the twelfth century to fight on Castile's southern frontiers with Islamic Andalucía.¹² Those who entered one of the orders agreed to live according to a form of ecclesiastical discipline in addition to their military duties, setting them apart from secular counterparts.¹³ The related orders of Calatrava and Alcántara were associated with the Order of Cistercians.¹⁴ The Order of Santiago, in

¹¹ He also drew on the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* and Pedro López de Ayala's work.

¹² Not long after their more famous counterparts, the Knights Templar and the Knights of St. John. Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain*, 107. Portugal also had a major order presence, and the Order of Santiago, in particular, was important in both. Aguiar Andrade, *A construção medieval do território*, 29, 55-6.

¹³ There were also traditional clergy in the orders, but I focus on the knights. Indeed, Ayala Martínez asserts that the primary ethos of the orders was that of the *caballero*. Carlos de Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares hispánicas en la Edad Media* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007), 174; Carlos de Ayala Martínez, "Las órdenes militares en la Edad Media: La Orden de Santiago," in *Actas del V Congreso Nacional Sobre la Cultura en Andalucía, Cuadernos de Estepa* 3 (Estepa: Ayuntamiento de Estepa, 2014), 1-3. Sam Zeno Conedera, though devoting more attention to their religious side of things, argues that members should not be viewed as monks, but as knights subject to ecclesiastical discipline. Sam Zeno Conedera, *Ecclesiastical Knights: The Military Orders in Castile, 1150-1330* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 3, 13. There were more properly "religious" members of all the orders who were outright monks, and sometimes nuns, but they were much smaller in number.

¹⁴ Ayala Martínez, "Las órdenes," 4-5; Joseph F O'Callaghan, "The Foundation of the Order of Alcántara, 1176-1218," *The Catholic Historical Review* 47, no. 4 (Jan., 1962): 479-481. Before the final union of Castile and León in 1230, Calatrava was associated with the former and Alcántara the latter. Both retained their separate identity even after the kingdoms were joined.

contrast, was under the direct protection of the pope and the religious obligations of its members were somewhat looser.¹⁵ But despite their ecclesial character, the military orders and their chief offices were established in ways which ensured a degree of royal influence over their affairs.¹⁶ The earliest days of each of the orders are shrouded by a degree of uncertainty, but by 1200 all three were firmly established and their basic rules in place.¹⁷

Moving on from their foundings, a longstanding “grand narrative” of the orders in the later Middle Ages holds that, after the Castilian conquest of Andalucía in the mid-thirteenth century, the role of the orders and the status of their members changed rapidly.¹⁸ With threats to the southern frontier growing less urgent, they lost their unique mission and turned inward, becoming just another player in Castilian politics.¹⁹ Although the orders retained their identities for a time, and even strengthened their respective internal organizations, their peculiar character and institutional independence weakened until, by the sixteenth century, they were absorbed by the crown.²⁰

¹⁵ Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 199; Ayala Martínez, “Las órdenes,” 6-10.

¹⁶ Carlos de Ayala Martínez, “Los inicios de la Orden de Calatrava y la monarquía Castellana,” in Torres Jiménez and Ruiz Gómez, *Órdenes militares y construcción de la sociedad occidental*, 223-266. For example, Josserand emphasizes how the 1306 *definiciones* of the order of Alcántara placed the order at the service of the “sovereign power.” Philippe Josserand, “Frontera y órdenes militares en la cristiandad latina medieval,” in Torres Jiménez and Ruiz Gómez, *Órdenes militares y construcción de la sociedad occidental*, 217.

¹⁷ Indeed, it is sometimes difficult to establish when the first communities that would become these orders were formed. The earliest surviving rules are from 1158 for Calatrava, 1170 for Santiago, and 1176 for Alcántara. Francisco Ruiz Gómez, “Órdenes militares y sociedad política durante el reinado de Alfonso X el Sabio,” in Torres Jiménez and Ruiz Gómez, *Órdenes militares y construcción de la sociedad occidental*, 341. However, these rules did not consist of a single document issued once and for all, but continued to evolve over time. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 152.

¹⁸ Ruiz Gómez describes the order of Calatrava in the fourteenth century as politically strong but ecclesiastically weak, meaning its religious “side” was under-developed and it had little impact in the larger world of the Castilian church even while the political influence of its leaders was very great. Ruiz Gómez, “Órdenes militares y sociedad política,” 409.

¹⁹ And order members often had other ties and obligations competing for their loyalty. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 510; Carlos de Ayala Martínez, “Órdenes militares y frontera en la Castilla del siglo XIV,” *En la España Medieval* 23 (2000): 282-284, 290; Conedera, *Ecclesiastical Knights*, 5; Enrique Rodríguez-Picavea, “The Military Orders and the War of Granada (1350–1492),” *Mediterranean Studies* 19 (2010): 20; Ruiz Gómez, “Órdenes militares y sociedad política,” 360.

²⁰ This narrative is a simplification that de-emphasizes specific interests, personalities and economic pressures at play beyond general trends. Also, some studies stress that from the start, royal influence in the orders

More immediately significant, however, is the position of the mastership itself. Brief descriptions of the rights and duties of the master, as well as the process of his election and possible deposition, were part of each order's rules.²¹ Although each order had its own specific set of regulations, procedures for gaining, and losing, the mastership were defined in similar terms in all of them.²² Most importantly, direct responsibility for electing or deposing masters lay with a body of high ranking officers.²³ At first, rulers had no formal role in this process, though in practice, they had great influence over selections, and masters were expected to do homage for the possessions of their order in a particular realm.²⁴

As for the duties of the masters, they were assigned ultimate responsibility for the administration and military operations of their respective orders, and also played a role in maintaining religious discipline among members.²⁵ But they were not absolute rulers, able to

was very strong. But on the whole, this view holds up. Blas Casado Quintanilla, "Años de cambios en Calatrava. El maestrazgo de Gonzalo Núñez de Guzmán (1385-1404)," in Torres Jiménez and Ruiz Gómez, *Órdenes militares y construcción de la sociedad occidental*, 339-376.

²¹ Failure to carry out those duties could be grounds for dismissal. On the other hand, the rules also emphasized the duty of members to obey and respect the master. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes Militares*, 193-94; Matellanes Merchán, "La estructura de poder en la Orden de Santiago," 295-96. On the whole, rules focused more on personal behavior than on governance. That was most often dealt with in meetings of an order's chapter. Zeno Conedera, *Ecclesiastical Knights*, 53.

²² Indeed, the papacy sometimes treated the orders a group. Zeno Conedera, *Ecclesiastical Knights*, 130.

²³ Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Sanctiago*, ch. 4, p. 7; ch. 9, p. 14; Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Calatrava*, ch. 9, p. 11. In the Order of Santiago, this group was known as the "Thirteen." Matellanes Merchán, "La estructura de poder en la Orden de Santiago," 297-99; *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago*, 27-28.

In the Cistercian-affiliated orders of Calatrava and Alcántara, representatives of that order had a role as well, though their importance declined over time. Ayala Martínez, "Inicios de la Orden de Calatrava," 257; Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Calatrava*, ch. 8, p. 11; Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Alcántara*, ch. 1, p. 1.

²⁴ Kelsen, "De l'Église et de l'État," 384; Meissonnier, "Théorie et pratique du pouvoir royal," 313-14; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "The Ecclesiastical Estate in the Cortes of Len-Castile, 1252-1350," *Catholic Historical Review* 67, no. 2 (1981): 186-7, 210-12. In addition to homage for order possessions, by the fifteenth century, masters might receive the insignia of their post from ruling monarchs. *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago*, appendix, 167-180.

²⁵ They also had the formal responsibility to represent the order to the king and a role in disciplining members for violations of the rule, though by the later Middle Ages, as the rules relaxed and communal life declined, that was less significant. Ayala Martínez, "Inicios de la Orden de Calatrava," 240, 254-57; *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago*, 32-33; Rodríguez-Picavea, "The Military Orders and the War of Granada," 27; Ruiz Gómez, "Órdenes militares y sociedad política," 418.

command order members and resources as they pleased.²⁶ Also, although the potential to use the posts to command soldiers and fortresses could be important, the economic benefits were just as significant.²⁷ In practice, the vast resources possessed by the orders were divided up into many parcels, so no master could directly enjoy the fruits of all of them.²⁸ But they each still received a valuable piece, called the *mesa maestral*.²⁹ And finally, the offices were prestigious, taking precedence over most other posts and titles. For example, after Álvaro de Luna became Master of Santiago in 1445, chroniclers and documents referred to him as *maestre*, superseding his previous identifier, *condestable*, even though he retained that office as well.

In some ways, historiographical narratives about the office of master follow those of the orders as a whole. They became major political players, or the offices became rewards given to major players, but the posts lost their distinctiveness along with the orders they led. And as a result, masters became more open to royal interference over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That traditional view is insightful. But in chronicle narratives at least, that is not just a reflection of changed order roles in Castilian politics, or an even vaguer general decadence. Instead, it also is a consequence of specific changes in how royal authority acted to confront “troublesome” masters.

²⁶ Ayala Martínez calls their authority “monarchical,” though limited by pacts, combining monastic and “feudal” traditions. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 191; Ayala Martínez, “Las órdenes,” 13-14. See also *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago*, 14-15.

²⁷ José García de Cortázar describes a vast “land of the orders” between the Tagus River and the Sierra Morena, in south-central Castile. García de Cortázar, *La sociedad rural*, 67.

²⁸ The number of full knights in each of the orders generally numbered in the hundreds, though their total military resources would be more than that. Enrique Rodríguez-Picavea, “The Armies of the Military Orders in Medieval Iberia,” *Mediterranean Studies* 20, no. 1 (2012): 38-40.

That economic organizational system began to develop in the thirteenth century. Matellanes Merchán, “La estructura de poder en la Orden de Santiago,” 316-319. As with many other ecclesiastical resources, holders might exploit them for their personal use and also try to transfer them, formally or informally, into their family’s control. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 243; Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 259.

²⁹ Manuel López Fernández, “El origen de la mesa maestral en la Orden de Santiago,” *Espacio Tiempo y Forma. Serie III, Historia Medieval* 22 (2009): 124; Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 195, 208.

Although the natures of the three masterships were not entirely static, masters across the period nonetheless held well-defined positions that crossed secular and ecclesiastical lines. Therefore, rulers who wished to do away with a master had to face the strongly defined traditions and rules associated with them. Royal chronicle accounts of the fourteenth century reflect those limitations, in that the legitimacy of royal action depended on depicting rulers working through those rules to achieve their goals.

King and Masters in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*

The mid-fourteenth century *Crónica de Alfonso XI* by, most likely, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid contains several descriptions of the removals of masters from their posts.³⁰ Within this royalist chronicle, each account envisions significant roles for King Alfonso, but the exact nature of his role varies greatly.³¹ In part, that is due to the different circumstances in which masters were targeted but, above all, it is because the chronicle depicts Alfonso adapting his own actions to order rules.

Garci López de Padilla

As discussed in chapter one, in 1325 Alfonso XI came of age after a long and tumultuous minority. According to the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, among his first responsibilities was dealing with an ongoing dispute between the Master of Calatrava, Garci López de Padilla, and several high ranking members of the order, led by *clavero* Juan Núñez de Prado.³² In the *Crónica*'s telling, in the early 1320's the master had led a failed attack on Granada. Prado and his allies

³⁰ Partly on that basis, Ayala Martínez identifies the early fourteenth century as a period of relative weakness in the mastership. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 211.

³¹ Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 99; Gingras, "Sánchez's *Tres Corónicas*," 67-82; Gingras, "The Medieval Castilian Historiographical Tradition," 419-25; Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 122.

³² Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 212.

blamed Padilla for the defeat and “quarreled” with him, leading to inconclusive armed conflict and a longer-lasting internal schism among the partisans of the two leaders.³³

Thereafter, the chronicle has nothing further to say about this incident until 1325, after King Alfonso’s majority.³⁴ In its narrative of that year, the order members opposed to Padilla appeared before the king in Valladolid. They lodged a formal accusation against him now that, the chronicle specified, Alfonso had come of age.³⁵ In their complaint, the rebels accused the master of several “crimes and damages” during the unsteady years of the king’s minority.³⁶ Regarding his conduct as a military leader, the knights also alleged that he had caused several castles of the order to fall into the hands of the “Moors” through negligence.³⁷ But on the whole, the case made by the petitioners is described in different terms than the chronicle’s own account of the circumstances which had given rise to the dispute in the first place. Rather than focusing on his alleged incompetence as a commander, its narrative of 1325 insists that the rebels stressed allegations that he had disserved the king.³⁸

³³ “desavencieronse dél.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 13, p. 195.

³⁴ Most of the Castilian members sided with the *clavero*, but the master retained support in Aragón. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200.

³⁵ “regnando este Rey Don Alfonso en el comienzo del año de su edad, et estando en la dicha villa de Valladolid, en este tiempo era aún Don Garci Lopez Maestre de la Orden de Calatrava, et Don Juan Nuñez Clavero de esta Orden: et el Clavero et los Freyles venieron al Rey á Valladolid, porque era salido el tiempo de la tutoría suya.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200.

To be clear, the chronicle suggests that they had waited for the king’s majority to make the petition, not that it was merely a coincidental factor. Note that the chronicle refers to Garci López as master at the time the protesting brothers go to see the king, despite the fact that it also noted the presence of Cistercian representatives who had come to settle the dispute. Calatrava was associated with the Cistercians, specifically the Abbey of Morimonde, and senior Cistercians were sometimes involved in settling disputes of many kinds within the order. The chronicle account does not specify exactly how long they had been on the scene, but they presumably either would not or could not settle matters, given the endurance of the schism.

³⁶ “et dixerón contra el Maestre muchos males et daños que avia fecho en la tierra del Rey, et en la tierra otrosí de la orden.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200.

³⁷ “et cómo dexó perder algunos castiellos de la Orden por non les dar retenencia et bastecimiento, et los ovieron los Moros.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200. That was a serious charge. Ayala Martínez, “Órdenes militares y frontera,” 285. “Moor” was a generic term for Iberian and North African Muslims.

³⁸ “et otros muchos deservicios que dixerón avia fecho al Rey en el tiempo de las tutorías.” For instance, he was blamed for the damage done by their skirmishing. It is likely that some disservice his opponents alleged came in the course of the dispute and so would not have occurred at the time it began. Therefore, that shift in emphasis could

After Alfonso heard the accusations, he summoned the master to answer the charges.³⁹ But he fled to Aragón, following which the king ordered the Castilian knights to assemble, and they “deposed from the mastership Don Garci López and made Don Juan Núñez master.”⁴⁰ Although depicted as having met at royal instigation, the chronicle does not assert that Alfonso directed them to pick Juan Núñez specifically for the role.⁴¹ And despite the king’s involvement, it presents the Castilian order members as having followed their rules, completing a clear process of removal followed by replacement.

Afterward, the chronicle describes no further royal action taken against the now absent Padilla. In fact, his deposition was not the end of the matter, since he continued to call himself master from exile in Aragón with the support of members from that kingdom. Long negotiations involving Cistercian representatives and the papacy ensued. At one point, a settlement was nearly reached, but ultimately he died still claiming to be legitimate Master of Calatrava.⁴² Even his death in 1336 did not end the breach in the order, which endured until 1348.⁴³ But although

simply reflect ongoing events and not a deliberate choice to cast him as a dissolver of the king. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200.

³⁹ “Et sobre estas cosas el Rey envióle emplazar que veniese ante él.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200. The chronicle uses the term *emplazar*, which meant to summon someone to appear at a set place and time in response to charges. See *p.7, t.1, l.14*. But his trial in absentia for treason, and his removal from the mastership, were described as separate procedures.

⁴⁰ “Et el rey mandó al Clavero et á los Freyles que avian fincado en Valladolid, et á los Abades de la Orden de Cistel, que eran y venidos sobre esto, que feciesen otro Maestre. Et los Abades et los Freyles desposieron de Maestre á don Garci López, et fecieron Maestre á Don Joan Nuñez.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 43, p. 200. The personnel said to be involved did not meet the formal requirements for election or deposition according to the twelfth-century rule, though in broad strokes the account suggests proper forms were given a nod. In this context, that is what was most important. Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 3.

⁴¹ After López de Padilla’s flight, Juan Núñez de Prado, as leader of the rebels, was in a strong position. Whatever the king and his advisors may have thought about him, and the chronicle offers no clues, this early in Alfonso’s reign it is not likely he was in a position to insist on someone else.

⁴² López de Padilla agreed to renounce his claim to the mastership in return for compensation, but these conditions were breached.

⁴³ In 1337, the election of his successor in Aragón, Alfonso Pérez, was annulled by the Cistercians because it was displeasing to Alfonso XI. AHN Órdenes Militares, Calatrava, carp. 446, n. 89. However, in 1338, the king of Aragón made a donation to the order, addressing it to master Alfonso Pérez. Ortega y Cortes, Álvarez de Baquedano, and Ortega-Zúñiga y Aranda, *Bullarium ordinis militiae de Calatrava*, 196-98. The 1348 settlement is recorded in: AHN Órdenes Militares, Calatrava, carp. 446, n. 93; Ortega y Cortes, Álvarez de Baquedano, and

the *Crónica* describes one Castilian town remaining loyal to the old master in 1325, it suggests that year's deposition, and thus the wishes of King Alfonso, prevailed in Castile. Otherwise, it has nothing to say about these ongoing disputes.⁴⁴

Focusing on the interaction between order rules, royal power, and royal justice, although Padilla's fall originated in an internal order dispute, it was ultimately only settled with royal intervention. Indeed, the *Crónica* stresses the king's role by implying that the knights had waited for Alfonso's majority to bring charges against the master. In a practical sense, it suggests that the knights opposed to Padilla could not, or at least did not, settle the matter internally. Instead, they turned to the king to complete an already begun project of breaking with Padilla. But on the other hand, despite Alfonso's central role, that framing means he responded to a situation in progress as a settler of disputes, and potentially as a judge, but did not intervene proactively to remove a troublesome master.⁴⁵

More specifically, as Padilla's rivals sought royal intervention, the chronicle suggests that they cast him mainly as a bad subject of the king rather than as a bad master of the order.⁴⁶ The master may have failed to live up to his responsibilities to the order, yet in the chronicle's telling the loss of his post was most directly justified because he disserved the king.⁴⁷ And as for the removal itself, the brothers of the order in Valladolid carried it out in response to the king's

Ortega-Zúñiga y Aranda, 205-207. See also Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 213, 220. However, the *Crónica* does not follow this dispute. As a royal chronicle, it focuses on the king and when he moved on, it did too.

⁴⁴ Neither involved the king directly as a party to the dispute. In the chronicle's telling, he had gotten what he wanted in 1325, so given its royal focus, its attention moved elsewhere.

⁴⁵ Recall that Juan Manuel emphasized the king's duty to maintain the realm in justice and peace. *El conde Lucanor*, 72; *Libro de los estados*, 173.

⁴⁶ Though as a royal chronicle, that is perhaps to be expected.

⁴⁷ Zeno Conedera, working mainly with sources from order archives, attributes his deposition to losing fortresses to the enemy. Zeno Conedera, *Ecclesiastical Knights*, 109. That, in his opinion, is representative of a secular turn in the early fourteenth century since his downfall had nothing to do with a breach of religious discipline. In the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, a similar secular orientation combined with a prominent role for royal power.

command, but also after the master had refused a royal summons, mixing royal justice and order deposition procedures.⁴⁸

But still, the forms of order procedure remained vital to depose him, since the knights, not the king, were responsible for first deposing Padilla and then electing Núñez de Prado. The king may have commanded the knights to do so, but his command did not directly “touch” the mastership. And, besides arranging such an outright deposition, the chronicle account contains no hint that there were any other options available to the king. Overall, although Alfonso called the master to justice, the *Crónica* treats his deposition, after his defiance of the king, separately. In that effort, Alfonso acted through the order’s members and within the limits of its procedural forms.

Vasco López

In the next account, royal intervention and adherence to order rules were once again mixed. Elected in 1338, Vasco López’s tenure as master of Santiago was short lived. He had been swiftly elected after the death of the previous master.⁴⁹ But his elevation had angered King Alfonso, who wanted his illegitimate son Fadrique to hold that post. Having overcome challenges from the nobility, he was in a much stronger political position by this time, and he intervened to clear the way for his son.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Francisco de Rades y Andrada granted the meeting in Valladolid the status of a formal chapter meeting, which suggests he viewed order forms as having been followed. But otherwise he was critical of the proceedings, as well as the treatment of the incident in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. His objection, however, rested on an accusation that Juan Núñez de Prado had improperly sought royal intervention, and that it was improper for the king to summon Padilla even if, eventually, direct responsibility for his removal rested with the order itself. Ultimately, he did not consider Núñez de Prado a legitimate master until his predecessor resigned and a new election was held, an event which the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* does not mention. Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Calatrava*, chs. 26-27, pp. 50-54.

⁴⁹ He was also the *mayordomo mayor*, an important household officer, of the *infante* Pedro, the future Pedro I. Esther González Crespo, *Colección documental de Alfonso XI: Diplomas reales conservados en el Archivo Histórico Nacional* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1986), doc. 250, 248.

⁵⁰ Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 216. Fadrique was one of his many children with Leonor de Guzmán, and brother of Enrique de Trastámara. Alfonso sought to provide for him, like his other siblings.

As the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* frames the issue, however, the brothers of Santiago took the initiative themselves. It reports that in 1338 “the priors, commanders and brothers of the Order of Santiago, who were assembled at Ocaña,” asked the king to come there with Fadrique.⁵¹ The chronicle notes that Alfonso had previously expressed his wish that Fadrique should become master and now, knowing that, the order was willing to give him their habit and “receive” him as their chief.⁵²

The *Crónica* soon offers a reason for that willingness. Upon Alfonso’s arrival at Ocaña, the chapter of the order assembled in his presence and some brothers “placed an accusation” against Vasco López, who “they had earlier made master of Santiago.”⁵³ They charged that before being made master he had “coined false money, and for this he had fallen into treason.”⁵⁴ He had also done violence against possessions of the king, for which, they added, he “deserved death.”⁵⁵ Finally, after his election he had stolen order resources for his personal use and fled to Portugal.⁵⁶ They declared, “for all those reasons and for each one individually he should not have the mastership, and should be deposed.”⁵⁷ The accusers were asked to prove their allegations,

⁵¹ “El Rey seyendo tornado á Mayrid, los Priors et los Comendadores et Freyres de la Orden de Sanctiago, que estaban ayuntados en Ocaña, enviaronle pedir merced que toviese por bien de ir aquel logar dó ellos estaban.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295.

⁵² “et que pues avia dicho que queria el Maestrado de Sanctiago para su fijo Don Fadrique, que lo mandase y levar, et que le darian el abito, et que lo rescibirian por Maestre.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, 295. Royal nominations of non-members meant that the king’s candidate would become both member and master at once.

⁵³ “et dos Freyres de la Orden pusieron luego acusacion contra Don Vasco Lopez que ellos avian fecho ante Maestre de Sanctiago.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295.

⁵⁴ “et dixeron, que este Don Vasco Lopez, ante que lo tomasen por Maestre, que labró, et fizo labrar moneda falsa, et por esto que era caido en caso de traycion.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295.

⁵⁵ “et otrosí, que entró en una villa del Rey, que decian Almogera, por cima de los muros, et que merecia muerte por esta razon.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295. However, nothing came of this assertion in or beyond the chronicle. He had left Castile and was out of reach, and even if he had not, that would have been a matter for royal justice.

⁵⁶ “et demas desto que robára la Orden de todos los ganados que avian, et todos tesoros que ovieron dexado en Montanches los Maestres que fueron de Sanctiago, et que se fué con todo al regno de Portugal.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295. Francisco de Rades y Andrada placed these last two charges specifically after the threatened master had learned the king was moving against him, softening his culpability somewhat. *Chronica de Calatrava*, ch. 33, pp. 42-43.

⁵⁷ “por estas razones, et por cada una dellas, que non debia aver el Maestrado, et que debia ser depuesto.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295.

and afterwards the chapter “considering regarding this matter the things which they were obliged to consider according to their rule, they deposed Don Vasco López from the mastership, and also wished to induct the king’s son, Don Fadrique, and make him master.”⁵⁸ However, in light of Fadrique’s youth and inability to “offer the service he had to render the king in the war against the Moors,” they instead elected his uncle at the king’s urging.⁵⁹ Afterward, they turned over the castles of the order to the new master, and he in turn rendered homage to the king for them.

In the *Crónica*’s depiction of the formal process of Vasco López’s removal, misconduct in the mastership and crimes against the king both featured in the charges made against him. However, the first two accusations had to do with his disserving Alfonso, while the order’s concerns came third. That does not necessarily mean they should be understood as the least important but, on the whole, this royal chronicle narrative focuses more on López’s actions against the king than on his failures as master. In that, it shares much in common with the same chronicle’s depiction of Garci López de Padilla’s downfall.

And also like that other narrative, this account describes a clear process of removal, followed by replacement, with no other pathways for unmaking a master. Both deposition and election, moreover, were determined by the chapter of the order acting according to its rules. Despite what was in fact a controversial royal intervention to secure the mastership, eventually, for his son, the chronicle carefully presents the removal and replacement as happening at the

⁵⁸ “luego el Cabildo de los Freyres preguntaron á aquellos que facian aquella acusacion, si podrian probar estas cosas contra aquel Don Vasco Lopez: et fecieronles luego ciertos desto que era asi. Et los Priors, et Comendadores et Freyres de la Orden de Sanctiago, catando sobre esto las cosas que debian catar segun su Orden, deposieron luego de Maestre á Don Vasco Lopez, et quisieran luego freyrar et facer Maestre a Don Fadrique.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295.

⁵⁹ “et por quanto este Don Fadrique era muy niño, et non podria trabajar en el servicio que la Orden avia á facer al Rey en la guerra de los Moros, el Rey tovo por bien que freyrasen a Don Alfonso Mendez de Guzman, hermano de Doña Leonor, et que le diesen el Maestrado.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 192, p. 295. After his death in 1342, Fadrique was made master.

order's initiative and as having been carried out through its forms.⁶⁰ It casts the king, after all, as having been nothing more than an observer at Ocaña, watching the order's members grant his desire, but not achieving it on his own authority.

Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo

The final narrative from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* deals with the more complex deposition of Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo from the mastership of Alcántara, his downfall from power more broadly and, ultimately, his execution.⁶¹ Setting the scene, according to the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, until 1339, Gonzalo Martínez had been a trusted royal advisor. This close relationship had secured his election to the mastership of Alcántara in 1337, and in September of 1339, Alfonso entrusted him with the defense of the southern frontier.⁶²

However, the *Crónica* also asserts that the king's influential partner, Leonor de Guzmán, disliked the master and viewed his influence as inconvenient for her own plans.⁶³ Seeking to turn Alfonso against him, during his absence on the frontier she and her supporters told the king that the master had spoken badly about their relationship.⁶⁴ Although the *Crónica* suggests that Alfonso was not entirely convinced by such vague accusations, he summoned Gonzalo Martínez

⁶⁰ Even before describing an orderly deposition carried out by the *comendadores* and some others, the chronicle insists that the priors, commanders and knights had assembled first, and invited the king to join them, which he did. His presence was not ordinary, yet it was presented in a very unobtrusive light.

⁶¹ Francisco de Rades y Andrada asserted that his name was in fact Gonzalo Núñez de Oviedo, and that the name in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* is incorrect. Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Alcántara*, ch. 17, p. 19. For general treatment of the situation, see also Novoa Portela, "Los maestros de la Orden de Alcántara," 323-327.

⁶² *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 178, p. 288. According to the *Crónica*, the previous master had resigned his post during a visitation by a Cistercian abbot to the order. He expected to get it back, but the king desired instead to give the post to his ally. He pressured the visitor and the order not to return it to the prior holder, though he did receive some compensation for the loss. The turn seems to have been sudden, since only a few weeks before his fall, Alfonso confirmed all the order's privileges, addressing himself to the master whose replacement he would soon engineer. Ortega y Cortes, Fernández de Brizuela, and Ortega-Zúñiga y Aranda, *Bullarium ordinis militiae de Alcántara*, 167-169.

⁶³ Alfonso had little time for his legal wife, Maria of Portugal, the mother of the future Pedro I.

⁶⁴ "Et Doña Leonor aviale grand saña, porque quisiera destorvar á su hermano Don Alfonso Mendez que non oviese el Maestrado de Sanctiago: et buscabale mucho mal con el Rey, diciendo que dicia el Maestre Don Gonzalo Martínez mucho mal del Rey et della." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 201, p. 302.

to respond to them, and threatened him with arrest if he did not comply.⁶⁵ The master did not comply, instead rallying the forces of the order to his defense.⁶⁶

In the aftermath of the breach, each side maneuvered their forces. Alfonso sent an envoy to Gonzalo Martínez, promising to overlook his recent *yerras* in light of his past service if he would return to his service now, but that effort was not successful.⁶⁷ Also, at this stage in the narrative, there had been no indication that his removal from the mastership was among Alfonso's priorities. However, shortly after the rejection of the envoy's offer, the chronicle reports that the king learned some knights under the leadership of an order member named Nuño Chamizo had broken with the master and seized control of the order's headquarters.⁶⁸ After receiving the news, he commanded the dissidents that "since they were there, they should make Don Nuño Chamizo, brother of that order, master."⁶⁹ Obeying the royal orders, they "gathered in

⁶⁵ "Et como quier que el Rey fue mucho quexado del Maestre por estas cosas, ca tenia en quanto le ficiera mas merced, et pusiera en la mayor fianza, que en tanto le avia fecho mayor yerro que otro ficiera, si esto le acaesciera; pero non quiso catar a los yerras que le dician que aquel Maestre avia fecho, nin se quiso mover á mandar facer contra el ninguna cosa: et envióle mandar por sus cartas, que veniese á él que queria saber, si eran verdad aquellas cosas que dél avian dicho. Pero rescelando que como se atreviera á lo primero, que se atreveria estonce á facer alguna cosa en que el Rey tomase algun deservicio, mando, que si non quisiese venir, que lo prisiesen." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 201, p. 302.

⁶⁶ "Et desde que el Maestre vió las cartas, entendió que el Rey avia saña dél, et que Doña Leonor et otros le avian mezclado... Et partió dende, et todas aquellas gentes con él, et fueron para Moron, logar de la Orden de Alcántara, que es en la frontera." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 201, p. 302. He then secured the loyalty of the commander of that and other order castles.

⁶⁷ "envióle su mandadero, con quien le envió decir, que era maravillado porque non veniera á él enviandolo llamar, et aviendo fecho en él tanta merced et tanta fianza como ficiera; et que le mandaba que veniese allí á Mayrid dó el Rey estaba: ca si él errara en algunas cosas, que mas razon avía el Rey de catar los servicios que le avia fecho, que non los yerras." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 201, p. 302.

⁶⁸ "et sopo que algunos Freyres de la Orden de Alcántara se avian partido de aquel Gonzalo Martínez, Maestre, et que fueran á la villa de Alcántara, et que apoderaron el convento, et estaban en él et lo tenian." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 203, p. 303. He is an obscure figure, and would only lead the order briefly before dying in Alfonso's successful attack on the port of Algeciras a few years later.

⁶⁹ "Et el Rey envióles mandar, que pues allí eran, que ficiesen luego Maestre a D. Nuño chamizo, Freyre de aquella Orden." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 203, p. 303. Normally, elections should happen at order headquarters, so their occupation of it had the potential to be a significant legitimacy boost.

the convent of Alcántara, and took Don Nuño Chamizo as their master.”⁷⁰ But, although this may have struck a blow against Oviedo’s legitimacy, it still did not finish him off.

Instead, the order was divided between the two masters, and by the end of 1339 Gonzalo Martínez had established himself in a fortress near the Portuguese border. Alfonso set off to confront him there, and on the way received a message from Chamizo alleging that his rival master was planning to hand over the places still under his control to the king of Portugal.⁷¹ However, no such action had been taken by the time of the king’s arrival, and he demanded entry to the fortress while promising Oviedo safe conduct.⁷² Entry was denied, and in the course of the standoff, some defenders were alleged to have fired upon the king. In response, Alfonso “ordered later that day to call together all who were there with him and gave sentence against said Gonzalo Martínez, in which he judged him a traitor,” as well as the other defenders.⁷³

Eventually royal forces gained entrance to the fortress, and once Oviedo finally fell into his power, Alfonso was not pleased. Confronting his former advisor in person, he lamented that he had raised him up from a low estate to be a great lord and had put his trust in him, but in return received many “treasons and damages.”⁷⁴ The king reiterated his judgment of treason, and

⁷⁰ “Et estos Freyres, et otros que estaban en las encomiendas, yuntaronse en el convento de Alcántara, et tomaron por su Maestre aquel Don Nuño Chamizo, asi como el Rey ge lo envió mandar.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 203, p. 303.

⁷¹ *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 203, p. 303.

⁷² For which, as an order fortress, the chronicle noted he had done homage after his election. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 204, p. 304. The *Doctrinal de los caballeros* discusses laws regarding the possession of castles at length, and the general right of monarchs to award, and revoke, them. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 187. See also p.2, t.13, l.22; and capítulo 71 of the *Ordenamiento* of Alcalá in *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:546-48.

⁷³ “mandó llamar luego en aquel día los que eran y con él, et dió sentencia contra aquel Gonzalo Martinez en que lo dió por traydor.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 204, p. 304.

⁷⁴ “Et desde que lo vió el Rey ante sí, dixole, que se le debiera membrar en como veniera á la su casa, et á la su merced ome de muy pequeña manera, et como fiara dél toda su hacienda, et todo su consejo; et que le pusiera en tal estado dó era Señor de caballeros et de viellas, et de castiellos, et de grandes tierras; et él que le feciera muchos desconocimientos et trayciones.” He also recalled that during the siege men under Oviedo’s command had attacked him, throwing rocks and other objects toward him. *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 205, p. 305. Altogether, the king’s lamentation was very similar to that described by this same chronicle with respect to Alfonso’s confrontation with Álvar Núñez Osorio ten years before.

ordered one of his men to “behead him and burn him as a traitor, to complete the sentence the king had given against him.”⁷⁵ Unlike his counterparts, therefore, the captured Gonzalo Martínez faced both deposition and the consequences of royal justice, and his deposition as master is not the principal consequence he was said to face.⁷⁶

That context, however makes this narrative well suited for isolating how the chronicle treats the mastership in the midst of a larger effort, centered on royal justice, against a particular target. First, even if Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo’s deposition was not cast as the main “point” of this narrative, it still singles out Alfonso’s decision to arrange his formal replacement. Despite the power of royal justice, and an execution on the horizon, the mastership as an office had enough “heft” to be considered separately from the personal fate of the man who held it. More specifically, the *Crónica* reports that the replacement was carried out by a group of knights at the order’s headquarters.⁷⁷ Although it describes his election as having taken place at royal command, the command was not in response to the master’s defiance and rebellion itself, but followed Chamizo’s own revolt against him. Some initiative, at least, rested with the order and, unlike the previous two accounts, the king was not even personally present.

But despite those parallels with the two accounts more directly focused on removing a master from his post, this one treats the loss of the mastership with a degree of ambiguity not seen in the others. Very little in the way of detail is offered regarding the process of Nuño Chamizo’s election, or justifications offered for it. Given the royal focus of the chronicle, the king’s absence from the scene may explain that.⁷⁸ But more importantly, it does not explicitly

⁷⁵ “et por estas cosas que le avia juzgado por traydor...et fizolo degollar et quemar por traydor, por complir la sentencia que el Rey avia dado contra él.” *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 205, p. 305.

⁷⁶ In any case, he was a powerful courtier, so any move against him would have involved more than dealing with the mastership. Sánchez-Arcilla Bernal, *Alfonso XI: 1312-1350*, 222.

⁷⁷ Which invokes the spirit of the order’s rules, if not the letter. The chronicle gives few details as to who was there and what positions they held, in contrast to the two accounts discussed above.

⁷⁸ In contrast to the other two, where he was present.

describe Gonzalo Núñez as deposed before Chamizo's election.⁷⁹ Indeed, even the wording of his election is ambiguous, and can be taken to mean only that the rebels should obey Chamizo as if he were master, not necessarily that he was the master.⁸⁰ That would complicate the clear binary between possession, or not, of the mastership, established by explicit deposition in the other two narratives.

Taking a broader view, the *Crónica* implies that the news of Chamizo's revolt was a surprise to the king, and from the start it had insisted that Alfonso's attention was on Oviedo himself, not his mastership.⁸¹ Chamizo's position would likely have been strengthened by turning him from a leader of a band of knights opposed to the master, to a legitimate master of the order himself. But overall, in the midst of dealing with Gonzalo Martínez, the chronicle depicts Alfonso taking advantage of a spontaneous revolt by arranging, through order forms, for its leader to receive the authority of the mastership.

On the other hand even after describing this election, the chronicle insists that as Alfonso made his way to the Portuguese frontier to confront Gonzalo Martínez, the king offered him a deal that would have allowed him to retain the mastership, though not his position at court, if he surrendered.⁸² Furthermore, the terminology the *Crónica* employs suggests a degree of ambiguity about the status of the two "masters." As was customary, it refers to Gonzalo Martínez

⁷⁹ That stands in contrast to the *Crónica*'s approach to the other two incidents, when master removal was justified with specific charges. In this account, the action was presented in more opportunistic terms, a response to a fortunate development, for the king at least, in the midst of a crisis. With royal offices, the appointment of a new holder generally implied the removal of old. García Marín, *El oficio público*, 325-337, 344-346. But a master was not a royal official, and order rules offered a procedure for removal before replacement. López de Ayala's narratives also tend not to specify removal, focusing instead on replacement. In such cases, it is difficult to know whether there was a real difference in procedure in these later removals, or if chroniclers either did not know, or chose not to include, specific details.

⁸⁰ That is not an insignificant distinction since, as noted in the introduction, there was a well-developed regime for dividing the formal possession, duties, and benefits of offices.

⁸¹ In the previous two cases, although the masters were accused of other crimes as well, their masterships were the things principally at stake.

⁸² "Que le non matase nin prendiese, nin le tirase del estado del Maestrado." *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 204, p. 304. The chronicle does not address what would happen to Chamizo in that case.

as *maestre*, his most prestigious title. However, after reporting Chamizo's election, who exactly the master was, or would be in the future, is unclear. Oviedo was directly referred to as master only once more, very soon after the "election" of his replacement. Regarding his rival, when the king arrived at the fortress where Oviedo had taken refuge, the chronicle reports that he found Chamizo there already with the brothers who had "made him master." However, he is not called master again until after the execution of his predecessor.⁸³

But in any case, in a narrative in which the issue of the mastership was just one piece among many, and whose most dramatic consequence was a result of royal justice, its loss was still treated distinctly. The key factor leading to changes in the possession of the mastership, even if sometimes ambiguously defined, was a vote taken by order members.⁸⁴ And despite the ambiguity, the *Crónica* does not suggest in explicit terms that there was anything at stake other than the possession of the office itself. Finally, and most importantly, though the king was once again involved, he was depicted acting through order forms and responding to the initiative of order members.

Alfonso XI's Limited Royal Interventions

Although each of these accounts of master depositions from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* is framed by very different underlying circumstances, the chronicle describes some combination of royal intervention and members of the order acting according to their rules in all of them.

However, those royal interventions were limited in two ways. First, Alfonso was constrained by the deposition procedures of the orders. He gave commands to their members to carry them out,

⁸³ Francisco de Rades y Andrada continued to call Gonzalo Martínez, or for him Gonzalo Núñez, master until his death. On the other hand, he also transitioned to calling Nuño Chamizo master without noting any further election procedures. Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Alcántara*, ch. 17, pp. 392-394.

⁸⁴ Although a deal suggested he might get the office back after that, no mechanism for how that might happen was described and, in any case, no such reinstatement occurred.

but his authority did not directly “touch” the mastership itself.⁸⁵ And second, his action was restrained by an insistence, as far as the chronicler was concerned, that he was responding to developments within the orders, not moving proactively for his own purposes, maintaining a sense of order independence.⁸⁶ His presence loomed large, but he did not have procedures or forms of his own to use in order to remove a master.

That stands in contrast to the narratives of royal justice discussed in chapter one, and in the role of royal justice in Alfonso’s confrontation with Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo. However, the reasons the *Crónica* offers for the removal of both Garci López de Padilla and Vasco Núñez have much in common with those deployed in accounts of royal justice. It stresses specific crimes against the king that the targeted masters had, allegedly, already committed, with failings in their duty as master coming second.⁸⁷ Still, the inclusion of those master-specific failings highlights the distinctiveness of the office, in which failure to carry out its specific duties could justify its loss alongside broader accusations of crime. And even though the justifications might be primarily framed in terms of how the king had been impacted, the charges were still brought by order members.⁸⁸ The third narrative, however, offers no specific reasons for deposition. It does depict Alfonso enumerating alleged crimes in his later confrontation with the master, but they were associated with his execution by royal justice rather than the deposition episode.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ In the account of Martínez de Oviedo’s fall, Alfonso did act as a direct judge, but against him personally, without any reference to the office of master.

⁸⁶ Royal intervention in selecting masters became more common in the fourteenth century, though in these mid-century accounts that intervention was masked behind order forms. Ruiz Gómez, “Órdenes militares y sociedad política,” 381. In later accounts, the mask began to slip. However, that is not necessarily because kings were intervening more, but because they were doing so in different terms.

⁸⁷ And there was no specific invocation of royal interests instead of specific misdeeds.

⁸⁸ As a royal chronicle, it is not surprising that a deposition’s significance for the king, not the order, would be stressed.

⁸⁹ Clearing the way for Chamizo to become master would have been expedient in the circumstances as the *Crónica* describes them, but that was not advanced as an explicit justification.

And with respect to what, exactly, was at stake in these confrontations, all three accounts stress possession of the title of master itself. That sense was very clear in first two accounts, where the former masters were distinctly deposed and succeeded by a newly elected incumbent.⁹⁰ The third is more ambiguous, but the *Crónica* still describes the king ordering the knights to “make” Chamizo master. Like in the accounts studied in section one, the *Crónica* offers no explicit sense of a way to suspend the exercise of the mastership, or the enjoyment of its fruits, in temporary or contingent terms.⁹¹

Overall, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* treats the mastership in distinct terms alongside royal justice, and direct intervention by the king in the formal procedures of unmaking a masters is limited.⁹² But his distance was not a result of his invocation of distinctive forms or language of his own to enact, justify, or define the loss of the mastership.⁹³ In these accounts, he had no other options, and instead worked through the orders, and their rules, to target formal possession of the title.⁹⁴ That limitation on legitimate royal action, ultimately, has much in common with the limitations this same chronicle imposed with respect to the disempowerment of “secular” nobles by means of royal justice.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Though it should be noted that, in both instances, the former holder had fled.

⁹¹ The same is true with respect to the depiction of how Alfonso targeted Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo in general, beyond just the mastership. The *Crónica* does not stress things like sequestration or embargo, even in the midst of their confrontation.

⁹² A form of royal justice, moreover, very similar to that found in the accounts analyzed in chapter one.

⁹³ As it was with removals involving less distinctive resources or positions of power, both in late fourteenth-century narratives and, even more strongly, in those of the fifteenth.

⁹⁴ In some studies, Alfonso XI, as portrayed in his *Crónica*, is identified as a pragmatic figure, with his decisions made and justified in a utilitarian manner. However, with respect to the orders, the possibilities of such a justificatory approach appear to have been limited. Purificación Martínez, “La historia como vehículo político,” 218-22.

⁹⁵ Through the procedures of royal justice, kings judged and punished the guilty in response to their crimes, opening up their possessions to royal intervention. Here, Alfonso had to arrange for the members of the order to act similarly, according to their own procedures.

Pedro I: An “Arbitrary” King Confronts Masters

Moving on to Pedro López de Ayala’s late fourteenth-century chronicles of mid-century events, his depictions of master depositions during Pedro’s reign often contribute to his larger project, building an image of a cruel king who deserved destruction.⁹⁶ But like the account of Alfonso Fernández Coronel’s downfall studied in chapter one, his accounts of these mid-century depositions share much with those in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. So despite Ayala’s specific concerns, his depictions of master depositions can also be placed in a broader fourteenth-century context. Two accounts of incidents in the mid-1350’s, on the cusp of Pedro’s “turn” to tyranny, serve as examples, one involving a Master of Calatrava, and the other a Master of Alcántara.⁹⁷

Juan Núñez de Prado

According to the *Crónica de Pedro I*, in 1354 Juan Núñez de Prado, who many years before had led the revolt against Garci López de Padilla, was arrested at royal command and replaced as leader of the Order of Calatrava. In the *Crónica*’s telling, Pedro learned that he had been conspiring with Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque, the king’s former advisor turned enemy, to “defy the king as strongly as they could.”⁹⁸ Aware of Pedro’s anger, the master tried to avoid

⁹⁶ Ayala focused on Pedro’s conduct in office. Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 169-179; Valdaliso Casanova, “La obra cronística de Pedro López de Ayala,” 193-211.

⁹⁷ In 1358 he also ordered the killing of his half-brother Fadrique, Master of Santiago. However, it was decidedly irregular, after Pedro’s turn to outright tyranny within Ayala’s narrative around 1355. In the *Crónica de Pedro I*, his victim’s status as master received little attention and order forms had no presence. *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1358 ch. 3, p. 482. See also Carlos de Ayala Martínez, “Pedro I y las órdenes militares,” *Memoria y Civilización* 22 (2019): 63-92; Barbosa Schiavinato, “Cronística medieval em Portugal,” 312-13.

⁹⁸ “Don Juan Nuñez de Prado, Maestre de Calatrava fué en consejo con Don Alfonso de Albuquerque de ge lo estrañar al Rey por los mejores maneras que pudiesen.” *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440. To offer more context, this deposition occurred after the king’s break with Juan Alfonso de Albuquerque, and in the midst of a controversy about Pedro’s new favorites, relatives of his mistress Maria de Padilla, and his alleged mistreatment of his wife, Blanche of Bourbon.

him, taking refuge in Aragón.⁹⁹ But after receiving assurances of his safety, he returned to Castile, setting in motion a fateful confrontation.

When Pedro learned of his arrival, he set out to meet him, sending ahead a force to surround him in the town of Almagro, where he had taken up residence. The *Crónica* insists that one of Juan Núñez's advisors begged him to fight his way out and flee before the king arrived, saying "you know the king's ways, and that he is angry with you, and if you are arrested, you will not avoid death."¹⁰⁰ The master, however, responded "I never erred against the king, and never will," and insisted that he would depend on Pedro's *merced*.¹⁰¹

Having delivered that piece of ominous foreshadowing, the *Crónica* succinctly relates that, after the king arrived, Juan Núñez de Prado was "arrested, deposed and disempowered of the mastership of Calatrava."¹⁰² The king then ordered the brothers of the order to elect another master of his own choosing, Diego García de Padilla.¹⁰³ The chronicle adds that Pedro "did not consider any advice from the brothers, but only insisted that he wanted things to be arranged thus."¹⁰⁴ As for the arrested Juan Núñez, he was put in his replacement's custody, and shortly afterwards was killed at his direct order.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ "Don Juan Núñez, Maestre de Calatrava, este dicho año, con grand miedo que ovo del Rey, fuese á una tierra que los Maestres de Calatrava tienen en Aragón." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440.

¹⁰⁰ "E estaba con el Maestre un Caballero de la Orden, su criado é pariente, que decian Don Pero Moñiz de Godoy, que despues fué Maestre de Calatrava, é dixo asi al Maestre: ... vos conocedes al Rey, que es sañudo contra vos, é si sodes preso, non vos podredes escusar la muerte." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440.

¹⁰¹ "E el Maestre dixo que él nunca errára nin erraria al Rey, é que mas queria atender a la su merced." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440.

¹⁰² "e el Maestre salió á él, é fué luego preso, é depuesto é desapoderado del Maestrazgo de Calatrava." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440.

¹⁰³ "E el Rey mandó á los Freyres de Calatrava que oviesen por Maestre á Don Diego Garcia de Padilla." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440. He was a relative of Pedro's mistress, María de Padilla. The family got little sympathy from Ayala.

¹⁰⁴ "é non esperó que los Freyres oviesen otro consejo sobre ello, salvo que quiso que en todas guisas se ficisese asi." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 1, p. 440. Also, Ayala did not offer any specifics as to who exactly these brothers were, offering a sense of order forms being acknowledged though not scrupulously followed.

¹⁰⁵ Ayala also asserted that "muchas veces decia despues el Rey que él nunca le mandára matar, é que le ficiera matar el dicho Don Diego García sin su licencia é mandamiento del Rey." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1354 ch. 2, p. 440. However, by mentioning this denial at all, Ayala presented the idea that Juan Núñez had been murdered. But on

Ayala placed the loss of the mastership at the heart of this fairly brief account. Despite noting an arrest, no further judicial proceedings were described, and the only other consequence Juan Núñez de Prado faced was extra-judicial murder at the hands of Diego García de Padilla. Focusing on the loss of the mastership, he differentiated between Juan Núñez's removal and the subsequent election of his replacement by order members. Yet, no process behind that removal was specified, and the account does not identify who brought it about or by what process. If anything, Ayala presented the loss as a consequence the master's arrest at royal command rather than an action of order members, suggesting a royal encroachment on the formal independence of the office.

Reinforcing that sense of royal imposition, in contrast to the accounts in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, there is no sense of order initiative either. Ayala insisted that the order was coerced into electing Pedro's choice, with no chance to offer input or advice regarding their former master's successor. Finally, the sole cause suggested for his ouster was his involvement with Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, and the king's subsequent anger with him. At no point was Núñez de Prado's conduct as master identified as a reason for his fall.¹⁰⁶

Looking to the *Crónica de Pedro I* more broadly, this account sits on the cusp of Pedro's "tyrannical" turn, at least as Ayala cast it, around 1355. In that sense, portraying the king's scant attention to order procedures, while suggesting an outright disregard for the opinions of its members, plays into building a negative image. But on the other hand, the mastership and its forms were still accorded some consideration. So, even as Ayala built an image of Pedro as a tyrant, he did not show him acting with total caprice with regard to the mastership. The king may

the other hand, he also suggested that some said afterwards that this event was a "juicio de dios," because Juan Núñez had been involved in the deposition of Garci López de Padilla years before.

¹⁰⁶ That said, Ayala does note that "some said" his fall was fitting punishment for his involvement in his own predecessor's overthrow.

impose upon the order but, like Alfonso XI in the much more sympathetic account of his reign, he did not do so directly, at least with regard to the election of a successor. And finally, despite Pedro's ire, no other measures were taken against the master, or mastership, until Juan Núñez's arrest and almost immediate replacement.¹⁰⁷

Diego Gomez de Zavallos

Moving on to another abrupt downfall at Pedro's hands, Pedro López de Ayala also chronicled the deposition of Diego Gutiérrez de Zavallos, who was briefly master of Alcántara.¹⁰⁸ In 1355, Pedro secured his election to the mastership following the death of its previous occupant.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Ayala insisted that he had not even been a member of the order beforehand, and its members were not pleased at having to accept the king's choice. But, so great was their fear of him, they complied.

Immediately following his election, the *Crónica* reports that the king dispatched the new master to deal with a disturbance near the small town of Palenzuela. Soon afterward, however, he recalled him to court, for "some reasons that would serve him."¹¹⁰ Upon his arrival, Pedro ordered him arrested, and he was soon replaced as master by Suer Martínez, whom the electors chose at Pedro's insistence.¹¹¹ As the *Crónica* tells it, Pedro's abrupt change in attitude was due to the influence of his partner, María de Padilla, and her relatives.¹¹² But Ayala did not offer

¹⁰⁷ That is similar to Ayala's accounts of Alfonso Fernández Coronel's arrest, in which measures against the target did not begin until a confrontation between him and the king.

¹⁰⁸ Novoa Portela, "Los maestros de la Orden de Alcántara," 330-332.

¹⁰⁹ *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1355 ch. 16, pp. 467-68.

¹¹⁰ "envió el Rey por él, que viniese luego á él, diciendo que le queria para algunas cosas que cumplian á su servicio." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1355 ch. 16, pp. 467-68.

¹¹¹ However, there is no indication as to who exactly they were. "É luego que Don Diego Gutierrez fué preso, mandó el Rey facer Maestre de Alcántara, estando sobre Palenzuela, al Clavero de Alcántara, que decian Don Suer Martinez." *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1355 ch. 16, pp. 467-68.

¹¹² That connects this incident with fallout from Pedro's break with Juan Alfonso de Alburquerque, the same context in which Juan Núñez de Prado fell.

much detail about why they supposedly disliked him, describing their antipathy as a form of mysterious “palace intrigue.”¹¹³

This account is very brief, but has several parallels with Ayala’s depiction of Juan Núñez de Prado’s deposition. The form of electing a new master was observed, though left undescribed. Despite that, however, the *Crónica* openly alleges that the king had imposed his own choice on the order. Moreover, like in the previous account, no procedures accompanying Gutierrez de Zavallos’ deposition were included. Instead, Ayala highlighted his arrest at the king’s order in explaining his loss of the mastership. Finally, the reason the *Crónica* offers for the removal had little to do with the mastership itself, and is supplied in the form of an explanation by the chronicler rather than presented as charges made, and proven, in some sort of deposition proceeding. Ultimately, the account almost suggests a dismissal from office to clear the way for a new choice, in which the forms of the order were mainly associated with the election of a new holder and, even then, only barely respected.

Limits Ignored, but not Redefined

In general terms, both of these accounts contribute to López de Ayala’s anti-Pedro project, casting the king as arbitrary, with order forms barely acknowledged as the king imposed his will on them and their unfortunate masters.¹¹⁴ Turning to the more specific issue of how these accounts present the separation of masters from their office, Ayala did not place much emphasis on deposition in itself, as distinct from replacement, suggesting instead that the masters’ arrests

¹¹³ “É el Maestre llegó al Rey: e por quanto algunos parientes de Maria de Padilla non le querian bien, por algunas maneras que eran en el palacio, avianle vuelto con el Rey: é luego como el Rey llegó, mandóle prender: é fué esto martes diez días de noviembre deste año; asi que non estovo Don Diego Gutierrez en su estado como Maestre mas de cincuenta é ocho días. *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1355 ch. 16, pp. 467-68.

This narrative follows a common Ayala technique of describing an abrupt action taken by Pedro against a subject, then afterwards explaining it, so that it comes as a surprise to the reader as much as to, by implication, the target.

¹¹⁴ And in Ayala’s account of Fadrique’s downfall, they were entirely absent.

at royal orders got them out of the way for a new election. And although Ayala offered explanations for the two royal arrests, he did not place them within any kind of formal procedural setting. That is different from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*'s approach, and also from the priorities of the fifteenth-century chronicles. But like in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, the only action the king arranged when dealing with an unwanted master was his outright replacement with a new one. And that, even under explicit royal pressure, required an election. So, in terms of what it meant to lose the mastership, both fourteenth-century chronicles share a common vision.

As for the divergences between Ayala's portrayals and those of his predecessor, they appear to serve his larger anti-Pedro project more than they advance any specific new ideas about how kings could legitimately depose masters.¹¹⁵ But there is also more to the story, since Ayala was not very interested in the masterships, and the procedures associated with removing them, even in his more sympathetic coverage of Pedro's successors. For example, around the time of the civil war between Pedro and his half-brother Enrique, all the masterships were divided between partisans of each claimant, but were eventually firmly transferred to Enrique supporters after his victory in 1369.¹¹⁶ To be sure, there was a great deal of turnover in the major offices of the realm in these years, as might be expected with the accession of a new king. But

¹¹⁵ After all, one of his goals was to make Pedro look illegitimate.

¹¹⁶ In his chronicles, Francisco de Rades y Andrada painted a picture of confusion in these years. As the confrontation between Enrique and Pedro heated up, the orders and masterships were divided among supporters of each, even before the 1366 beginning of the war "proper." Santiago had been divided since Fadrique's death in 1358, when two masters were elected by the opposing bands. In 1366, after Enrique temporarily drove Pedro out of Castile, the pro-Pedro master resigned and Enrique's became sole master. For their part, Alcántara and Calatrava were split from 1364 and 1365, respectively. Unusually, both shared the same opposing candidates, Martín López de Cordoba for Pedro and Pedro Muniz de Godoy for Enrique. Godoy retained the mastership of Calatrava in 1369, though Alcántara went to another holder. However, these divisions sprang from disputed elections, not an elected holder being pushed out. *Chronica de Santiago*, chs. 36-37, pp. 50-51; *Chronica de Calatrava*, chs. 29-30, pp. 59-62; *Chronica de Alcántara*, chs. 24-25, pp. 29-31. See also Emilio Mitre Fernández, "Los maestros de las órdenes militares Castellanas y la revolución Trastámara: Vicisitudes políticas y relaciones nobiliarias," in *Las Órdenes Militares en la Península Iberia*, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Francisco Ruiz Gómez, vol. 1 (Ciudad Real: Universidad Castilla-La Mancha, 2000), 267.

masters were not formally dismissible like royal officials. Nonetheless, Ayala had little to say.¹¹⁷ After 1371, the masterships of all three orders were fairly stable for the rest of the century, the period which Ayala's work covers, offering him few opportunities to discuss master downfalls in any case.¹¹⁸

In that sense, compared with the author of the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, Ayala did not single out master removals in strongly distinctive terms. Indeed, in common with his late century accounts analyzed in chapter one, his narratives of master depositions suggest a disconnection between formal procedures and practical losses of power. He did not stress losses of the mastership itself, which seem to occur by default at the time of arrest by royal command.¹¹⁹ To the extent Ayala suggested Pedro was constrained by order procedures, it was that he had to work through them to arrange the appointment of a new master. However, although he associated both losses with royal intervention, he had no special language for describing that intervention. Moreover, royal intervention did not lead to any distinctive consequences for masters. He still cast loss of the mastership as a matter of having the title, or not.

¹¹⁷ The downfall of Martín López de Córdoba of Calatrava did receive attention from Ayala, though not as a master per se. He was one of the last holdouts in favor of the former king, but in 1371, Enrique II suppressed this pocket of resistance in an episode which led to López de Córdoba's execution in Seville. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 517; Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 38. Ayala, however, did not stress his position as master. Indeed, he insisted that he merely "called himself" master of Calatrava, and described no measures to specifically refute that claim before his execution. Pedro López de Ayala, *Crónica del rey Don Enrique, segundo de Castilla e de León*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 68 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953), 1371 ch. 2, pp. 8-9.

Similarly, Martín's daughter, Leonor López de Córdoba, wrote in her "memoir," composed around the turn of the fifteenth century, that her father was referred to as master until right before his death. She also stated directly that Pedro had "made" her father master of Alcántara and, subsequently, Calatrava. Leonor López de Córdoba, "Memorias," in *Por mi alma os digo. De la Edad Media a la Ilustración*, ed. María-Milagros Rivera et al., *La vida escrita por las mujeres* 4 (Buenos Aires: Lumen, 2004), 29, 31. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 750-53.

¹¹⁸ The biggest dispute was a contested election for the mastership of the Order of Santiago in 1384.

¹¹⁹ In contrast to the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* accounts. However, the masters deposed by Pedro were all in his custody, whereas the first two from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* escaped. When covering the master who was captured and faced royal justice, Gonzalo Martínez de Oviedo, formal deposition was less stressed.

Monarchs Confront a non-Royal Office

Altogether, the accounts of master depositions in both these fourteenth-century chronicles insist on the distinctiveness of the offices, though to a different degree in keeping with the outlooks of their respective authors. The *Crónica de Alfonso XI* describes quick but justified processes in which forms of deposing and electing were respected, and in which possession of the mastership was a distinct issue even alongside royal justice. Ayala's description of Pedro's removals of masters suggests, typically, that he acted arbitrarily and without real justification. But although his intervention was more directly cast as a force behind the depositions, there was no unique language for it, and Pedro's options for intervention were limited to replacing the incumbent.¹²⁰

In addition, although in neither chronicle were any of the depositions cast as having been justified solely in terms of conduct in the mastership, neither offers a distinctive image of a king acting in the service of his interests or responsibilities as ruler either. Both depict kings deploying their influence, or outright force, to arrange outcomes they desired. But they were endowed with no unique means through which to take such actions, or a language to justify them. As a result, they had no clearly defined pathway to disempower a master other than to remove him and replace him with a new one.¹²¹

Of course, masters did not formally owe their positions to a monarch, and each of the orders had rules of its own which offered no specific authorization for unilateral royal interference in order affairs.¹²² More broadly, their ecclesiastical status complicated the terms in

¹²⁰ Though Ayala was less concerned with specifically marking deposition in general.

¹²¹ Even as royal intervention became more abrupt, the "paradigm" of order procedure remained intact. Wilentz, introduction to *Rites of Power*, 17.

¹²² The church advanced a very robust conception of clerical independence, which spilled over into ecclesiastical property, though in practice matters were more complex. Pennington, "Ecclesiastical Liberty on the Eve of the Reformation," 187-8, 204-5.

which kings could confront and disempower masters in comparison with the figures on whose removals I have focused thus far. Yet still, orders and their chiefs, like other church institutions and dignitaries, had secular obligations.¹²³ In particular, as possessors of vast estates and many fortresses in Castile, they owed its king allegiance for them.¹²⁴

Bishops, who were also involved in politics and endured its vicissitudes, were in a similar position with regard to the “temporalities” of their dioceses.¹²⁵ However, chronicle depictions of kings seizing the possessions of bishops are distinct from depictions of royal action against masters.¹²⁶ For example, Ayala described actions taken by King Pedro against the Bishop of Sigüenza in 1355 and the Archbishop of Toledo in 1360.¹²⁷ He also noted similar treatment for a later Archbishop of Toledo in 1393, during the regency for Enrique III.¹²⁸ However none of the master depositions he portrayed, nor those in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, stressed temporary

¹²³ George Dameron, “The Church as Lord,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity*, ed. John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 2, 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199582136.013.028.

¹²⁴ In the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, for example, after Vasco López’s deposition from the mastership of Santiago, his successor did homage for the order’s fortresses. For possession of castles in general see, Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 187-190.

¹²⁵ Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 115; Meissonnier, “Théorie et pratique du pouvoir royal,” 315; José Manuel Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y poder real en Castilla: El episcopado, 1250-1350* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1988), 206; José Maria Silva Rosa, “A glória dos reis é tomar a palavra. Discurso, ‘verdade’ e poder no *Rex Pacificus*,” *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 75, no. 3 (2019): 1578; R.N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 89-90, 107, 122.

In fourteenth-century England, bishops, for political reasons, began in fact to define themselves in some disputes more as lords who happened to hold ecclesiastical office than as ecclesiastical officeholders who also enjoyed temporal possessions. Matthew Phillips, “Bishops, Parliament and Trial by Peers: Clerical Opposition to the Confiscation of Episcopal Temporalities in the Fourteenth Century,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 67, no.2 (2016): 289-92, 297, 303

¹²⁶ Kay, “Martin IV and the Fugitive Bishop of Bayeux,” 476-480. It is also distinct from the phenomenon of kings having control over the possessions of ecclesiastical institutions, including dioceses, during a vacancy in top leadership posts. In the next chapter, the idea of royal rights during vacancies does come up, but it is an “enforced” one, not a natural one due to factors like the death of a bishop. For an important English comparison, related to the fate of Templar estates after that order’s suppression, see J. Michael Jefferson, *The Templar Estates in Lincolnshire, 1185–1565: Agriculture and Economy* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2020), 152, 159.

¹²⁷ *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1355 ch. 9, pp. 463-464; *Crónica de Pedro I*, 1360 ch. 21, pp. 509-510;

¹²⁸ Pedro Tenorio, who fell into difficulties as a result of regency politics during the minority of the Young king. *Crónica de Enrique III*, 1393 ch. 9, pp. 207-209. See also Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis*, 263; Juan Francisco Rivera Recio, *Los arzobispos de Toledo en la Baja Edad Media* (Toledo: Diputación Provincial, 1969), 95-98; Luís Suárez Fernández, “Don Pedro Tenorio, arzobispo de Toledo (1375-1399),” in *Estudios dedicado a Ramón Menéndez Pidal*, vol. 4 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 601-627.

seizures of possessions as opposed to the loss of the office itself. That may reflect the fact that the orders' own mechanisms for removal gave rulers options, when in conflict with masters, which they did not enjoy with respect to bishops.¹²⁹ But it also emphasizes the distinctiveness of masterships from other ecclesiastical posts and, looking ahead, the novelty of royal measures to suspend and limit, rather than remove, masters in the fifteenth century.

Finally, kings in theory had broad power to appoint and dismiss their officials.¹³⁰ Indeed, even the act of naming a new person to a post already occupied could be cast as bringing an end to the tenure of the current holder by default, without any specific recognition.¹³¹ However, the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* stresses procedures for removal in master depositions. Ayala's work, to be sure, pays much less attention to them, but he also had a broader anti-Pedro project in which Pedro's alleged contempt for expected procedures in general was a key pillar. In that light, the attention to deposition and related procedures in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, and their absence in Ayala's account, suggests a shared view that to intervene legitimately in the orders, kings needed at least to appear to do so through order forms. And as a result, the outcomes of those interventions took the form of the consequences which order procedures authorized, namely the outright deposition, and replacement, of a master.

Conclusion

Accounts of master deposition in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* depict its subject acting indirectly, through order procedures, to secure removals. Moreover, they frame matters so that,

¹²⁹ Monarchs did exercise considerable influence over the selection of bishops, even before they did so with masters, but formally removing them was trickier. Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "Alfonso X and the Castilian Church," *Thought: A review of Culture and Ideas* 60 (1985): 418-19.

¹³⁰ García Marín, *El oficio público*, 82, 137, 344; Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno*, 98.

¹³¹ García Marín, *El oficio público*, 151-153, 344-46. On the other hand, Villarroel Gonzalez points to a growing concern from the latter half of the fourteenth century, especially in chronicle accounts, to explicitly mark deposition separate from replacement. Villarroel González, "Las deposiciones y sus ritos," 211-246.

despite acknowledging royal preferences with respect to who should be master, the initiative in actually bringing about change rested with members of the orders themselves. In Ayala's accounts of Pedro's removals, respect for order processes and royal restraint, typically for his treatment of this ruler, were less apparent. But, he suggested no alternative, legitimate ways for kings to disempower masters. In both chronicles, moreover, the mastership was conceived as something that was either possessed, or was not. Neither depicts any royal measures which limited or suspended the power of a master short of outright removal, replacement, or both.

Due to the civil war in the middle of the fourteenth century, and general stability in the masterships in its final decades, Ayala's later work did not extensively engage with master depositions.¹³² However, the narratives of fifteenth-century chroniclers, while continuing to acknowledge the unique character of the posts, showed kings intervening by other means, dependent on royal authority and interests, to arrange consequences for targeted masters defined in distinctive new ways. Those innovations were also in keeping with their treatment of the removals of secular nobles, who held positions of power defined in different terms. As we will see, new conceptions of power were not limited to those figures, or to contests over power bestowed by the crown, but applied more broadly in Castile's fifteenth-century politics and political culture.

¹³² Ayala Martínez, "Órdenes militares y frontera," 276.

Chapter Eight

Royal Authority Outflanks the Mastership: The Fifteenth Century

After the relative stability of the late fourteenth century, in all three major Castilian military orders master depositions returned in the first half of the fifteenth. In both contemporary royal chronicle traditions, King Juan II was depicted intervening much more directly with the office of the mastership itself, in comparison with his predecessors. Moreover, the king's interventions suspended or disrupted the ability of masters to benefit from their positions on a temporary basis. Loss of the formal possession of a mastership according to enduring order rules may be significant, but only in specific circumstances. As such, later narratives offer a much greater sense of the capacity of royal power to directly confront even these subjects, with uniquely defined positions not formally dependent on royal favor. At the same time, they also articulate a new way of losing a mastership, concerned more with the exercise of its functions than formal possession of the title.

In addition, although certain late fourteenth-century papal measures sanctioned stronger royal influence over the orders, the rules regarding the processes of electing and deposing masters remained unchanged. As such, the origins of the markedly different means for kings to challenge masters described in these chronicle narratives must be sought elsewhere. To account for the new ways in which masters could be disempowered, I return to the same ideological innovations, advanced with particular strength after 1420, that influenced fifteenth century accounts of the downfalls of secular nobles. In them, the king gained new bases for authorizing and justifying royal actions, with particular consequences, within narratives unfolding along a *via de justicia*. Despite the uniqueness of their positions, depictions of master removals share

much with those narratives. King Juan was able to get around the formal processes of the orders by invoking royal authority and interests, not to target the formal possession of the masterships, but to deny masters the right to exercise the powers, or enjoy the benefits, of their posts.

Relatedly, given the enduring distinctive identity of the masterships, depictions of the king intervening in masters' ability to act show that a new conception of power and its loss extended beyond accounts of royal authority intervening to take power that it had bestowed. Several existing interpretations of the emergence of an exercise based understanding of power in late medieval Castile look to the changing nature of noble power bases. In the previous section, an alternative way to explain that emergence was proposed, based on legal and ideological innovations promoted by the court, coupled with longstanding royal judicial responsibilities. And since similar changes applied to masters despite the distinct identity of their positions, the nature of a target's post itself does not account, on its own, for those changes. In these fifteenth century chronicles, new royal interventions, and their distinctive consequences, were associated with strong claims of royal authority, justified as acting in the interests of a governing king. A target's interaction with royal authority and its evolving claims, more than the nature of the positions in question, determined how their loss of power was defined.

Finally, that underscores how new royal claims, and their consequences, facilitated a broader strengthening, in theory at least, of royal power. With masters, like with nobles, chronicles do not depict assertions of the king's authority simply imposing themselves over order rules and procedures. Instead, those assertions redirected royal action toward the capacity to exercise power over possessing the resources to support it, allowing deposing monarchs to avoid limitations on legitimate action imposed by those rules and procedures.

The Late Fourteenth Century: Continuity and Change

The late fourteenth century was a period of stability in the orders in general and their masterships in particular. However, stability did not mean stagnation. Although narratives of decline, if decline is defined as a loss of distinct religious character and mission, dominate late medieval order historiography, the late fourteenth century saw many institutional reforms in at least two of the orders, Santiago and Calatrava.¹ The situation in the Order of Alcántara was likely similar, but the near total loss of the order's archives makes any firm conclusions difficult.

First, in the latter half of the fourteenth century and continuing into the fifteenth, the tangible benefits of the masterships increased as the orders consolidated their internal administrations.² Above all, the management of the vast possessions of the Orders of Santiago and Calatrava was revamped.³ In consequence, the value of the masters' personal portions, the *mesa maestral*, increased.⁴ On a less tangible level, masters of all three orders claimed an increasingly high "estate" by appropriating signs of honor and ceremonial trappings for themselves, while also making strong claims about their own authority over their respective orders.⁵ Carlos de Ayala Martínez, in his prolific work on the military orders, identifies a

¹ As there were in royal institutions, as discussed in chapter two.

² Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 241, 246-47. In fact, Ayala Martínez points out that before 1250, resignations from the mastership were common. As it became a more powerful office, and administrative and political duties displaced military responsibilities, they became much rarer. Ayala Martínez, 199-200, 209-211.

³ That was not unique to the orders. Fernández Conde points out that much late medieval reform in religious institutions centered on improving administration. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 259. Suárez Fernández also points to Trastámara monastic reform efforts which prioritized lifting burdens placed on religious institutions by having accepted the "protection" of nobles during turbulent times. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 63.

⁴ Palacios Martín, *Colección diplomática de la Orden de Alcántara*, doc. 704, 483-84. See also Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 226. And despite the strengthening of the mastership, other senior members of the orders benefitted from the reforms as well and consolidated their own positions. Ayala Martínez, 215.

⁵ Part of a trend toward greater use of, or at least concern with, political ceremony, led by the king and his court. Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza*, 15-20, 120-123, 130-133; Cañas Gálvez, "La cámara de Juan II," 81-196; Cañas Gálvez, "Música, poder y monarquía en la Castilla Trastámara," 362-5; Ruiz, *A King Travels*, 1-33; Villarroel González, "Las deposiciones y sus ritos," 246; Joaquín Yarza Luaces, "La imagen del rey y la imagen del noble en el siglo XV castellano," in Rucquoi, *Realidad e imágenes del poder*, 281-85.

“royalization” of the mastership from the late fourteenth century onward, which owed much to developments pioneered by monarchs and at their courts.⁶ Together, these trends show that the orders of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were far from moribund institutions simply waiting for absorption into the crown.

That said, in the 1380’s the papacy granted Castilian monarchs the explicit right to name candidates for the masterships of the military orders in their realm.⁷ The significance of this provision is debated, with some seeing it as a mere formalization of royal interventions that had been growing in significance for decades, and others as a vital step in the eventual absorption of the orders into the crown.⁸ But despite that papal concession, each order’s rules regarding the procedures for the election and deposition of their masters remained unchanged. Indeed, they continued to play important roles in fifteenth century chronicle accounts.⁹

Those points are important as I transition to master depositions depicted in royal chronicles of reign of Juan II. In comparison to their predecessors, they portray very different royal interventions to deal with troublesome masters, with different consequences. Yet those differences cannot be explained only in terms of general order weakness or, despite the

⁶ Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 210.

⁷ José Sánchez Herrero, “Los obispos castellanos y su participación en el gobierno de Castilla (1350-1406),” in Rucquoi, *Realidad e imágenes del poder*, 106. However, this decision may not have been definitive. In 1459, for instance, another papal bull gave Enrique IV the authority to “provide” for the masterships, and priorships, of the military orders. AGS Patronato Real, leg. 60, n. 175.

In the context of the Western Schism, royal roles in ecclesiastical appointments grew, and become more official, in general. Brigitte Basdevant-Gaudemet, “Quelques réflexions sur la *Libertas Ecclesiae* dans les procédures de désignations épiscopales au cours des siècles,” *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 1 (2016): 20; Nieto Soria, “La configuración eclesiástica de la realeza trastámara,” 156-8; Nieto Soria, “Enrique III de Castilla y la promoción eclesiástica del clero,” 41, 58.

⁸ Novoa Portela views it as a blow to institutional autonomy, but also notes that it formalized a practice that had been common for decades. Feliciano Novoa Portela, “La orden militar de Alcántara y la monarquía castellana durante los primeros Trastámaras,” *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 34, no. 1 (2004): 94-95. Ayala Martínez argues that orders underwent a transformation into royal instruments by the late fourteenth century, in which royal service served as justification for intervention. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 492-3.

⁹ Ana Echevarría, “The Queen and the Master: Catalina of Lancaster and the Military Orders,” in *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (New York: Ashgate, 2005), 103; Sánchez Herrero, “Los obispos castellanos,” 92.

formalization of royal influence over the choice of master, by fundamental changes in the norms governing their election and deposition.¹⁰ They also reflected new claims of justified royal authority, employed to bring about the suspension, rather than outright removal, of masters.¹¹

Master Removals in the Chronicles of Juan II

Master depositions had a prominent place in the political contests of Juan II's reign, which was reflected in the two major chronicle traditions covering the era.¹² Narratives of the three major master removals of the first half of the fifteenth century serve as the basis of my analysis. They were the deposition of Master of Calatrava Enrique de Villena in 1407, the turbulent tenure of the *infante* Enrique as Master of Santiago, and the 1432 downfall of Juan de Sotomayor as Master of Alcántara. The first incident, which occurred during King Juan's minority, offers an example of a deposition without direct royal intervention, and shows the endurance of formal order procedures into the fifteenth century. The other two, however, came after the king's majority, and reveal how drastically the active intervention of royal authority

¹⁰ Despite "decline" narratives, the late fourteenth century was a time of relative stability in each of the major orders, with few major internal shake-ups or controversial outside interventions by rulers. In fact, according to Ayala Martínez, close association with royal power helped to promote stability and master authority after 1350. Ayala Martínez, *Las órdenes militares*, 221. Also, O'Callaghan points out that in the late fourteenth century, in the Order of Calatrava at least, masters took a leading role in capitular legislation, displacing Cistercian representatives. Joseph F. O'Callaghan, "The Earliest *Difiniciones* of the Order of Calatrava, 1304-1383," *Traditio* 17 (1961): 255.

And from another perspective, a poem from a fifteenth century collection called the *Cancionero de Baena*, containing contributions by, mainly, courtier-poets describes Fernando Sánchez de Calavera's entry into the order of Calatrava in the 1410's. In it, the order was cast as a place apart from the palace and the court where one could live more nobly than in the secular world. This image of the order, even if reality did not always, or even often, match up to it, at least offers a sense that they were still a distinctive environment. Juan Alfonso de Baena, *Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena*, ed. Brian Dutton and Joaquín González Cuenca (Madrid: Visor Libros, 1993), no. 405, 407. See also Nieto Soria, "La nobleza y el 'poderío real absoluto' en la Castilla del siglo XV," 243.

¹¹ Indeed, as described in fifteenth century chronicles, master depositions were less associated with acts of royal justice than in their fourteenth-century predecessors, and in particular the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*. In those accounts, justifications for losing a mastership and for broader royal justice were quite similar, but in their later successors, kings had other ways to justify interfering in the masterships, if not stripping the title outright.

¹² Those accounts are read alongside order documents or royal documents having to do with order affairs, both published and archival. The work of the sixteenth century chronicler of the orders, Francisco de Rades y Andrada, also continues to be an important source. He drew heavily on the *Crónica de Juan II*.

altered master deposition narratives, in comparison to the 1407 incident and to those in the fourteenth-century accounts. The distinctiveness of the masterships was not erased, but the chronicles depict monarchs with legitimate means to get around the limitations imposed by the procedures governing their election and removal.¹³

Enrique de Villena

Enrique de Villena, of august lineage but precarious personal circumstances, enjoyed a brief and controversial stint as Master of Calatrava.¹⁴ Thanks to his close relationship to King Enrique III, in 1404 the monarch nominated him for the mastership after the death of the previous holder. Although the electors accepted the king's choice, they had preferred another candidate, and Villena himself was not even a member of the order at the time of his selection. Moreover, a hasty and legally suspect separation from his wife had to be arranged, so that he could meet the requirement that a master had to be unmarried.¹⁵

Both the order's preference for another candidate, and the obscure circumstances surrounding his annulment, help to explain why, after the death of his patron Enrique III in late 1406, senior leaders of the order deposed Enrique de Villena in 1407.¹⁶ He challenged the

¹³ Thanks to internal stability and a long royal minority in the beginning of the fifteenth century, the effects of the papal bulls legitimizing royal intervention in the orders are not discernible in chronicle accounts until somewhat later, when they mixed with the new claims of royal authority advanced from the 1420's onward.

¹⁴ Enrique de Villena's father and mother were members of the Aragonese and Castilian royal houses respectively, so he was of high rank. But he is perhaps best known for his intellectual pursuits. According to some contemporaries, they had a sinister and suspicious air about them, pushing against the bounds of orthodoxy. Indeed, the character sketch devoted to him in *Generaciones y semblanzas* focuses on that, and does not even mention his time as master. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 99-101.

¹⁵ She asked to be allowed to enter a nunnery, claiming Villena was impotent. Antonio Torres Alcalá, *Enrique de Villena: Un mago al dintel del Renacimiento* (Madrid: Porrúa, 1983), 26.

¹⁶ Echevarría, "The Queen and the Master," 100-103; Ruiz Gómez, "Órdenes militares y sociedad política," 381. This master appointment was not the only one of King Enrique's political moves that did not survive him. According to the *Crónica de Juan II*, he had dismissed and replaced the senior officials of Seville and Cordoba, the *alcaldes mayores* and *regidores*, for "not carrying out their judicial responsibilities as they should." However, after his death, the deposed petitioned for their reinstatement and the regents for King Juan II agreed. For my purposes, the way the *Crónica* treats this royal intervention in urban offices is important. It praises what it cast as Enrique III's simple dismissal of these officials, but in no account was the mastership of a military order subject to such an

validity of the deposition with appeals to the regents for the young King Juan II, but no intervention was forthcoming from that quarter. He eventually appealed to Rome, but he was not successful there either and the rival candidate chosen in 1407, Luís González de Guzmán, became uncontested master.¹⁷

Turning to how the fifteenth century royal chronicles frame this event, the contemporary *Crónica de Juan II* stresses the controversial beginning of Enrique de Villena's short tenure, claiming Enrique III had arranged his election despite the problem of his marital status.¹⁸ Beyond that initial irregularity, it claims that after gaining the post he asserted a "greater estate" than previous masters, offending other powerful knights. Finally, he also tried to push through some unpopular, though unspecified, changes.¹⁹ Those efforts, the *Crónica* insists, were the principal reasons why his still unreconciled opponents gathered and discussed his dismissal after the death of the king who had pressed his candidacy.²⁰ After establishing the desirability and acceptability of removing the master, the *comendadores* formally deposed him, electing Luís González de Guzmán in his place.²¹ The account closes by noting that Villena appealed to the regents ruling

abrupt, even if justified, intervention in this or any of the chronicles of Juan II's reign. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, ch. 17, p. 283. For more on growing royal intervention in city governments, another distinct institutional environment, see García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 549-550.

¹⁷ He was the candidate the electors had desired in 1404.

¹⁸ "E como fue en Maestrazgo, tomo mayor estado que no solían tomar los maestros, preciándose mucho más que de lo que debía, faziendo poca mención de grandes caballeros legos e de los de su orden." García de Santa María, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1407 ch. 16, pp. 63-65.

¹⁹ "E otrosí dezía a los comendadores e caballeros de su Orden, que debían usar no saliendo de la regla de su orden, e que debían dexar las mancebas que tenían, e otras muchas premisas que nunca ovieron los tales comendadores." García de Santa María, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1407 ch. 16, pp. 63-65.

²⁰ "E por esta razón fizieron cabildo ellos entre sí, e fizieron ciertos capítulos, porque dixeran que non debía ser su maestre. E fueronse a la torre de Don Ximeno el comendador mayor y el claverero e el comendador de Otos e otros comendadores, e fizieron ayuntamiento, e leyeron los capítulos que avían hecho, porque debía ser depuesto de maestre. E acordaron que lo depusiesen." García de Santa María, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1407 ch. 16, pp. 63-65.

²¹ "E tiraronle la obediencia, e esleyeron por maestre al comendador mayor Luís Gonzáles." García de Santa María, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1407 ch. 16, pp. 63-65.

for King Juan II, but that they decided it was a matter for the pope, after which the *Crónica* has no more to say about the issue.²²

The later reworking of the *Crónica* presents a similar outline of events, though it describes the reasons for deposition, and the act of deposition itself, somewhat differently. In its telling, “Because of many acts contrary to law and unjust measures they [the *comendadores*] said he had done to the other commanders of the order, they renounced obedience to him, and so he found himself deprived of the mastership.”²³ That phrasing suggests that Villena broke specific rules, whereas the older version cast his downfall as the result of political disagreements. Also, while the earlier *Crónica* states outright that he was deposed, this reworking says only that the order withdrew their obedience from him.²⁴ But, it also ends by recounting how the *comendador mayor* was elected by the *comendadores* in his stead, suggesting deposition.²⁵

As for the accounts of the *Halconero* tradition, they also describe Enrique de Villena’s removal. However, both consider his deposition from that post retrospectively, when offering a brief summary of his life while describing his death in 1434.²⁶ Their nearly identical accounts insist that his appointment had been improper in the first place because he was married, and they stress that he had only been chosen at the insistence of Enrique III.²⁷ So, after the king died he

²² But in practice Enrique de Villena was out and the chronicle suggests that the regents were content to leave it that way. The appeal continued until 1414. Torres Alcalá, *Enrique de Villena*, 27; *Libro del origen, definiciones y actos capitulares de la orden de la inclyta caballería de Calatrava*, 15. The dispute may also explain why members of the Order of Calatrava were absent from some important military actions around this time. Rodríguez-Picavea, “The Military Orders and the War of Granada,” 22.

²³ “E por muchos desaguizados é sinrazones que decian que hacia a los Freyles Comendadores de su Orden, le quitaron la obediencia, é así quedó sin el Maestrazgo.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, ch. 4, p. 279.

²⁴ “En este tiempo los Comendadores de la Orden de Calatrava quitaron la obediencia á Don Enrique...á quien el Rey Enrique habia dado el Maestrazgo de Calatrava.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, ch. 4, p. 279.

²⁵ “E los Comendadores eligieron por Maestre al Comendador mayor Don Luis de Guzmán.” It adds there was great debate over the affair and an appeal to Rome. “sobre lo qual hubo grand debate, é quedó la determinación dél al Sancto Padre.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, ch. 4, p. 279.

²⁶ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 177, pp. 181-182; *Refundición*, ch. 96, pp. 170-171. Neither narrative extends back to 1407.

²⁷ “En vida de este rey don Enrique tobose manera con doña María su muger fuese puesta en monasterio, e don Enrique fué maestre de Calatrava, por vacación de maestre don Gonzalo Núñez de Guzmán. E esta doña María

was, with *justicia*, deprived of the mastership.²⁸ However, neither account directly states that the impropriety of his appointment was the reason given for his removal at the time, or even identified who precisely removed him.

Looked at alongside one another, in their interpretations of Enrique de Villena's deposition, the *Crónica* accounts consider his conduct in office, whether in terms of poor relations with his subordinates or allegations of specific misconduct, to explain his deposition.²⁹ Although both, and particularly the earlier account, also discuss his irregular appointment, it was not the prime concern of either narrative. Moreover, both describe his deposition as occurring according to order rules where the knights, on their own initiative, gathered to bring his tenure to an end before replacing him.

As for the *Halconero* tradition chronicles, they interpret his loss of the mastership as a fitting response to the irregularity of his appointment. However, they do not specify any procedures for his removal, leaving that initial illegitimacy as the main justification for his disempowerment. But looking at this depiction in the broader context of each account, neither is really describing his fall so much as they are adding to a rather unflattering character sketch inserted at the time of his demise a quarter century later.

su muger no podía ser monja, por cuanto eran casados;" "E después que murió el maestre de Calatrava don Gonzalo Núñez de Gusmán, este don Enrique tovo manera de se quitar de su mujer, y fuéle dado el maestrazgo de Calatrava." *Halconero*, ch. 177, pp. 181-182; *Refundición*, ch. 96, pp. 170-171.

²⁸ "e después que falleció el rey, con justicia le fué tirado el maestradgo, por ser casado, en tal manera que ni le quedó el condado ni el maestradgo." *Halconero*, ch. 177, 181-182. The phrasing in the *Refundición* is nearly identical. The *condado* he also was said to have lost was another post he had sought under Enrique III, which he had given up in order to secure the greater prize of the mastership.

²⁹ That distinction is interesting. The earlier narrative describes his fall as a political issue, which was an important trend in how chronicles justified removals at royal hands. The reworking, however, attributes his fall to more specific rule-breaking. That is despite the fact that in other circumstances, like in describing the 1430 confiscations of the possessions of the *infantes* or Aragón, it is the earlier *Crónica* which stresses the judicial aspects of the situation, and the late reworking that looks to politics. But unlike that situation, this difference between the contemporary account and the reworking is difficult to explain.

But those details are less important than how the chronicles of both traditions interpret the role of royal intervention, or more appropriately in this instance the lack of such a role, in Enrique de Villena's deposition. With respect to his rise to the mastership, all accounts acknowledge Enrique III's part in bringing it about, forcing the brothers to elect him. Similar situations had arisen before, however, with kings coopting order procedures to achieve their own ends.³⁰ Yet despite that royal intervention at the beginning of his career as master, both fifteenth century chronicle traditions present his fall as an internal order matter.³¹ The *Crónica* tradition accounts attribute his removal mainly to the problematic relationship of the master with the knights, while the *Halconero* narratives focus on his unfitness for the post according to the Order of Calatrava's rules. Neither casts it as a matter caught up in wider politics or pushed by external royal influence.

And along with the absence of outside intervention, there was also no sense of any royally authorized, temporary or contingent suspensions that played such prominent roles in accounts of many fifteenth century removals.³² The *Crónica* narratives describe an act of removal, though expressed in somewhat different terms, followed by a new election to officially replace Enrique de Villena soon after.³³ The *Halconero* accounts, for their part, insist less specifically, but still clearly, that he was "deprived" of the mastership.³⁴ Ultimately, the

³⁰ But as discussed above, the mid-fourteenth century *Crónica de Alfonso XI* was careful to place the initiative with the orders themselves, even while noting royal preferences. López de Ayala took no such pains, and neither do these narratives. However, in Ayala's work, that framing also fit into his project of making Pedro appear arbitrary. These later chronicles, without such a goal, also presented royal intervention much more openly than the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, perhaps reflecting a more formalized role for monarchs in order affairs.

³¹ Though the *Crónica* accounts do insist that he appealed, unsuccessfully, to the regents.

³² Though it should be noted that, with Juan II a minor, Castile was ruled by regents whose authority was limited. In some ways, his removal was made possible by that power vacuum, given that his royal supporter was dead.

³³ Although "removing obedience," the phrasing of the later reworking, did not necessarily mean formally depriving Enrique de Villena of the title, both accounts described what followed as an election to choose a new master.

³⁴ This formulation may suggest a concern with the practical exercise of the mastership rather than possession of the title, but no explicit distinction was made in either account.

chronicles of both traditions are in agreement that after this event in 1407, his tenure as undisputed master was at an end.³⁵

As discussed in section two, the justificatory role of royal authority advancing royal interests was decisive in many early fifteenth century chronicle narratives of removals from power. Yet in these accounts of a master removal, active royal intervention was absent. Enrique de Villena was identified primarily as a bad or illegitimate master, not a misbehaving subject, and his loss of the mastership meant formal loss of the title.³⁶

To be sure, the king's youth meant that a capable monarch to wield such authority was absent. Moreover, the event itself occurred before the advance of new expressions of royal authority after 1420.³⁷ But significantly, these accounts of an early fifteenth century removal depict the internal processes and rules of the order at work, without reference to royal authority and interests as executive or justifying forces.³⁸ And the principle stakes were the formal possession of the mastership.³⁹ In a significant departure, neither of those characterizations applies in the accounts of the two post-1420 removals with the involvement of King Juan II and his royal authority.

³⁵ No account, despite the ongoing appeal, expressed any interest in its course.

³⁶ Mitre Fernández refers to him as an “anti-master,” occupying the position and recognized by some but, in the long term, not accorded the legitimacy of a “true” master. He identifies other terms used to suggest masters were not legitimate. One is specifying that someone only “called himself” master, which Ayala employed with regard to Martín López de Córdoba. Another was calling their election non-canonical, while using the term *intruso*, favored by Francisco de Rades y Andrada, was a third. Mitre Fernández, “Los maestros de las órdenes militares castellanas y la revolución Trastámara,” 264.

³⁷ However, even without the terminology, fourteenth century rulers could intervene. Here, the significance is the absence of royal intervention.

³⁸ Despite the formalization of royal influence in the late fourteenth century.

³⁹ The fourteenth-century master removals depicted in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, and to a lesser extent in López de Ayala's work, often included a mixing of violations of specific master responsibilities with crimes against the king. The latter were absent here, but did feature in other fifteenth century accounts, after Juan obtained his majority. However, those crimes were also joined by characteristic assertions of royal interests and service.

The *Infante* Enrique

The *infante* Enrique, who held the title of Master of Santiago for most of his life despite frequent clashes with King Juan, received quite different treatment from chroniclers of both traditions as they recounted his often tumultuous tenure.⁴⁰ Though never formally deposed, on three occasions between the 1420's and 1440's, the *infante* was deprived of the powers and extensive material benefits associated with the mastership, which were put into the hands of an administrator. Royal chronicle narratives engage with those actions alongside, but distinctly from, other actions taken against Enrique's personal possessions.

The principal means through which King Juan dealt with him was "suspension" rather than deposition.⁴¹ That marks a departure from fourteenth-century accounts and those of Enrique de Villena's removal. In one sense, a lack of direct royal intervention to remove Enrique outright shows the enduring distinctiveness of the office of master. But overall, that departure from precedent fits with other accounts, in these same chronicles, of royal authority arranging immediate suspensions of the ability of its targets to exercise power, notwithstanding differences in the natures of the targets' specific power bases.

The three incidents, in 1422, 1429-30, and 1444, all unfolded in quite similar ways. As each of the chronicles describe it, the king suspended the *infante* Enrique's authority, ordered order members not to obey him if he did give orders, sequestered or embargoed the possessions and powers attached to the mastership, and appointed an administrator to act in his stead while

⁴⁰ He had been made master at a young age thanks to his father, the regent Fernando de Antequera

⁴¹ That term, *suspender*, was used in a 1444 document related to the third incident, though the anti-Enrique actions which it authorized were essentially the same as in the two earlier incidents even though the specific term *suspend* was not used. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 102, 322.

suspended.⁴² To understand this new course of action, I focus on chronicle narratives of the 1429-30 incident, which was the most extensively covered.⁴³ In 1429, the *infante* Enrique joined with his siblings in an effort to re-establish their dominant position in Castilian politics at the expense of the king's favorite, Álvaro de Luna. The effort failed, and Enrique ended up losing many of his Castilian possessions. However, chronicle accounts single out the mastership of Santiago from his other, personal holdings.

Beginning with the treatment of the episode in the contemporary *Crónica de Juan II*, in 1429 the king ordered the sequestration of possessions attached to the office of the mastership alongside those belonging to the *infante* Enrique personally.⁴⁴ He justified this step, taken while Castile was still in the midst of open conflict, on the immediate grounds that Enrique had broken an oath to serve him against his siblings, who had entered Castile in force. Indeed, he had instead joined with them against the king and his allies.⁴⁵

After this initial step, the chronicle reports that the king also determined, given the circumstances, that although Enrique held the title of master, he could not be allowed to enjoy its powers and benefits.⁴⁶ Therefore, he decided that the Order of Santiago required an

⁴² For 1422 see Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 96, 271; *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 18, pp. 293-294; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 14, p. 419. For 1444 see Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 102, 321-325; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1444 ch. 19, p. 624; 1445 ch. 14, p. 632; 1445 chs. 18-19, pp. 634-5.

⁴³ That is most likely due to the nature of the sources than any particular significance for this suspension. The *Halconero* tradition's coverage of the 1420's is sparse, and neither account says anything specific about the mastership in 1422. Moreover, the *Refundición*'s account ends in the late 1430's, and although the *Crónica del Halconero* reports the election of Alvaro de Luna in 1445, it does not engage with the *infante*'s prior suspension. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 339, pp. 466-67. As for the *Crónica* tradition, the early fifteenth century text called the *Crónica de Juan II* ends with the year 1434. So, focusing on this one avoids the problem of the very uncertain understanding of the precise origin and dating of its later reworking and continuation after that year.

⁴⁴ "é envió secrestar todas las villas é lugares del Infante don Enrique, así del Maestrazgo de Santiago como de su patrimonio." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 18, pp. 77-79.

⁴⁵ "porque había juntado con los Reyes, sus hermanos, según que habemos dicho, sobre tantos ofrecimientos como al Rey había fecho, é el juramento é pleito homenaje que en su nombre Garci Fernandez Manrique ficiera...É demás, que había tomado del Rey dineros para sueldo de gente de armas para venir en su servicio en esta guerra." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 18, pp. 77-79.

⁴⁶ "Veyendo el Rey que el Maestrazgo de Santiago que el Infante don Enrique tenia, del cual él non podía nin debía usar por las razones dichas." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 2, pp. 177-79.

“administrator and governor” to carry out the responsibilities of the mastership. And since, the narrative explains, the management of the orders pertained to the king in the absence of a master, he, in turn, gave the job to Álvaro de Luna with the agreement of the *Consejo*.⁴⁷ The later reworking of the *Crónica* presents the events in a very similar light, although it has less to say about the process behind the appointment of Álvaro de Luna as administrator, noting only that after the 1429 sequestration he was eventually given the post by King Juan.⁴⁸

As for the *Halconero* tradition accounts, according to the *Crónica del Halconero*, soon after the outbreak of hostilities the king ordered the possessions of the mastership of Santiago seized.⁴⁹ Afterward, it reports separately that Álvaro de Luna was made perpetual administrator of the order, though it does not directly connect that step with anything that had been done to the *infante*.⁵⁰ The *Refundición*, for its part, does not report any specific seizures of possessions

⁴⁷ “no estaba bien estar sin Administrador é Gobernador, é como á él como á Rey pertenescia la gobernacion é administracion de él é de los otros Maestrazgos de sus reinos en defecto de los Maestres de ellos, con acuerdo de los del su Consejo, encomendó é dió la administracion de él á don Alvaro de Luna.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 18, pp. 77-79.

Such a claim had not appeared in any earlier chronicle account. According to the rule granted to the order in the twelfth century, the prior had the responsibility for overseeing the order when the post of master was vacant, and it implies any interregnum should not last longer than fifty days. There was certainly no provision for appointing an administrator. Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Santiago*, ch. 4, p. 7; ch. 9, p. 14; *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago*, 26-28. However, a papal bull issued in 1383, in addition to acknowledging a royal right to nominate the masters, also expanded royal roles in overseeing the orders during an interregnum.

That was similar to what kings could do in the case of bishoprics already, and in fact some rulers were accused of abusing that privilege, leaving them vacant in order to collect their revenues. Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis*, 153, 205; O’Callaghan, “Alfonso X and the Castilian Church,” 423-24, 427; Phillips, “Bishops, Parliament and Trial by Peers,” 292. But the situation the chronicle describes was not a vacancy. The king’s action constituted a new royal claim to authority over the order, the conditions for which sprang from previous royal measures to “suspend” Enrique’s capacity to act as master, in line with those taken against other figures and, indeed, the *infante*’s other possessions. The terms of the new intervention echoed the new power granted to monarchs in 1383, but its specific application rested on changing ways of expressing, and employing, royal authority.

⁴⁸ “Y embió secrestar todas las villas é lugares del Infante Don Enrique, así del Maestrazgo de Santiago, como de su patrimonio, porque se habia juntado con los Reyes sus hermanos;” “Esto [the 1430 Medina del Campo confiscations] así hecho, el Rey dió la administracion del Maestrazgo de Santiago al Condestable don Álvaro de Luna.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 15, pp. 458-459; 1430 ch. 4, p. 479.

⁴⁹ “E por la otra parte de Alcalá de Henares venia el conde de Benabente, don Rodrigo Alfonso Pimentel, e Ramir Nuñez de Guzmán, por mandado del Rey, con cuatrocientos ombres de armas, para le tomar la posesión de los lugares del maestradgo.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 19, p. 39.

⁵⁰ “fué probeydo en Cáceres el condestable de Castilla, don Álvaro de Luna, por el Rey don Jhoan, que fué administrador perpetuo del maestradgo de Santiago. E mandóle dar sus cartas para que le entregasen todas la

attached to the mastership. However, when the time came to describe the appointment of an administrator, it states that Juan, along with the *grandes* and prelates who were with him, decided that since Enrique was a rebel and open enemy of the king, he deserved to be stripped of the mastership.⁵¹ They also agreed to make Álvaro de Luna administrator, for which the king then had the necessary charters and provisions prepared.⁵²

The accounts of the *Crónica* tradition, and the *Crónica del Halconero*, report the seizure of the possessions of the mastership alongside, but distinct from, the general seizures of 1429 and the *repartimiento* at Medina del Campo in 1430.⁵³ The *Refundición*, for its part, only does so in the second instance. But all accounts clearly convey a sense that the mastership, among Enrique's many other possessions, was a distinctive post and was dealt with as such.

fortalezas, e las posesiones de todas las villas e lugares, e las encomiendas que el ynfante don Enrique, maestre de Santiago, avía poseydo.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 28, p. 48.

⁵¹ “el Rey estando allí en Cáceres, acordó con los perlados y caballeros que allí con él estaban que pues el ynfante don Enrique, en grant deservicio de Dios y suyo, seyendo de su linaje y tanto cercano a él en debdo, se avía rebelado en aquel castillo de Alburquerque, y le fazía como enemigo suyo y de sus reynos guerra desde el dicho castillo, y de todas las otras fortalezas que por él estaban, que le debían privar de maestradgo de Santiago. Lo qual por todos fué así acordado, y se puso luego en execución.” *Refundición*, ch. 44, p. 85. That phrasing, naming the king, the *grandes*, and the prelates, also suggests a *Consejo* meeting even though the term itself was not used.

⁵² “Y por acuerdo de todos ellos, fué dado al condestable don Álvaro de Luna la administración del dicho maestradgo de Santiago, en tanto que se proveya de maestre. E para esto, el Rey le mandó dar las cartas y provisiones que eran menester, para que le fuesen entregadas las fortalezas y todas las villas y logares y encomiendas que el ynfante don Enrique, maestre de Santiago, en los reynos tenía.” *Refundición*, ch. 44, p. 85.

Both *Halconero* tradition accounts also refer to a further incident after the appointment of Álvaro de Luna. They claim that in 1431, the *infante* Enrique was “deprived of the title of master” in a ceremony held at the order’s headquarters at Uclés. At least some of the thirteen commanders responsible for electing and deposing masters gathered, according to the *Refundición* at the order of the king, to consider whether or not Enrique should be deposed, and decided in the affirmative. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 70, p. 86; *Refundición*, ch. 60, pp. 111-113. The incident, over a year after Alvaro de Luna’s appointment as administrator, was the subject of an appeal made to Rome by the *infante* Enrique. Ortega y Cortes, Álvarez de Baquedano, and Ortega-Zúñiga y Aranda, *Bullarium ordinis militiae de Calatrava*, 383-8; *Regla de la orden de la caballería de Santiago*, 141-142. However, when Enrique’s “suspension” was lifted in 1439, no account or document mentions any formal deposition having occurred. And significantly, neither the chronicle accounts nor the appeal mention any effort to formally elect a new master at that time. But even if it did occur as described, the novelty of the king’s measures in 1430, in particular appointing an administrator, remains. See also Villarroel González, “Las deposiciones y sus ritos,” 222-224.

⁵³ The *Halconero* tradition accounts treat the appointment of Álvaro de Luna as administrator as a separate event before the Medina del Campo meeting, while those of the *Crónica* tradition fold the treatment of the mastership in with the broader seizures authorized there. His appointment as administrator is dated March 30, which was after the Medina del Campo gathering, though it is certainly possible the decision was made earlier. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 32, 97-100.

But more importantly, the king's decision to appoint an administrator was different in character from any royal intervention in the fourteenth century.⁵⁴ First, none of the narratives suggest that the order or its members were consulted, and nor did they play any executive role. Among those that describe procedures or justifications associated with the move, the contemporary *Crónica* does depict the king as acting according to order rules in the case of vacancy, but the *Refundición* gives no consideration to order rules at all, attributing the decision to the king and his *Consejo* alone. However, even with the *Crónica*'s reference to order rules, the absence of any reference to direct involvement by members of the order, in all the accounts, stands in stark contrast to any fourteenth-century narrative and to the coverage of Enrique de Villena's fall in both fifteenth century traditions.⁵⁵

Although each of these chronicles treats the mastership separately from other resources of power, that means mainly that royal power was invoked against it separately. In contrast to earlier accounts, a sense of order initiative, or at least that the king acted through order procedures carried out by order members, was not present. However, the chronicles of both traditions also specify that the *infante* was not deprived of the title of master. Instead, the king suspended his capacity to act as master and his ability to enjoy its material benefits.⁵⁶ Just as such direct royal intervention was not seen in earlier accounts, neither was such a suspension of a

⁵⁴ With the exception of the *infante* Enrique's suspension from the mastership in 1422, as described in the *Crónica* tradition. It would also not be the last. Besides the subsequent 1444 administration, after the execution of Álvaro de Luna in 1453 Juan II received papal permission (not mentioned in the accounts of 1430) to become the administrator of the order, until his young son, Alfonso, was old enough to be elected to the mastership. It remained in administration under Juan's successor, Enrique IV. Alfonso XI had also desired that his young son be made master, but in the chronicle of his reign, another man was duly elected master to bridge the gap. Rades y Andrada, *Chronica de Santiago*, ch. 45, p. 63.

⁵⁵ That reference to order rules is somewhat plausible, taking into consideration the late fourteenth century papal bull. However, this situation is not really what that bull encompasses. Here, the king filled a "vacancy" he had created by his own previous commands.

⁵⁶ The first in the *Refundición*, the second in the *Crónica del Halconero*, and both in the *Crónica* tradition accounts.

master's ability to exercise his position.⁵⁷ Those measures, here directed against the mastership, are in keeping with those arranged by royal authority acting in its interests, interfering with the capacity to exercise power, against those who did not hold such a distinctive post.

Furthermore, the picture offered by the chronicles, both in terms of the parts played by royal authority and the nature of the *infante's* loss, is in accord with documentary evidence.⁵⁸ For example, in a royal *carta de merced* announcing and confirming Álvaro de Luna's appointment as administrator of the Order of Santiago, the king commanded that the *infante* "should not be held or obeyed as master," "nor be able to collect dues from the *mesa maestral*, nor have the right to use anything that pertains to the mastership."⁵⁹ The reasons for such prohibitions, he insisted, had been made clear in prior letters on the subject of Enrique's 1429 betrayal, but he

⁵⁷ The legal regime surrounding offices was quite extensive and complex. The title, power and income of a particular post could be separated and held by different people. That owed much to canon law, but by the fourteenth century was well established in secular practice. Ertman, *Leviathan*, 79-82; García Marín, *El oficio público*, 22-27; Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 305. Moreover, appointing placeholders, in which the title and much of the income would remain with one person, with the duties carried out by another, was common. Indeed, sometimes placeholders appointed their own placeholder. García Marín, *El oficio Público*, 54-59, 100, 110; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 484, 495-6; Pérez-Bustamante, *El gobierno*, 139. For contemporary examples of the private appointment, and revocation, of placeholderhips, see Díez Martínez, *Documentos de Juan I*, doc. 130, 246; Francisco Veas Arteseros, *Documentos del Siglo XIV*, vol. 2, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia 10 (Murcia: Academia de Alfonso X el Sabio, 1985), doc. 67, 62.

However, that is not what any of the chronicle traditions describes in this instance. Sometimes, kings did get involved in the appointment of placeholders in the context of ongoing disputes, like in a long contest involving the *adelantamiento* of Murcia in the 1370's and 80's. In that case, Juan I arranged a solution to the city's objection to the titular *adelantado* by appointing a placeholder. But an *adelantado* was a royal official. In this instance, the king's solution shows a reluctance to use the full force of royal authority not, as in the later case of Enrique's suspension, an assertion of it in a situation without precedent and in which his formal power was dubious at best. Díez Martínez, *Documentos de Juan I*, doc. 19, 44; doc. 20, 45; doc. 39, 73; doc. 99, 188; doc. 101, 190; doc. 119, 223; doc. 130, 246; doc. 134, 251; Francisco Veas Arteseros, *Documentos del Siglo XIV*, vol. 3, Colección de documentos para la historia del reino de Murcia 12 (Murcia: Academia de Alfonso X el Sabio, 1990), doc. 109, 144; doc. 172, 226.

⁵⁸ The king's arrangements also seem to have been effective. For instance, in 1438, Álvaro de Luna confirmed, as administrator, an older decision made by the *infante* Enrique. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, car. 191, n. 52. Also, as Álvaro de Luna's time as administrator ended in 1439, he and Enrique made an agreement in which the *infante* agreed not to demand back payment for incomes his rival had collected as administrator. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 65, 209-213. Shortly afterward, a *sentencia real* issued in *Consejo* sought to settle remaining issues. Calderón Ortega, doc. 69, 219-23.

⁵⁹ Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 32, 98. It is very similar to the document issued for the same purpose in 1444. Calderón Ortega, doc. 102, 321-25. However, the later document also connected suspending the *infante* Enrique and appointing Álvaro de Luna with royal justice and punishing the *infante* for specific misdeeds. In the 1430 letter, the appointment was justified more on the grounds of expediency.

reiterated that he had been moved by “true, sufficient and legitimate reasons and justifications,” which were “in the service of God, the king, and the public good.” Álvaro de Luna received “the duty of administration and government,” and was charged with overseeing civil and criminal justice and empowered to do everything that masters could do because of their *dignidad maestral*.⁶⁰

Moreover, the king invoked the by now common formula of *poderio real absoluto* to enact this arrangement.⁶¹ Indeed, King Juan ordered his judges not to hear any legal challenges to his action, insisting that he could arrange matters in this way simply because he understood it to correspond with his service. The direct royal intervention described by the chronicles, and the absence of consultation with the order itself within their narratives, corresponds to the tenor of royal orders associated with the process of Enrique’s suspension. The document advances a claim, which the chronicle treatments of the issue reflect, that Juan could, by his own authority, suspend, if not depose, the Master of Santiago.

Stepping back from the chronicles and the royal case, given the ecclesiastical status of the order, the *infante* Enrique appealed to the church to fight for his rights as master. However, that step, not noted by any of the chronicles, does not appear to have meaningfully affected his situation in Castile.⁶² Although that choice of response speaks to the enduring ecclesiastical identity of the order, the ultimate ineffectiveness of these appeals certainly does not undercut the

⁶⁰ “carga de la administración y regimiento.” Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 32, 98.

⁶¹ Which was also a claim to independence from any superior authority, like the papacy. Post, “Blessed Lady Spain,” 206-8.

⁶² AHN Órdenes Militares, Uclés, carp. 8, ns. 12, 13, 18, 20; AHN Órdenes Militares, San Marcos, carp. 379, n. 59.

force of new royal claims.⁶³ Enrique did get the powers of the mastership back in 1439, but in response to a changing political balance in Castile, not pressure from Rome.⁶⁴

Overall, chronicles of both traditions identify the mastership of Santiago separately among Enrique's possessions. But more importantly, they also all describe a loss of the ability to exercise its powers, achieved by invoking royal authority, without any reference to order procedures or members. In the contemporary *Crónica* and the *Refundición*, that authority was invoked specifically in the service of royal interests in the midst of his conflict with the *infantes*. But whether displaying one or both of those characteristics, each of the chronicles uses similar terminology to that which they employed when depicting other contemporary removals, and which had not appeared in earlier narratives.⁶⁵ These accounts also, then, advance a new conception of power and its loss, while still maintaining some distinction for the mastership. But that distinction does not include independence from royal intervention, at least when it was directed against the exercise of the mastership's powers.⁶⁶ That was the thing principally, or at least immediately, at stake, not the formal possession of the office as governed by order rules.

Juan de Sotomayor

Closely connected to the *infante* Enrique and his political activities, Master of Alcántara Juan de Sotomayor was deposed in 1432. He was a protégé of the *infantes'* father, Fernando de

⁶³ In 1453, when Álvaro de Luna, then Master of Santiago, faced royal justice, King Juan II invoked *poderío real absoluto* to head off any attempt on the master's part to appeal to the pope. Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 100; Rucquoi, "Privanza, fortuna y política la caída de Álvaro de Luna," 350. See also AHN Órdenes Militares, San Marcos, carp. 379, n. 65.

⁶⁴ As part of yet another deal to limit Álvaro de Luna's influence at court, he gave up the administration in exchange for a pledge that the *infante* would not initiate any legal proceedings to recoup the income he collected while in the post. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1439 ch. 8, p. 553; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 239, p. 285. See also Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, docs. 67-69, 216-223. By 1440, Enrique was acting as master again in fact, as well as name, at the order's chapter celebrated in 1440. BNE Ms. 833.

⁶⁵ The *Crónica* narratives also suggest a *vía*, though not quite of *justicia*. No formal summons were depicted in 1429, yet they do depict a seizure in 1429 before a more formal suspension later in 1430.

⁶⁶ For an English comparison, in which a bishop's possessions were taken, and restored, at royal discretion see Phillips, "Bishops, Parliament and Trial by Peers," 294.

Antequera, a connection which helped him to secure the post. But like Diego Gómez de Sandoval, the ongoing conflict between Juan II and Álvaro de Luna, on the one hand, and the *infantes* of Aragón on the other, put him in an awkward position.⁶⁷ Attempts were made to manage his divided loyalties, but ultimately he sided with the *infantes*, or more specifically the *infante* Enrique, and was formally deposed. That deposition, however, occurred in response to a singular circumstance. His nephew Gutierre, a fellow member of the order, exploited the lucky stroke of capturing the *infante* Pedro, Enrique's younger brother, to secure royal blessing to arrange for his uncle's removal and, subsequently, his own election to the mastership.

According to the very similar *Crónica* tradition accounts, the underlying causes of Juan de Sotomayor's removal stretched back to 1429.⁶⁸ When the *infantes* invaded Castile, he ignored a royal summons for service and instead joined them.⁶⁹ The contemporary account and the later reworking broadly agree on the sequence of the succeeding events.⁷⁰ In 1430, after reconciling with Sotomayor for his initial disobedience, King Juan entrusted him with the task of keeping watch on the *infantes* Enrique and Pedro. They had fortified their position in Alburquerque, near the Portuguese border and also situated in the heart of the Order of Alcántara's territories, after their older siblings had retreated.⁷¹ Later that year, however, the king became suspicious of the master's loyalty.⁷² Subsequently, in 1431, Sotomayor made a more formal agreement with the king, swearing to serve him and not to aid the *infantes*. But he quickly broke its terms and began cooperating with them again.⁷³

⁶⁷ Suarez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 210.

⁶⁸ That is also similar to Diego Gómez de Sandoval's fall, though in this case deposition was not so much a last resort, as was the stripping of Gómez de Sandoval's possessions, but the result of political opportunism.

⁶⁹ That was also the heartland of the Order of Alcántara.

⁷⁰ Though the later version, typically, presents them in a condensed form.

⁷¹ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 2, pp. 177-179; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 3, pp. 478-479.

⁷² *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 27, pp. 234-235; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 25, p. 488.

⁷³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 5, pp. 259-262; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1431 ch. 5, pp. 491-492.

Then, early in their accounts of the year 1432, both *Crónica* tradition accounts abruptly declare that King Juan commanded the sequestration of the rents of the mastership of Alcántara, and commanded places under the order's jurisdiction to deny any effort by Juan de Sotomayor to collect them. Shortly afterward, the king took the even stronger step of ordering that nobody should follow or obey him as master, while also sequestering the forts and towns under the direct jurisdiction of the mastership of Alcántara.⁷⁴ Following these general orders, in the spring of 1432 the king sent a military force to the Portuguese border to deal with the situation at Alburquerque.⁷⁵ This order, in hindsight, led to a turning point in the narratives, from an effort to suspend the mastership in a manner similar to the *infante* Enrique, before the appointment of Álvaro de Luna as administrator at least, to an outright deposition.

However, before continuing, I will follow the *Halconero* tradition accounts up to the same chronological point. Neither mentions a 1431 agreement between the king and the master, or any sequestrations or suspensions.⁷⁶ On the other hand, both accounts do insist that in 1430 Juan de Sotomayor had been left to watch the *infantes* Enrique and Pedro in Alburquerque.⁷⁷ His pro-*infantes* sympathies soon pushed him over to their side and, after learning of that, King Juan

⁷⁴ “non solamente el Maestre continuaba lo que solía en deservicio del Rey, más mucho peor, é por ende el Rey desde Zamora envió un caballero que llamaban Juan Carrillo, uno de los Alcaldes mayores de Toledo, con sus cartas para que secrestase las rentas del Maestrazgo de Alcántara é non recudiesen con ellas al Maestre; é porque por aquello non dejaría de seguir todavía su mal propósito, partido el Rey de Zamora é venido a Toro, mandó dar sus cartas más rigurosas contra él, mandando que ninguna persona de sus regnos non le siguiesen nin estuviesen con él, é á los que lo contrario ficiesen, que los prendiesen é les derribasen las casas de sus moradas é secrestasen sus bienes; é mandó secrestar las fortalezas é justicia del Maestrazgo en aquellos que las tenían, mandando que no acogiesen al Maestre en ellas nin cumpliesen su mandado.” The exact phrasing in the later *Crónica* is slightly different, but shares all the same elements and terminology as above. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 5, pp. 338-341; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 6, p. 505

⁷⁵ The sequestrations and expedition led to new negotiations, which resulted in a new agreement. However, the master repudiated it before he openly joined the *infantes*. In the older version, among its provisions was a stipulation that Juan de Sotomayor would be deprived of the mastership if he did not live up to the agreement. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 chs. 8-10, pp. 344-350; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 chs. 10-11, pp. 506-507.

⁷⁶ That is similar to how they deal with the negotiations between Diego Gómez de Sandoval and the king, and like in those accounts, makes the royal interventions seem more abrupt. Also, in the *Crónica* accounts, the extra context helped define the king's actions as efforts to solve, or even head off, political problems, not just reactions to things that the targeted figure had done.

⁷⁷ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 29, p. 50; *Refundición*, ch. 45, p. 88.

ordered a military expedition set in motion in 1432.⁷⁸ The *Crónica del Halconero* simply describes that order.⁷⁹ The *Refundición*, however, insists that before giving his command, the king had first justified it publicly. In its telling, he called together the *grandes* who were with him at court, and informed them of what the master, though his “vassal and natural subject,” had done, which he cast as allying with royal enemies.⁸⁰

Comparing the narratives of the two traditions to this point, in the *Crónica* accounts the negotiations and attempts at accommodation between the master and the king were a major concern. That is similar to their approach to the clash between Diego Gómez de Sandoval and King Juan, placing the moves made against him in a larger political context beyond any specific transgressions. On the other hand, negotiations of that type were less significant in the *Halconero* tradition accounts, which present royal orders abruptly, like they did with respect to Diego Gómez. Moreover, also in keeping with the priorities of the two distinct traditions, the *Crónica* accounts depict a series of clearly defined sequestrations and suspensions ordered by the king, while the *Halconero* accounts refer to royal orders with less precise terminology.⁸¹ But neither suggests any effort to formally depose Juan de Sotomayor from the mastership of Alcántara before mid-1432, even as other measures were taken against him at royal command.

⁷⁸ The *Refundición* makes the connection clear by directly recalling his relationship with Fernando de Antequera. *Refundición*, ch. 75, p. 133.

⁷⁹ “partió el adelantado Pero Manrique de Valladolid, por mandado del señor Rey... para yr contra los ynfantes don Enrique e don Pedro, a estorbarlos que no fiziesen daño en tierra de Cáceres e otros lugares que están cerca de Alborquerque e de Açagala, que estaban por los ynfantes.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 125, p. 129.

⁸⁰ “Pero mandó llamar a los grandes de su regno, y fabló con ellos, dándoles a entender lo quel maestre de Alcántara, siendo su vasallo y súbdito natural suyo, avía cometido, juntándose con los ynfantes don Enrique y don Pedro, sus enemigos. E por todos fue acordado quel Rey debía enviar caballeros de estado, poderosamente, a fazer guerra a los dichos ynfantes don Enrique y don Pedro, y al maestre de Alcántara.” *Refundición*, ch. 75, p. 134. In contrast, the *Crónica del Halconero* does not mention the master as a specific target.

⁸¹ The *Refundición*, as it does with the *infante* Enrique in 1430, surrounds the royal decision-making with greater procedure, consultation, and justification.

That, however, was about to change. In early July 1432, Gutierre de Sotomayor, the master's nephew and *comendador mayor* of the order's headquarters, informed King Juan that he had detained the *infante* Pedro. The circumstances behind this detention are not entirely clear, and the chronicles of the two traditions explain it somewhat differently.⁸² But regardless, in both it played a critical role in bringing about Juan de Sotomayor's deposition, not just suspension, from the mastership.

According to the *Crónica* accounts, the *infante* Pedro's capture set in motion two important negotiations. First, the king persuaded Gutierre de Sotomayor to keep Pedro imprisoned despite the threat it might pose to his uncle who, recall, was in league with the *infante* Enrique at the time.⁸³ He was promised the mastership himself, along with a pardon and compensation for his uncle. Gutierre accepted, and once his cooperation was secured and Juan de Sotomayor formally deposed, Álvaro de Luna and the king used Pedro as a bargaining chip to force the *infante* Enrique to give up his remaining Castilian possessions.⁸⁴ The *Halconero*

⁸² The *Crónica* accounts claim a royal envoy, who had been detained by the *infantes* party, began to sway the master's nephew away from his uncle, even hinting he might be made master if he switched sides. That did not work, but soon after Gutierre received news, though erroneous, that his uncle had been betrayed by the *infante* Enrique. He and some loyal followers then detained Pedro in retaliation. According to the *Halconero* tradition accounts, Juan de Sotomayor had welcomed the *infantes* into the headquarters of the order. While there they arrested a royal envoy and used it as a base to attack possessions of the king and his allies. Those actions, both accounts claim, were distressing for the other order members. Enrique and the master soon left, and in their absence the younger Sotomayor, urged on by his outraged knights, had Pedro arrested. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 11, pp. 350-352; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 12, pp. 507-508; *Crónica del Halconero*, chs. 128-129, pp. 131-132; *Refundición*, ch. 76, pp.134-136.

⁸³ According to the *Crónica*, he was with him personally, having recently set out on an expedition.

⁸⁴ Regarding the first negotiations, contemporary *Cronica* reads: "é despues de muchas fablas é ratos que en ello pasaron, concluyóse que este Comendador mayor hobiese el Maestrazgo de Alcántara, por quanto el Maestre don Juan, su tío, había de ser privado de él, por los grandes errores é deservicios que al Rey ficiera; é aun demás de esto, lo merecía perder porque quebrantara los capítulos que dicho habemos que él jurara é ficiera pleito homenaje de guardar so ciertas penas, entre las cuales era una que por ese mismo fecho perdiese el Maestrazgo, é que los Comendadores de la Orden lo privasen de él e eligiesen á otro; é fue segurado el Comendador mayor por parte del Rey que eligirían á él." The later *Crónica* reproduces this phrasing, with only a few minor differences. see *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 12-13, pp. 353-358; Guzmán, *Crónica*, 1432 ch. 14, pp. 509-510. For the second negotiations, see *Crónica*, 1432 ch. 15, pp. 359-362; Guzmán, *Crónica*, 1432 ch. 16, p. 511.

accounts only describe negotiations regarding the second issue directly, but they do depict the intervening deposition of the elder Sotomayor.⁸⁵

Delving deeper, the *Crónica* accounts associate the process of Juan de Sotomayor's deposition directly with the deal between the king and Gutierre. In their telling, the agreement stipulated that since Juan de Sotomayor should be deposed for his misdeeds, and also for breaking his prior agreements with King Juan, the king would see to it that Gutierre, in exchange for handing over the *infante* Pedro, would be made master instead.⁸⁶ Although those deposable offenses had occurred long before, the *Crónica* tradition narratives suggest that formal deposition most directly met the need to reward the *infante* Pedro's captor with the mastership, in order for the king to secure the captive for himself, not simply to punish or disempower his uncle. Measures taken on royal authority had already authorized his disempowerment on different terms.

To seal the deal, the *Crónica* accounts both insist that the *comendadores* of the Order of Alcántara gathered "according to their custom."⁸⁷ The crimes of Juan de Sotomayor were presented to them, and according to the contemporary *Crónica*,

"having seen the errors and disservices which the master of Alcántara Don Juan de Sotomayor committed against the king in the matters which this history has told, and how he broke the oaths and homages which he had made, and how he had been and still was in favor of and supporting the *infantes* Don Enrique and Don Pedro who were in rebellion against the king, and how the same master had offered to lose the mastership and be

⁸⁵ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 121-123, pp. 134-135; *Refundición*, ch. 77-78, pp. 136-137.

⁸⁶ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 13, pp. 355-358; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 15, pp. 510-11.

⁸⁷ "Estas cosas así concordadas, pusiéronse en obra e juráronse, é todos los comendadores, ó los más é mas principales de la Orden de Alcántara, segun su costumbre, en Alcántara en la fortaleza que dicen Convento." The phrasing in the later *Crónica* is nearly identical. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 14, 358-359; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 15, 510-511.

stripped of it if he broke his oaths completely or in part, and about this there was carried out a certain procedure, which held that he should be deprived of the mastership.”⁸⁸

After that, the *comendadores*, “to whom election pertained,” selected Gutierre in his place.⁸⁹

As for the *Halconero* tradition chronicles, their nearly identical accounts offer a more concise take on Juan de Sotomayor’s definitive dismissal from the mastership. They do not refer to any specific negotiations to arrange the transfer of the mastership after the *infante* Pedro’s detention. However, both describe advice on the part of Álvaro de Luna that the king should use the captured Pedro as a bargaining chip against his brother. Shortly afterward, both also report the king received word that, as he had ordered, Juan de Sotomayor had been deposed and the *comendadores* had elected his nephew, Gutierre, to succeed him.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ “vistos por ellos los errores é deservicios que el Maestre de Alcántara don Juan de Sotomayor ficiera al Rey en las cosas que la historia ha contado, é cómo quebrantara los juramentos é pleitos homenajes que le había fecho, é cómo había seido é era a favor é ayuda de los Infantes don Enrique é Don Pedro, que estaban rebelados al Rey, é como el mismo Maestre se ofresciera a perder el Maestrazgo é ser de él privado si los quebrantase en todo ó en parte; é fecho sobre ello cierto proceso, hobiéronle ellos así por privado del Maestrazgo, y en cuanto en ellos fué, pronunciáronle por tal.” The phrasing in the later account is virtually identical. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 14, pp. 358-359; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 15, pp. 510-511.

⁸⁹ “e aquellos Comendadores a quien pertenescía la eleccion, eligieron luego en concordia por su Maestre al Comendador mayor de Alcántara don fray Gutierre de Sotomayor.” Once again, the phrasing in the later account is essentially identical. Both are ambiguous regarding who exactly voted to depose, but the *comendadores* were identified as the electors. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 14, pp. 358-359; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1432 ch. 15, pp. 510-511.

The *Crónica* narratives also report that after his election Gutierre came to the king at Ciudad Rodrigo. He participated in a solemn ceremony in the cathedral where the king presented him with the banners of the order and in which he was “named” Master of Alcántara. Although the electoral form was followed, the *Crónica* tradition narratives also suggest a royal role in fully making Gutierre de Sotomayor master. He swore to serve the king, and he did homage for the fortresses of the order. Homage had been included in chronicle accounts before, but the direct role of the king in investing him with the insignia of the mastership itself, making him master, had not. The chronicles also insist that the king had sent word to the pope asking him to confirm the election, and the ceremony went forward after that confirmation arrived. Though acknowledging the ecclesiastical connection of the order, the pope’s intervention was also said to be solicited by the king, not independently offered, and served mainly to confirm what had already been done.

⁹⁰ They thus imply royal orders to that effect had been given, though they do not describe those orders in “real time.” “llegáronle nuevas cómo por su mandado era despuesto el Maestre de Alcántara don Jhoan de Sotomayor, e era elegido por los comendadores don Gutierre de Sotomayor, comendador mayor de Alcántara, por maestre;” “E allí vinieron nuevas que los comendadores de la horden de Alcántara, cumpliendo lo qué los avía enbiado mandar, se avían ayuntado en Alcántara, y en su capítulo avían dispuesto de maestre a don Juan de Sotomayor, y avían elegido por maestre a don Gutierre de Sotomayor, su sobrino, que era comendador mayor de Alcántara. De lo qual mucho plogo al Rey.” In the *Crónica del Halconero*, the *comendadores* elected the new master while the responsibility for deposition was ambiguous. In the *Refundición*, the *comendadores* had clear responsibility for both. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 33, p. 135; *Refundicion*, ch. 78, p. 137.

Overall, the *Crónica* tradition accounts place Juan de Sotomayor's downfall in the context of a long-term political dispute involving negotiation, confrontation, "suspension" and, eventually, deposition.⁹¹ Regarding the mastership specifically, explicit invocations of royal authority and interests arranged temporary and contingent suspensions of Juan de Sotomayor's powers as master. Eventually, he also faced a formal deposition according to order rules. Both kinds of actions arranged important setbacks for the master, but they achieved different ends.

As seen in other narratives in this tradition, old and new discourses of power and its loss worked alongside, but distinctly from, one another.⁹² Royal power did not erase the identity of the mastership or the forms governing deposition and election. But commands relying on royal authority, and targeting exercise rather than possession, allowed the king to get around them legitimately. However, although the use of royal authority to "suspend" the mastership sufficed before Pedro's capture, once the formal transfer of the title of master became important for the king, he turned to order procedures, carried out by order members. Like in earlier narratives, royal commands set those procedures in motion, but remained one step removed from the critical acts of deposition and election themselves.

Later, they both also describe a solemn ceremony in Ciudad Rodrigo, where the master did homage to the king for the castles of the order. Like the *Crónica* accounts, they depict the king investing the new master with banners of the order, proclaiming "I make you master," adding royal authorization to the election carried out by the *comendadores*. That said, the *Refundición* had referred to him as master since his election, before this ceremony took place. *Crónica del Halconero*, chs. 139-142, pp. 138-141; *Refundición*, ch. 80, pp. 140-141.

⁹¹ In the *Crónicas* the charge that the master had disserved the king was joined with the allegation that he had broken specific oaths. He had supposedly agreed that if he broke them, he would forfeit the mastership. Despite that, the formal deposition process was observed. But, the terms of the deal suggest another way in which the distinctiveness of the orders was being eroded. The elder Sotomayor had allegedly agreed, in a personal pact with the king and without reference to order decision-making procedures, that if he broke the terms of the pact he would be deprived of the mastership. For their part, the accounts of the *Halconero* tradition reference the agreement, and Juan de Sotomayor's breach of it, but not its direct role in his deposition. However, they also convey little sense of order protagonism at any point in the process.

⁹² Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, in reporting his misfortunes, included both his loss of the mastership and subsequent de facto exile. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 99-101.

Looking to the *Halconero* tradition accounts, they also suggest, though to a lesser extent than their *Crónica* counterparts, that Juan de Sotomayor's loss of the mastership was one step on a long path of confrontation. However, neither of them identify explicitly defined royal actions, or related temporary suspensions of the powers of the mastership, prior to Juan de Sotomayor's deposition. That lack of concern for explicitly defining such measures fits with a broad pattern in that chronicle tradition, identified in section two. But like in their *Crónica* counterparts, the formal deposition procedures of the order had a specific, limited purpose in dealing with Juan de Sotomayor. Within their narratives, he had been cast as rebellious and untrustworthy for some time, and the king had even sent a military expedition to the order's heartland. Still, the prospect of formal deposition according to order rules only arose after his formal replacement, not containment, became important.

New Paths to Removal

Beginning in the 1420's, novel claims to *poderío real absoluto* were advanced in royal documents.⁹³ These claims were reflected in contemporary chronicle narratives of the separation of person and power, and facilitated the articulation of new ways to justify and enact those separations. But along with them came distinctive new ways of defining what losing, and having, power could mean.⁹⁴ Chronicle narratives showing King Juan II and his allies dealing with the masterships, in their contests with the *infante* Enrique and Juan de Sotomayor, share in those developments while continuing to recognize the institutional, and legal, independence of those

⁹³ Crawford, *The Fight for Status and Privilege*, 163; Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages*, 144; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 45, 124-27; Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 32, 42; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 96-97; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 55. For an example of usage, when King Juan absolved Álvaro de Luna for breaking solemn pacts he had made, see Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 18, 50. Here, royal authority, acting in its interests, intervened to override a private arrangement between subjects.

⁹⁴ And recall that accounts of each tradition make use of inserted documents, or at least what they claim to be genuine documents, within their own narratives.

posts. That combination underscores that new senses of power and its loss expressed by chroniclers of Juan II's reign were not just confined to situations involving resources of power granted by the king and associated with the crown.⁹⁵

The accounts of the *Crónica* tradition convey a strong sense of suspension at royal command in their treatment of the *infante* Enrique and Juan de Sotomayor. Preliminary royal orders denied access to resources or the ability to exercise powers associated with the office of master.⁹⁶ Also, those orders were justified and explained not only in terms of what the targets had done, but in how they met the king's needs in the midst of ongoing conflicts. This proactive justification, associated with explicitly invoked royal power and leading to temporary and contingent suspension, has much in common with approaches toward holders of less distinctive positions in those same narratives.

As for the *Halconero* tradition chronicles, like in their treatment of other disempowered aristocrats, they offer a less clear sense of preliminary measures taken on royal authority in both cases. That said, regarding the *infante* Enrique, both accounts report the unprecedented appointment of Álvaro de Luna as administrator of the Order of Santiago. And they both present it as having been done by royal command, without any reference to the members, or procedures, of the order. Although they directly describe no such royal action with respect to Juan de Sotomayor, they present the king's role in arranging his deposition unambiguously. That is to say, there was no suggestion of "order initiative," like in the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* accounts, behind his command to depose the elder Sotomayor and replace him with Gutierre. And in

⁹⁵ Nieto Soria, "Enrique III de Castilla y la promoción eclesiástica del clero," 59.

⁹⁶ With regard to the *infante* Enrique, appointing an administrator explicitly left him the title while handing exercise of the powers and privileges that went with it to someone else. Given that a similar solution was employed in 1422 and 1444, the treatment of the *infante* Enrique suggests a kind of standard, but new, approach to dealing with the mastership of Santiago. Though his high status was likely a factor in this careful treatment as well.

contrast to Ayala's accounts of similar royal interventions, these narratives cannot be interpreted as part of a larger effort to make a king seem arbitrary.⁹⁷

Overall, chronicles of both traditions maintain a certain distinctiveness for the mastership. However, they also depict actions which depended on the king's authority, deployed in the service of his interests, taken directly against the office of master and its powers. Such a specifically defined royal role, with particular consequences in the *Crónica* narratives at least, was not seen in any fourteenth-century account.

To be sure, regarding Juan de Sotomayor's outright deposition from the mastership, the king still worked through order forms in both traditions. No account suggests he advanced any claim that masters were directly dismissible by his command. But dismissal of that type only became important in the unique circumstances of the *infante* Pedro's capture, and the opportunity it opened for the king and his allies. Its purpose was quite specific, and in a similar way to the formal sentences discussed in chapter six, had more to do with securing the title for the suddenly useful Gutierre de Sotomayor than opening up the mastership to royal intervention.⁹⁸ Masters, like other powerful aristocrats, were thus left more exposed to legitimate disempowerment at the hands of the king.⁹⁹

In addition, these parallels between accounts of master removals, and those of other types of prominent political figures, suggest that the changes in fifteenth century chronicles, in comparison to their fourteenth-century forebears, cannot be attributed to the kind of general "decadence" that forms a prominent part of late medieval order historiography. Indeed, the rules

⁹⁷ The *Crónica del Halconero*, as we will explore in greater depth in the next section, was in fact the most personally sympathetic to King Juan.

⁹⁸ At the same time, a traditional investigation (*pesquisa*) was opened to determine and mandate the repayment of the damages inflicted by the master during his rebellion. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, car. 40, n. 9.

⁹⁹ Or, those who could control or influence him.

of the orders remained mostly steady across the period in question.¹⁰⁰ Instead, chronicle narratives of these downfalls responded to the same new expressions of royal authority and images of governing kings, with similar consequences for how person and power, in this case the specific power of the masterships, were split apart.

And more importantly, the fate of the masterships suggests that the increasing association of the power of the nobility with that of the crown did not, at least on its own, account for how fifteenth century chronicle representations of separations of person and power departed from their fourteenth-century predecessors. Removals of the holders of these stably established posts, with a unique identity, underwent similar changes to the disempowerments of their counterparts with more fluidly defined power bases. Both, though different in character, were subject to similar pressures from the deployment of royal authority against the exercise of power, rather than the formal possession of particular posts or resources.

Deposed Masters and the Church

Finally, disputes involving masterships were not just a matter of kings and the orders. Even in the fifteenth century, their ecclesiastical status meant that church institutions, most commonly representatives of the Cistercian Order or the papacy, could become involved as well. However, none of the chronicles, from the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* to the sixteenth century *Crónica de Juan II*, engage very heavily with their involvement in any of these disputes.¹⁰¹ Documentary evidence of such outside church involvement suggests that these interventions were mainly retrospective. In essence, depositions or suspensions unfolded in Castile, and then

¹⁰⁰ Royal rights to be involved in choosing candidates in cases of vacancy were formalized by the papacy in the 1380's, but that did not do away with the need for elections and nor did it, in explicit terms, give kings the right to arrange a vacancy by means of "suspension."

¹⁰¹ Nor did the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*.

an aggrieved ex-master complained to an appropriate ecclesiastical body, leading to efforts at mediation and, sometimes, litigation. However, those disputes were always officially defined as being between the dueling master claimants, sometimes dragging in other order officials as well. Rulers were not parties to them and, at most, a successful appellant would receive compensation for their loss. No appeal of this type led to an outright reinstatement of a deposed or otherwise disempowered master.

As such, it is not surprising that chroniclers focusing on kings and their doings paid little attention to these disputes.¹⁰² However, that is not to say none took any notice at all. For instance, when recounting the falls of both Enrique de Villena and Juan de Sotomayor, the characteristically more extensive accounts of the *Crónica* tradition did note interactions with Rome.¹⁰³ First, they report that Enrique de Villena tried to appeal his disempowerment but was, in the end, unsuccessful. That incident, an after-the-fact dispute between claimants, fits the mold laid out above. And even then, the narratives do not really follow the dispute or its consequences.

But the role both assign to the papacy in the deposition and replacement of Juan de Sotomayor is more significant. In their telling, no outside ecclesiastical actor intervened as the king suspended the powers of the mastership before agreeing to his deposition as part of a political deal. However, both report that several weeks after finalizing his agreement with Gutierre de Sotomayor, King Juan held an investiture ceremony in which he bestowed the mastership, and its symbols, on the new master.¹⁰⁴ In itself, the depiction of a royal investiture speaks to the ascendancy of royal authority over the orders and their rules, even as they retained

¹⁰² In contrast to Francisco de Rades y Andrada.

¹⁰³ Masters of Calatrava and Alcántara respectively. That is interesting in itself, since both were affiliated with Cistercians at their birth, in contrast to the Order of Santiago. Indeed, representatives of that order were involved in the 1325 dispute. Now however, the appeal went to Rome. No such concern was expressed with respect to Enrique of Santiago in the chronicles, though there is evidence elsewhere. Those appeals also went straight to the pope, who was the only recourse in the case of independent Santiago. Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 100.

¹⁰⁴ Echevarría, "The Queen and the Master," 103-05.

the vestiges of their distinct identity. But besides that, both accounts insist that the king waited to hold this ceremony until he had received papal approval for doing so, which they say he had requested when the negotiations with Gutierre were concluded but before his formal election.

In the late fourteenth century, the papacy had given Castilian kings the explicit right to name candidates to the mastership. But in the royal chronicle accounts of this incident, the king's authority did the most work, arranging immediate suspensions of the exercise of the mastership. Rome's approval was less prominent and, significantly, only associated with the formal transfer of the office to another. Overall, from the perspective of royal chronicle accounts, when royal interventions were involved the ecclesial status of the orders was at most a secondary concern, along with the potential roles of bodies within the church which could claim authority over them. Like with their secular counterparts, royal authority and its interests set the terms in which master depositions unfolded.

Conclusion

In contrast to fourteenth-century narratives of kings confronting, and removing, masters of Castile's military orders, in fifteenth century accounts rulers deployed royal authority in more direct and assertive ways against them. That authority, particularly in the *Crónica* tradition accounts, served to circumvent order rules regarding deposition by arranging suspensions of a master's authority which fell short of a definitive removal. Instead, deposition played the more limited role of allowing the post of master to be given to someone else. Finally, those new interventions, and consequences, are comparable to those described in contemporary accounts involving royal interventions against other forms of power.

In some ways, that change appears to align with the "decadence" narratives so prominent in the historiography of the late medieval military orders. But placed in the context of accounts

of removals from power more broadly, the specific new ways in which kings intervened against the power of masters are better understood as part of broader shifts in how person and power could be split apart.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the parallels between the changes at work with regard to holders of this unique and stably defined post, and those associated with figures whose power bases were much more intertwined with the crown, signals that those novel conceptions were not driven only by the nature of the power bases of major political players. They also depended on the new authority claims advanced by the crown, which led legitimate royal intervention along new paths and, ultimately, to a distinct new conception of power and its loss.

¹⁰⁵ Of course, the two explanations are not mutually exclusive.

PART FOUR

Chapter Nine

Álvaro de Luna as Over-Mighty Favorite

As *privado*, or royal favorite, of King Juan II, Álvaro de Luna played a leading role in Castilian politics for three decades, exercising such influence that he was called Castile's greatest man without a crown.¹ Even his sudden fall from grace in 1453 did not bring an end to his outsized role, since fifteenth-century chroniclers continued to wrestle with his impact and legacy.² However, his career was not without other setbacks. In 1427, and in two related incidents in 1439 and 1441, he was temporarily banished from court under pressure from bands of rival nobles. Although less dramatic than his 1453 trial and execution, the ways in which his power at court was defined and targeted by his opponents changed dramatically between 1427 and 1441. Those changes served to "turn" him into a figure who warranted the treatment he received in 1453. They also involved similar terminological conventions, and broader legitimizing strategies, to those which transformed understandings of power, and its loss, in chronicle narratives of deposition at royal hands.

Chroniclers dealt extensively with these events, and their accounts of nobles acting to remove a rival, rather than monarchs doing so, offer a further chance to test the scope and extent of new conceptions of power and its loss, and the important edge they gave to royal authority.³

¹ José Manuel Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna: Riqueza y poder en la Castilla del siglo XV* (Madrid: Dykinson, 1998). And he himself played an important role in advancing the claim of *poderío real absoluto*. Rucquoi, "Privanza, fortuna y política," 331, 342-8.

² Scholars debate whether he sought to advance crown interests, or manipulate its structures for his own ends. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 190; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 211-240. Suárez Fernández favors the former and Round the latter.

³ Those nobles may have acted through or for the king in name, but accounts of both traditions, even ones concerned to protect royal dignity, sometimes admit when the king had been cajoled, and perhaps even coerced, into approving their actions.

Instead of following changes in narratives of royal power acting against a relatively firm and stable target such as a master of a military order, here I study how power associated with a much more amorphous position, that of royal favorite, was redefined, and targeted in new ways, between 1427 and 1441.

Below, chronicle narratives of Álvaro de Luna's 1427 downfall are interpreted in the context of previous battles over influence at court, particularly accounts of a 1420 incident in which he was involved but not the main target. In royal chronicles, and in documents produced during the course these political debates, his position in 1427 was characterized using longstanding ideas of proximity to the ruler, bad advice, and bad government. That characterization echoed accounts of the 1420 affair. His power was conceived as dependent on his control of the space and personnel of the court, his attendant monopolization of access to the king, and to his close relationship with the monarch.

When it came time to remove him, Álvaro de Luna's opponents made use of a tried and true method to formalize their expulsion of a royal advisor. In some sense, any forced change at court was an imposition upon the ruler at its nominal head, yet his 1427 removal was presented as an agreement between dueling parties of aristocrats involved in a dispute over access to the king. It was cast as having been made with the king's permission, but not with his direct involvement.⁴ However, later accounts departed radically from such a view, and did so in ways which, despite the very different dynamics of situations of this type, reconceived the position of a royal favorite, and his fall from it, as a matter of royal authority regulating the exercise of power.

⁴ This method was different from the methods described in relation to the 1420 situation. But both were also different from the more extensive application, or hijacking, of royal authority and justice against Álvaro de Luna after 1439.

King, Court and Counsel

Attempts to remove Álvaro de Luna from power at court occurred, and were chronicled, against a backdrop of enduring discourses about counsel, advice, and the conduct of government. Conflicts over these things, or debated in these terms, were a significant aspect of late medieval politics.⁵ These principles are well known, but some background is needed to put the anti-Luna arguments in context. In particular, it helps to isolate specific changes in how his power was defined and targeted within more stable conventions of political contestation.

All rulers had to take advice to rule, and choosing proper counselors was a serious concern.⁶ In many political struggles, “evil counselors” were singled out as the source of whatever problems opponents of royal policy decried.⁷ These counselors ruled by isolating their lords and keeping them ill-informed, misadvising them to authorize injustices or simply leaving them unaware of their allegedly nefarious activities. By focusing on counselors, opponents could avoid blaming a ruler directly.⁸ Moreover, when criticism gave way to action, they could justify their defiance by turning to another important discourse. Naming themselves the king’s true

⁵ Black, *Political Thought*, 136, 156-157. See also Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 22-26, 68-88.

⁶ Molas Ribalta, “The Impact of Central Institutions,” 25; Watts, *Politics*, 241. Influential fourteenth-century Catalan political theorist Francesc Eiximenis held that a small group of learned men were the best advisors, while fifteenth-century Castilian historian and political theorist Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo also emphasized wisdom and honesty as key qualities. Eiximenis, *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 73, 119-123; Sánchez de Arévalo, *Suma de la política*, 288. In England, royal family members were also put forward as ideal counselors. In Castile, Álvaro de Luna’s rivals did include some royal relatives who made use of that connection, but on the whole the sense that they would be ideal advisors because of that status was not widespread. Ralph Griffiths, “The Crown and the Royal Family,” 17-18.

⁷ Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 48; Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 259; Janin, “Mentiras y engaños,” 100-1; Lacey, “Defaming the King,” 80; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 86.

⁸ Owens, ‘*By My Absolute Royal Authority*’, 39. In England, Ferster describes a mixture of “submission and aggression, flattery and resistance,” expressed by the lords appellant against Richard II in 1388. Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 1-3.

servants, they claimed that by breaking the hold of bad counselors, they might then offer good advice.⁹ This would lead to better government and serve both the king and the common good.¹⁰

Fifteenth-century Castilian chroniclers were certainly no strangers to these ideas.

Although the ways in which this discourse worked is not a point of focus per se, this flexible language of service, advice and good government played an important role in chronicle accounts, and also in the arguments of Álvaro de Luna's opponents in general.¹¹ Therefore, connections are drawn between that case-making and Castilian laws, works on political thought, and some literature.¹² But that is in the service of my main task, understanding how chroniclers, and the political actors whose maneuvers they chronicled, reinterpreted the source and nature of the great favorite's power, and the implications of that reinterpretation.

The Affair of 1427

Álvaro de Luna's first enforced separation from the court of King Juan II occurred in 1427. The young monarch came of age in 1419, and by the middle of the 1420's the relative upstart, of noble but illegitimate birth, was the king's most trusted advisor. That drew the ire of many Castilian nobles, especially the king's powerful cousins, the *infantes* of Aragón. Amid

⁹ Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 32, 41-44, 50, 62.

¹⁰ Beceiro Pita, "Argumentos ideológicos de la oposición nobiliaria," 229-236; Carrasco Manchado, "El bien común en la sociedad medieval," 33-83; Carrasco Manchado, "Léxico político en el Seguro de Tordesillas," 100; Gibello Bravo, *La imagen de la nobleza castellana*, 141-153; Rabade Obrado, "Confederaciones, seguros y pleitos homenajes," 73; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 146-7; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 42; García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 410.

¹¹ Contemporaries were conscious of the flexibility. For instance, in 1390 Juan I annulled all political pacts at the *Cortes* of Guadalajara. According to the record of the proceedings, he declared that although signatories to such pacts usually claimed to act in his service, the result was *escándolo*. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:426, 528-30. On good government, see Beceiro Pita, "Argumentos ideológicos de la oposición nobiliaria," 213-23; Quintanilla Raso, "Élites de poder, redes nobiliarias y monarquía," 969.

¹² Regardless of its status in practice, the legal legacy of Alfonso X had a strong influence on the cases as reported in the chronicles and on political thought and literature in general. For political thought, in addition to this legal tradition, authors owed much to the work of Aristotle and Aquinas. Black, *Political Thought*, 22; García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 645.

growing tension, in 1427 these discontented *grandes* demanded his departure from the king's side. The king and his *privado* were forced to back down, and a specially appointed commission mandated that he leave court for a year and a half. But ultimately, this settlement did not last and he was recalled within six months.

The principal narrative sources for this confrontation are, once again, the early to mid-fifteenth-century *Crónica de Juan II*, the adaptation of that work that forms part of the later *Crónica de Juan II* published in the early sixteenth century, the *Crónica del Halconero*, and the *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero*. They largely agree on the basic sequence of events, but in characterizing the *infantes'* complaints, and the nature of the power at stake, the accounts of each tradition express distinctive views. The first two locate Álvaro de Luna's power within the king's court and household.¹³ Along with his allies, he dominated royal counsels and excluded others. In contrast, the *Crónica del Halconero* and the *Refundición* focus more directly on the man himself, while defining his power mainly in terms of his relationship with King Juan.¹⁴ These differences are not absolute. But understanding the varied ways in which chroniclers presented and interpreted this event, and the political arguments behind it, is critical for analyzing how the anti-Luna nobles later deliberately embraced new ways of conceiving, and dealing with, the power a favorite.¹⁵

¹³ Traditionally, the reworking of the *Crónica de Juan II* was credited to Fernán Pérez de Guzmán in the mid-fifteenth century. Guzmán was a Luna critic, and the later *Crónica* does present a dimmer view of him, and a better one of his enemies, than the *Crónica del Halconero* and even the earlier iteration of the *Crónica*. Another critic who may have influenced the later version was Diego de Valera. Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," xviii-xxi; Mata Carriazo, "Estudio Preliminar," lxxii-lxxvi; Jorge Sanz, introduction to *El Victorial*, xxxiv.

¹⁴ The slightly later *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero* was seen by its first editor as a reworking of Carrillo de Huete's account into a more sophisticated historical narrative. More recently its relationship to the *Crónica del Halconero* have been questioned. They are grouped together here because they share a similar perspective on Álvaro de Luna's power and the *grandes'* complaints, as indeed they do on many issues. Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," xxi-xxxiii, xliv-lv; Mata Carriazo, "Estudio Preliminar," xxxiv-xliv, cxii-cxvi.

¹⁵ These concerns were not isolated to how the chronicles of the different traditions deal with Álvaro de Luna and his downfall. The *Crónica* accounts are more concerned with institutions, while the *Halconero* accounts

Against Álvaro de Luna

Moving on to the chronicle accounts themselves, according to the contemporary *Crónica de Juan II*, in August of 1427 Álvaro de Luna's opponents, part of a movement that had been gaining strength since 1425, gathered a large force and resolved "to work with all their might so that the constable may be separated from the king's presence, and the same for those who had entered the king's *Cámara* because of him."¹⁶ As this chronicle tells it, in their view it was a disservice for King Juan to place "so much faith" in his *privado*, and to give him "so great a place" in government.¹⁷ Indeed, they believed that the king "did not look after affairs as he should, nor even seek to understand them, because he left everything to the constable's will," to the point that he was "not carrying out his duty to govern the realm."¹⁸ Finally, they lamented that having only one *privado* was an undesirable state of affairs. However, seeing that the king's *voluntad*, or will, stood behind him, they did not agree on further action beyond petitioning Juan about these concerns.

The later reworking of the *Crónica de Juan II* presents a similar view of events. In its telling, earlier in 1427 the infantes and other *grandes*, or great lords, had allied against Álvaro de Luna and those who "because of him held a place near the king."¹⁹ At the August meeting, they determined that he, and those placed in the king's household by his hand, should be "separated from the king."²⁰ To that end, they petitioned their sovereign so he would know "how much

focus on the interplay of personalities. Both of them, while maintaining those distinctive concerns, registered similar shifts in anti-Luna case making at the end of the 1430's, however.

¹⁶ "trabajar por todo su poder por que el Condestable fuese apartado de cerca del Rey, é eso mesmo los suyos que por él en la cámara del Rey habían entrado." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 7, p. 447. In 1425, the *infante* Enrique was released under pressure from his siblings and others. By then, the king's regard for Álvaro de Luna was clear, and those who wished to dominate the court themselves saw his removal as vital.

¹⁷ "tanta fianza;" "tanto lugar."

¹⁸ "non curaba de negocios como debía, nin quería entender en ellos, porque todo lo dejaba á la voluntad del Condestable;" "descargado de cargo que tenía de regimiento del reino." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 7, p. 448.

¹⁹ "á causa suya habían lugar cerca del Rey." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 3, p. 439.

²⁰ "apartado del Rey."

disservice he received by allowing the constable to absolutely govern and rule these kingdoms, which was to the great detriment and humiliation of his royal person, and placed his kingdoms on the path to destruction.”²¹ Though the *privado*’s alleged ascendancy was identified as the source of problems for both the king and the kingdom, in contrast to the earlier account, there was no mention of the king’s trust in him or his exclusive *privanza* among their complaints.²² Here, it was simply something that Juan had allowed to happen and whose consequences, given that the petition was implied to be informational, he might not have realized.²³

On the other hand, this narrative has more to say regarding the supposed purpose of the petition. It claims that the *grandes* desired not only to inform the king about the problems his reliance on this one advisor was causing, but also to lay out a path to better government. Namely, the *grandes* “begged his lordship that it might please him to take counsel with the prelates and *grandes* of his kingdoms, and arrange matters so that his royal pre-eminence might be defended, and that affairs might be carried out according to reason and justice, and not in the way they had

²¹ “quanto deservicio recibia en dar lugar a quel Condestable absolutamente rigiese é gobernarse estos Reynos, lo qual era en gran detrimento é mengua de su persona real y en daño á perdimiento de sus Reynos.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 4, p. 441.

²² That is to say, the closeness and trust that defined a *privado*.

²³ Reflecting the differences between the chronicles noted above, this formulation minimizes Juan’s support for him. Both agree that the *grandes* were upset with Álvaro de Luna, but by expressing those complaints differently, they show their different perspectives regarding the favorite and the king. The later *Crónica* is, on the whole, more hostile to Luna, which makes sense given Guzmán’s possible, and Valera’s likely, involvement. In addition, the later *Crónica* presents King Juan in a more passive light. That also is in keeping with how the later *Crónica* presents him at the time of Luna’s death in 1453. On the one hand, framing matters in this way may have shielded the king from direct responsibility for the supposed ills of Luna’s ascendancy, but it also made him appear weak. Pérez de Guzmán employed that “lazy Juan” image as well. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 115-129.

been until now.”²⁴ Here, the problem of bad government was to be solved not only by Álvaro de Luna’s departure, but also by consulting new advisors of a specific type.²⁵

Moving on to the *Crónica del Halconero*, it offers the shortest but most distinctive account of the *grandes*’ concerns and demands. In its telling, they had been discussing for several years how they might “divert [Álvaro de Luna] from the court and will of the king.”²⁶ These discussions took a more concrete form in 1427, when the anti-Luna nobles met in Valladolid and petitioned that the king “command that the said constable depart from himself and from his court.”²⁷ However, uniquely among the chronicles, the *Crónica del Halconero* does not offer any direct interpretation, beyond mentioning they offered “many reasons and justifications,” of why the *grandes* desired his expulsion or on what basis they justified this request.²⁸

Finally, the *Refundición* presents a similar tale of discontent, a meeting of the *grandes*, and a resolution to move against the favorite. However, in its depiction, his opponents primarily complained among themselves about his “great *privanza*.” Before he could “increase his *privanza* further,” from which would come great disservice to the king and harm to the realm, they judged that “they should separate him from the king.”²⁹ Therefore, they decided to speak to

²⁴ “a Su Señoría suplicaban quisiese haber consejo con los Perlados é Grandes de sus Reynos, é dar forma como su preeminencia real fuese guardada, é las cosas hiciesen por razon é justicia, é no por la forma que hasta aquí habian pasado.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 4, p. 441. This phrasing implied that the counsel the king had been receiving was defective. In his *Suma de la política*, Sánchez de Arévalo expressed a view that “advice not based upon justice is not useful.” *Suma de la política*, 291. The phrase “haber consejo” means taking advice from qualified people, not necessarily the formal *Consejo*. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 38-39, 53-57.

²⁵ The *Partidas* envision a particular role for powerful nobles in advising kings. *p.2, t.9, l.6*. In stressing the potential benefits of *grande* involvement in government, the later *Crónica* once again shows more explicit sympathy with them.

²⁶ “desbiasen de la corte e de la voluntad del Rey.” *Crónica del Halconero*, 11. In 1425, the *infantes* had made Álvaro de Luna’s role part of their efforts to force the release of the *infante* Enrique. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 94, 269.

²⁷ “mandase apartar de sy y de su corte al dicho condestable.” *Crónica del Halconero*, 11.

²⁸ “muchas causas e razones.” That is not uncommon for coverage of the 1420’s in this account, which is very sparse.

²⁹ “más adelante privase;” “lo debían apartar del Rey.” *Refundición*, ch. 21, pp. 49-51.

him, to “provide for the good government and direction of the kingdom.” This view connects Álvaro de Luna’s *privanza*, and its potential increase, with those wider problems of government, and their potential escalation.³⁰

The Narratives in Context

All of the accounts identify Álvaro de Luna’s separation from the king as a main purpose of the *grandes*’ meeting and petition, but offer varied interpretations of what he was to be separated from and what it would accomplish. Following the division in perspectives noted above, for now the *Crónica de Juan II* accounts and the *Crónica del Halconero* and *Refundición* are treated separately. That places their most distinctive differences in context, before considering how they represented alternate perspectives on a common problem.

Beginning with the narratives of the *Crónica* tradition, they place the expulsion of pro-Luna partisans, beyond the man himself, among the *grandes*’ objectives. They also stress that those followers, and their leader as well, were “close to the king.”³¹ For Álvaro de Luna, this proximity was undefined, but his allies were specifically placed in the king’s household, a setting that suggested physical closeness to him.³² The royal *Casa* and *Cámara* were part of court, but had a distinct identity within it as the space most intimately connected with the king, the setting of his private life, and the abode of those who would most often come into contact with him.³³

³⁰ “proveer para la gobernación y buen regimiento del reyno.” *Refundición*, ch. 21, pp. 49-51. This presentation also contains elements of the perspectives of both the *Crónica del Halconero* and the *Crónica* tradition. It attributes Álvaro de Luna’s influence to personal *privanza*, but also refers to larger *grande* demands for “good government.” The strict association of the slightly later *Refundición* with the *Crónica del Halconero* has been questioned, and this passage constitutes a notable departure from the *Crónica del Halconero*, showing a bit more sympathy toward the *grandes* and their goals.

³¹ “cerca del Rey.”

³² Álvaro de Luna was *camarero mayor de los paños*, a household office nominally responsible for the royal wardrobe. Cañas Gálvez, “La cámara de Juan II,” 154; Cañas Gálvez, “La Casa de Juan I de Castilla,” 149-52.

³³ Porras Arboledas, Ramírez Vaquero, and Sabaté, *La época medieval*, 76-89; Tomas Puñal Fernández, “Los oficios de la escritura: Escribanos de Cámara en Castilla en el siglo XV,” in Gamba Gutiérrez and Labrador Arroyo, *Evolución y estructura de la Casa Real de Castilla*, 747; Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla*, 39-

Officials of the *Casa* and *Cámara*, though many were involved in domestic service, also played a wide range of political roles.³⁴ As a space of both intimacy and practical power, overwhelming presence there could allow anyone great influence over who could see the king and what news reached him.³⁵ Certainly, the way *grande* concerns were represented implied that was the case.

Indeed, alongside proximity to the monarch, the *Crónica de Juan II* accounts also report that the *grandes* complained about Álvaro de Luna's role in *gobernación*, suggesting that the king essentially allowed him to rule in his stead. Conflicts between noble bands often hinged on this issue, namely who would and would not have a role in the government of the realm.³⁶

However, beyond the impression that the *grandes* accused the *privado* of misrule, neither version is very specific about what that entailed. But even without specific misdeeds, the allegation that someone other than the king was really governing could itself represent a problem. In fifteenth-century Castile, in the context of the continued rise of *letrados* in administration, the idea of governing, rather than reigning, grew in significance.³⁷ But despite that, the royal office

47, 49-51, 141-147. Eiximenis divided royal officials into those who served in the household and those who served outside it. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 225.

³⁴ Cañas Gálvez, "La cámara de Juan II," 81-87; Cañas Gálvez, "La Casa de Juan I de Castilla," 139-40, 144-47; Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla*, 73-74. For instance, as the organ of government "closest" to the king, many matters dependent on royal *gracia* or *merced* were handled there. Puñal Fernández, "Los oficios de escritura," 738-39.

³⁵ According to Juan Manuel household officers like the *mayordomo* must be discrete because it was a position of *privanza*. Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla*, 130-139. This requirement echoes the qualifications envisioned in the *Partidas*, citing the views of Aristotle and Seneca. *p.2, t.9, l.2,5*.

The *Cámara* included guards and doorkeepers too. Salazar y Acha, 101-109, 312-315, 323-329. Even these minor officials were important. For example, Ayala's *Rimado de palacio* describes its author's return to court after time away, reporting everyone changed and his access curtailed. His first obstacle was new *porteros*, who refused even to let him in. *Rimado de palacio*, 427.

³⁶ Often the *Consejo* is cast as the principal object of control in these struggles, but the *Consejo*, though part of the court, was not a part of the *Cámara*. In these accounts at least, the root of Luna's *gobernación* was placed elsewhere. For that view see Báldenas Zamora, "Los casos de corte," 1033; Cañas Gálvez, "La cámara de Juan II," 90; Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 8, 75, 84, 97-99, 105-107; Mackay, *Spain in the Middle Ages*, 143-158; Rucquoi, "Privanza, fortuna y política," 345; Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 135-6. Also, Carceller Cerviño places a later favorite's appointment to the *Consejo* as the consolidation of his influence, not its origin. Carceller Cerviño, *Beltrán de la Cueva*, 104-105.

³⁷ García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 738; Salazar y Acha, *La Casa del Rey de Castilla*, 129-130. The term *regimiento* is akin to *gobernación*. For instance, Pérez de Guzmán lamented that Castile since the 1420's had been cursed with bad *regimiento*. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 25, 119-20. As for the *letrados*, the term was in use at least

remained a great burden to bear, and its holder was expected to be personally involved in executing its duties.³⁸

In the contemporary *Crónica* narrative, this state of affairs also sprang from the king's trust in Álvaro de Luna.³⁹ That was another important explanation for his power which did not depend on domination of the court or household. Its later reworking, however, says only that the king had given him a "place" from which to govern.⁴⁰ But it also presents the *grande* petition as informational, implying that they had adopted the conceit that the king was ignorant of the supposed bad government that afflicted Castile, while casting their direct request as a plea for the king to take counsel with new advisors from among themselves. And in neither account was establishing good government said to be only about, respectively, the king taking up the reins himself or consulting new advisors. Coming full circle, and linking the *privado*'s domination of the *Cámara* to his *gobernación*, it was contingent on the expulsion of him and his followers. In this view, occupation of the space nearest the king by an exclusive set of unsuitable advisors was an indicator, and facilitator, of misrule, and their removal a precondition for its ending.

back to 13th century, but became more important in the 14th. García-Gallo, 73, 89, 317; Devaney, "Virtue, Virility and History," 721-749; Molas Ribalta, "The Impact of Central Institutions," 25.

³⁸ For instance, Pérez de Guzmán complained the Juan took no part in *regimiento* and left that *cargo* to the constable. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 119-120. Diego de Valera, for his part, referred to a distinct *oficio del rey*. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 187. See also Jeanne Allard, "La naissance de l'étiquette: Les règles de vie à la cour de Castile à la fin du Moyen Âge," in *El discurso político en la edad media*, ed. Nilda Guglielmi and Adeline Rucquoi (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas: Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1995), 11-28; Black, *Political Thought*, 187; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 110-155.

Royal responsibility to do so is stressed in the *Partidas*. *p.2, t.1, l.6*. It also was affirmed in *Cortes* proceedings, such as Briviesca in 1387, which insisted rulers must make sure their people were "well governed in peace and justice, and should correct and improve those things which may be contrary to good government." *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:362. On peace, as relates to government, see Bertelloni, "La teoría política medieval," 28.

³⁹ The 1420-34 portion of the *Crónica* is generally sympathetic to Álvaro de Luna. Rucquoi, "Privanza, fortuna y política," 333.

⁴⁰ The later *Crónica*, compiled after 1453, is inclined to blame troubles on Álvaro de Luna. It closely follows its model, at least up to 1434, but when there are differences regarding the favorite and his role, they work to his detriment and the benefit of his rivals. In general, the king's backing of his *privado* was presented as less "affirmative," and more passive, in the later account. That facilitated a strong argument in the later *Crónica* that the king had been dominated by Álvaro de Luna, who exploited that dominance to usurp royal power.

In contrast to the vision presented by the *Crónica* tradition accounts, both the *Crónica del Halconero* and the *Refundición* focus almost exclusively on Álvaro de Luna and his relationship with the king. Each of them also depicts the *infantes* asking for the physical separation of the monarch and his favorite, but in their portrayals, he was alone by the king's side. The lack of concern for other partisans, and the royal household in general, gives their characterizations of his power, and *grande* goals, a different tenor.

Most importantly, in their portrayals, the disruption of a personal connection between the king and his close advisor was specifically named as a *grande* goal.⁴¹ For instance, the *Crónica del Halconero* claims the opponents sought to separate him not just from the court, but from the king's *voluntad*. Meanwhile, in the *Refundición*, the *infantes*' complaints were expressed in terms of *privanza*. Like the *Crónica de Juan II* narratives, though not the *Crónica del Halconero*, it does describe the *infantes*' petition as a demand to provide for better government. But without reference to the wider court, that provision was associated with ending Álvaro de Luna's *privanza* alone. Indeed, the *Refundición* insists the *grandes* worried that it might deepen even further, marking that bond as the main thing at stake in his expulsion.

Both *voluntad* and *privanza* had specific connotations in political contexts, and in particular with respect to influence over the king and at court. Generally speaking, describing a relationship in terms of *voluntad* expressed a degree of sympathy or, more actively, influence.⁴² Its use was not exclusive to kings or politics, but the king's will, and a counselor's ability to understand or perhaps influence it, had political significance.⁴³ For example, in all chronicles

⁴¹ The *Halconero* tradition accounts tend to focus more on the interplay of personalities, while the *Crónica* tradition pays more attention to institutions.

⁴² For instance, the *Crónica del Halconero* says that the *infantes* found the *voluntades* of many of the *grandes* with them in Valladolid. *Crónica del Halconero*, 9.

⁴³ Valera urged counselors to tell the king what he needed to hear, rather than what the counselor thought was in accord with his *voluntad*. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 190; Sánchez de Arévalo did as well, saying they had to tell the truth and not simply follow the "voluntad y apetito real." *Suma de la política*, 289. Household officers like the

relationships between individuals, particularly when expressing how one person influenced another, were often interpreted in terms of the will of one or both parties.⁴⁴ In the accounts of the 1427 expulsion and its aftermath, the king's will was nearly always described as either behind or close to Álvaro de Luna, suggesting that, to some degree at least, his power depended on the king's support.

However, *privanza* loomed even larger, both in the accounts of this expulsion and in contemporary political discourse. *Privanza*, and the associated term *privado*, were old terms and did not necessarily have a negative meaning.⁴⁵ In general, it implied trust and intimacy, and was not exclusive to kings or to political concerns.⁴⁶ But here I am concerned with *privanza de reyes*, sometimes marked out as a specific state with both opportunities and pitfalls.⁴⁷ A *privado* need not be as specifically placed as Álvaro de Luna in the *Crónica de Juan II*, but the state did imply physical proximity to the king.⁴⁸ Moreover, it could be enjoyed by multiple people, with some

camarero mayor were in a particularly prime position to influence the “animo y voluntad del rey.” Cañas Galvez, “La cámara de Juan II,” 93.

⁴⁴ For example, in the earlier *Crónica* the king's will was described as backing Álvaro de Luna, while in the *Crónica del Halconero* they were almost intertwined. But the *Refundición*, when describing Luna's later exile, insists that he continued to hold the king's will, implying that he had some hold over the king, not just affinity with him.

⁴⁵ Manuel Borrego, “Aux origens de la privanza: Mots et modèles politiques,” *Viator* 45, no. 1 (2014): 175-202; María del Pilar Carceller Cerviño, “Álvaro de Luna, Juan Pacheco y Beltrán de la Cueva: Un estudio comparativo del privado regio a fines de la Edad Media,” *En la España Medieval* 32 (2009): 85-112; Carceller Cerviño, *Beltrán de la Cueva*, 50-65, 72-78; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 1-32. An Álvaro de Luna critic, Íñigo López de Mendoza, exhorted *privados* to be different from Álvaro, without condemning the concept itself. López de Mendoza, “Doctrinal de privados,” 158.

⁴⁶ Covadonga Valdaliso Casanova, “Privanza y privados en el reinado de Pedro I de Castilla,” *Historia. Instituciones. Documentos* 34 (2007): 294-298. In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala used the language of trust to describe *privados*. *Rimado de palacio*, 275.

⁴⁷ María del Pilar Carceller Cerviño, “El privado como eje vertebrador del partido regio durante la época de Enrique IV: Beltrán de la Cueva,” in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *El contrato político*, 355-390; Foronda, “La privanza dans la Castille du bas Moyen Âge,” 74; Valdaliso Casanova, “Privanza y privados,” 305. *Privanza* specifically with respect to kings is a theme of Mendoza's “Doctrinal de privados.” “Doctrinal de privados,” 157. In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala described a *privado* as a yes man, saying what he thought the king wanted to hear while also giving self-interested advice. But he also explained the fall of a stereotypical favorite to stress the dangers of such a position. *Rimado de palacio*, 273, 665. See also François Foronda, “La montagne du pouvoir. L'image de la montagne dans le discours politique castillan (XIIIe-XVe siècle),” *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public* 34 (2003): 363-8, 370.

⁴⁸ Valdaliso Casanova, “Privanza y privados,” 293-295; Foronda, “La privanza dans la Castille du bas Moyen Âge,” 73; Foronda, “La montagne du pouvoir,” 356; Alejandro Martínez Giral, “El barón feudal como

possessing more than others.⁴⁹ Indeed, no account noted complaints about him having *privanza* itself, only that he had too much of it, to the exclusion of others.⁵⁰

Two Views of the *Privado* and *Privanza*

Each of the accounts, across both traditions, describes the *infantes* and their allies first complaining about the *privado*'s closeness to the king, and then demanding that he be separated from him. However, how to conceive this proximity, and how it translated into power, is treated differently. As for what should be done about it, the *Crónica de Juan II* accounts focus on ending his and his supporters' presence near the king, while the other two interpret the *grandes*' concerns in terms of disrupting his relationship with King Juan.

These views are by no means mutually exclusive.⁵¹ But on the whole, the differences in emphasis present distinctive understandings of the nature and origin of power at court, and of influence with the king.⁵² Both, however, depict Álvaro de Luna's power, and *grande* arguments against it, in terms associated with counselors and favorites. No chronicle suggests, or describes

consejero del rey: Bernat II de Cabrera, "gran privado" de Pedro el Ceremonioso (1328-1364)," in Lafuente Gómez and Villanueva Morte, *Los agentes del Estado*, 279-319.

⁴⁹ Janin, "Mentiras y engaños," 96-8; Valdaliso Casanova, "Privanza y privados," 293, 304. A verse in the *Rimado de Palacio* describes two or three *privados* "en consejo con el rey," to the exclusion of others, and also implies it can be possessed in different degrees. López de Ayala, *Rimado de palacio*, 429, 677.

⁵⁰ For instance, the *Refundición* names an increase of Álvaro de Luna's *privanza* as a *grande* fear, while the earlier *Crónica* claims that the *infantes* objected specifically to his role as sole *privado*. See also Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 142.

⁵¹ For example, the older *Crónica* pays attention to trust and *privanza*, while the *Refundición* notes concern with *gobernación*. For Valdaliso Casanova, the path to *privanza* went through the court, linking the two. Valdaliso Casanova, "Privanza y privados," 294.

⁵² And to some extent that meant the "target," meaning the position of power the *grandes* are said to be attacking, was defined differently. In the *Halconero* accounts, the *grandes* were shown to oppose the king more directly, while in the *Crónica* tradition, their opposition was directed to the court and its personnel.

the *grandes* alleging, that Juan did not freely back him, or at least allow him to wield such influence.⁵³ Nor do any suggest that his role extended beyond *gobernación*.⁵⁴

Continuing with what these accounts have in common, despite their different interpretations of the nature and origin of Álvaro de Luna's power, at the heart of all versions of the *grandes*' complaints is a suggestion of his overwhelming, and even exclusive, influence over the conduct of affairs or with the king.⁵⁵ Looking back to the discourses of counsel and government, in addition to the maxim that rulers must take counsel, it was also understood that they should have multiple counselors.⁵⁶ However, the chronicle accounts suggest that Álvaro de Luna's influence overwhelmingly prevailed. Moreover, three of the accounts either connect such exclusive influence with problems in government, or name it as a problem in itself.⁵⁷

This problem of exclusivity comes into focus when considered in terms of the political sensibilities and expectations of *grande* opponents to the *privado* who, when identifying this supposed problem, also took it upon themselves to solve it. They had many traditional and legal bases on which to justify acting when they claimed to see a badly served king, or when their own interests were threatened.⁵⁸ By the fifteenth century, the *grandes* presented themselves as a

⁵³ His power was characterized as the "soft power" of influence more than the "hard power" of domination. That changed in later anti-Luna case-making. On applying those ideas see Vasileios Syros, "'Soft' and 'Hard' Power in Islamic Political Advice Literature," in *Violence in Islamic Thought, Vol. 2: From the Mongols to European Imperialism*, ed. Robert Gleave and István Kristó-Nagy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 168.

⁵⁴ Indeed, they each report that he was upset about his favorite's expulsion from court. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 11, p. 457; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 6, p. 441; *Refundición*, ch. 22, pp. 51-52, *Crónica del Halconero*, 13.

⁵⁵ Martínez, "La *Crónica* y la *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*," 53-4.

⁵⁶ In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala quoted the *Partidas*, saying that there should always be more than one counselor. *Rimado de palacio*, 48-49.

⁵⁷ The *Crónica del Halconero* is the exception. Its account of 1427 is the shortest, but even in its longer treatment of later clashes it is in general less concerned with the *grande* goals, and presents Álvaro de Luna's expulsions as impositions on the king.

⁵⁸ This principle was based on extensive law, dating back before the *Partidas*. p.2, t.13. Among political theorists, Eiximenis supported the idea of strong vassals restraining their lords. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 185-189. And according to Sánchez de Arévalo, subjects had the right and duty to help a king in trouble. *Suma de la política*, 308. Diego de Valera also expressed this view, with a particular focus on offering counsel, saying subjects must reveal all they knew to be in the king's service. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 190. See also Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia*

natural elite, deserving of the greatest voice in political affairs, and sharing responsibility for the wellbeing of the king and the realm.⁵⁹ Though the chronicle accounts do not deal with that issue explicitly, their depictions of both the complaints about Álvaro de Luna, and *grande* demands regarding good government, dovetail with those expectations. His exclusive ascendancy, however defined, prevented them from playing those expected roles, to the detriment of the king and the realm.⁶⁰

Juan II Comes of Age: The “Coup” of 1420

Álvaro de Luna’s 1427 fall was not the first time influence over Juan II and his court had been a cause of conflict. To contextualize his 1427 expulsion, and to fully appreciate the departure from precedent in the 1430’s and 40’s, the example of the convulsions of 1420 is instructive. The *grandes* of 1427 relied on a tradition with deep roots, casting their quarrel as one about influence dependent upon physical proximity, control of court personnel, and exclusive bonds of trust. But in the face of the king’s tenacious attachment to his advisor, the anti-Luna nobles later embraced a new way of conceiving, and dealing with, the power a favorite.

When King Juan II reached his majority in 1419, leading nobles agreed to rotate who, among themselves, would advise the young monarch as members of his *Consejo* at different

de la traición, 179; Quintanilla Raso, “Discurso aristocrático, resistencia y conflictividad en el siglo xv castellano,” 543.

⁵⁹ Or at least, that is a way they could present themselves, and they did so here according to the chronicles. *Grande* refers to a noble whose scale of action was realm-wide. In pacts that were also often publicized, they presented themselves as having a role in giving *Consejo*, and responsibility for the common good. Ana Isabel Carrasco Manchado, “¿Cultura política o cultura ‘de la política’,” 49; González Sánchez, “La media y baja nobleza castellana,” 128; Quintanilla Raso, “Relaciones contractuales y propaganda de estatus,” 40, 42-44; María Concepción Quintanilla Raso, “Consenso, pacto, amistad y seguridad. Escrituras y tácticas nobiliarias en la Castilla del siglo XV,” in *Pacto y consenso en la cultura política peninsular: Siglos XI al XV*, ed. José Manuel Nieto Soria and Óscar Villarroel González (Madrid: Sílex, 2013), 65-92.

⁶⁰ Sánchez de Arévalo warned that revolts resulted when some exceeded others in “power from offices and honors.” *Suma de la política*, 300. See also Olivier Canteaut, “Confisquer pour redistribuer,” 324; Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 338.

times of the year. However, thanks to an alliance between the king's *mayordomo mayor*, Juan Hurtado Mendoza, and the *infante* Juan, this agreement was not followed.⁶¹ As a result, the *infante* Enrique and his supporters found themselves excluded from court.

This state of affairs would not last long however, since the *infante* struck back in June of 1420. In comparison to later clashes, Enrique and his brother, the *infante* Juan, were on opposite sides. But Juan was absent from Castile at that time, on a quest to marry the heiress to the throne of neighboring Navarre. Seeing his chance, Enrique led a band of armed followers into the king's residence in Tordesillas and seized control, arresting Juan Hurtado de Mendoza and installing his own people.⁶² However, the coup was contested by his brother, who quickly returned to Castile. In the ensuing struggle, both sides engaged in public letter campaigns and convened rival assemblies to legitimize their positions.⁶³ Ultimately, Enrique's position collapsed when the king escaped his control with the aid of Álvaro de Luna.⁶⁴

The principal narratives of this incident are found in the *Crónica de Juan II* and its later reformulation, as well as the *Refundición de la Crónica del Halconero*. All three narratives agree on the basic sequence of events that June, but differ in characterizing them, and the power at stake. According to the contemporary *Crónica*, early on that June morning, after entering the king's palace by force, the *infante* Enrique and other supporters burst into the royal bedchamber. The *infante* explained to the annoyed monarch that he had come "to expel some people from his household and some ugly and dishonest practices prevailing in it," and also "to free him from the

⁶¹ The *mayordomo mayor* was an important household officer.

⁶² Santiago González Sánchez, "Un "golpe de estado" y sus consecuencias: El gobierno del infante don Enrique en Castilla (julio-diciembre de 1420)," *En la España medieval* 36 (2013): 156-62.

⁶³ González Sánchez, "Un "golpe de estado" y sus consecuencias," 169. And while the *infante* Enrique controlled the court, the "king's" letters supported his position. AGS Cámara de Castilla, Diversos, 9, 59.

⁶⁴ González Sánchez, "Un "golpe de estado" y sus consecuencias," 172-6.

subjection he had been under.”⁶⁵ In particular, he informed King Juan that he had arranged Juan Hurtado de Mendoza’s arrest.

After a brief interlude, in which the *Crónica* recounts the force and even outright violence with which Enrique’s men secured the palace, the principal plotters returned to justify themselves at greater length. Here, they connected Juan Hurtado de Mendoza and his intimates more explicitly with the alleged “ugly practices,” and claimed that he had been guided by the bad counsel of his Jewish advisor, Abrahén Bienveniste. As for themselves, they said they were only making the king aware of what had been going on, implying that before he had been ignorant.⁶⁶ The king, however, remained unmoved.⁶⁷ But despite his cool response, the *infante*’s efforts continued apace. His next step was to ensure that the king formally ordered his rival’s men at arms leave the court, replacing them with his own forces.⁶⁸

The later *Crónica* largely follows the model of the earlier account, but it offers a different perspective on two key points. On entering the king’s bedroom, the *infante*’s “speech” to the king was nearly identical.⁶⁹ But in this version, when expanding on their reasons for taking such an action, Enrique’s confederates alleged specifically that the king’s household, and his realm, were “under the government of Abrahén Bienveniste,” acting through Juan Hurtado de Mendoza.⁷⁰ By using the term “government,” it identified more explicitly how the ruling clique was, in Enrique’s view, calling the shots while holding the king in subjection.

⁶⁵ “por echar é arredrar de su casa algunas personas, é cosas feas é deshonestas que en ella eran;” “por le quitar de la sojecion en que estaba.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 3, pp. 85-88.

⁶⁶ Once again, a combination of bad advisors, an ignorant king and, additionally, the insistence of the plotters that they were acting in the king’s service characterized the case.

⁶⁷ The earlier *Crónica* adds that the *infante* was aware of this, and since he knew that Álvaro de Luna was already the king’s closest friend, they should offer him rewards to please the king and to get him on their side.

⁶⁸ Though reluctant to give his consent to this action, the king backed down because, the *Crónica* insists, he thought they would do so over his objections anyway.

⁶⁹ Though presented as direct speech.

⁷⁰ “á la governacion de Abrahen Bienveniste.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 2, pp. 380-81.

It also pointedly presents these events as a seizure of power by the *infante* Enrique, and more clearly defines his changing of the court's makeup. After recounting his self-justification, the account goes on to say that in order to "further empower himself over the court and household of the king," the *infante* convinced his sovereign to "order that all his officials and servants to go back to their own houses."⁷¹ It also extended Enrique's replacements beyond just the king's main advisors, and also alleged that Enrique and his allies selected new guards to be with the king at all times.

Ultimately, both iterations of the *Crónica* present the event as Enrique's seizure of the king's court or household, and largely agree about the case he made. Juan Hurtado de Mendoza's arrest is at the center of both narratives, but dealing with him was only one step in a larger process. The palace guards were replaced by Enrique's men, and other rivals were expelled from court. Control of the space and personnel of the court allowed Enrique to insist that the king's subjection, and the resulting "ugly practices," were brought to an end.

When depicting the space of the court and who was in it, each of these narratives connects Juan Hurtado de Mendoza's presence there, and his proximity to the king, with the power to counsel and govern. But the earlier *Crónica*, in particular, also considers his *privanza* as something from which his opponents sought to expel him. When recounting the *infante's* planning, it describes his band as wishing "to cast Juan Hurtado out from *privanza* with the king, and indeed from the court itself."⁷² Although their ultimate goal was physical expulsion, the account offered a dual understanding of what expulsion entailed. Even in this narrative that

⁷¹ "mas se apoderar el Infante de la Corte é casa del rey;" "mandase á todos los oficiales suyos se fuesen para sus casas." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 3, p. 381.

⁷² "echar de la privanza del Rey, é aún de la corte, á Juan Furtado." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 2, p. 83.

focuses so heavily on Enrique's use of force and the replacement of court personnel, his rival also must be removed from the much less material position of enjoying the king's *privanza*.

As for the *Refundición*, long before the coup, it reported that Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, in the weeks after the king's majority, "rose higher in the king's regard."⁷³ As a result, other courtiers, seeing he "was so close to the king's will," sought his favor to increase their own standing.⁷⁴ In doing so, they managed to prolong their period at court, past the time allotted to them following King Juan's majority. As for the coup itself, in its shorter telling, the outraged *infante* Enrique and his followers occupied the king's palace in Tordesillas. After entering his chambers, Enrique told the king that "for some things in his service and for the pacification of his kingdoms, he and the other *grandes* who were there had agreed that Juan Hurtado de Mendoza should be arrested."⁷⁵ Though the chronicle goes on to report the king's annoyance, the plotters were not dissuaded.

Overall, the *Refundición* focuses on the central players and their relationships, not on the court or its personnel more broadly, both in terms of Enrique's goals and the source of Juan Hurtado de Mendoza's power. And, although it also considers Enrique's action to be one of "empowerment," the object of that empowerment was not the court or household. Instead, he and his allies undertook their coup so that they might "empower themselves over the king."⁷⁶ As for the source of his opponent's influence, when describing the pre-coup situation the *Refundición* characterizes Juan Hurtado's ascendancy in terms of how he "grew closer in affection," with

⁷³ "Cresció en amor con él." *Refundición*, ch. 12, p. 32.

⁷⁴ "Estaba tan acerca a la voluntad del Rey."

⁷⁵ "por algunas cosas conplideras a su servicio y a la pacificación de sus reynos, era acordado por él y por los otros grandes que ay estaban que Juan Furtado de Mendoza fuese preso." *Refundición*, ch. 13, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁶ "apoderasen del Rey."

Juan, making him “close to the king’s will.”⁷⁷ Both Enrique’s target, and Juan Hurtado’s power, were bound up closely with the person of the king, and not his court or household.

In general, like in their accounts of Álvaro de Luna’s 1427 fall, the earlier *Crónica* and, even more, its reformulation, both consider the power at stake to be located in the court. That is to say, they are concerned, above all, with the expulsion and replacement of court personnel, painting the *infante* Enrique’s action as a way to establish control over the physical environment of the court and its composition. Such a position then allowed the dominant party to counsel the king. As for Juan Hurtado de Mendoza’s personal fall, it was cast as a part of Enrique’s overall efforts to secure control over the court and household of the king, and to supplant his rival from the same. In contrast, the *Refundición* focuses more narrowly on Mendoza’s ejection, while attributing his supposed power to an individual relationship with Juan that had grown since the king’s majority. Enrique’s own actions are also interpreted as being about control, but over the king directly. That too largely parallels how this chronicle portrays the events of 1427.

An Ineffective Exile: Álvaro de Luna’s Expulsion and Recall

I now return to 1427, but look to the measures taken in the aftermath of the *grandes*’ demands that Álvaro de Luna leave court. Ultimately, after a period of negotiation, the dispute was submitted for review to a group of four men, two supporters of the *privado* and two opponents.⁷⁸ Though the chronicle accounts do not all use the same terminology, they agree in their characterizations of the panel’s basic purpose and structure. Its central concern was to decide whether the *privado* and his partisans should stay or go, which the *Crónica* accounts also

⁷⁷ “cresció en amor;” “acerca a la voluntad del Rey.” *Refundición*, ch. 13, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁸ With a provision that the prior of the monastery of San Benito de Valladolid would cast the deciding vote in the event of a deadlock.

associate it with other, unspecified, measures to foster “good government.” Although this solution was carried out under King Juan’s auspices and with his formal consent, the dispute was specifically identified as being between Álvaro de Luna and the *grandes*. Each side swore to follow whatever the commissioners decided, while the king swore to accept and enforce it as well. Ultimately, they decided that Álvaro de Luna, and his followers, must leave court for a year and a half, though neither he nor they suffered any further penalties.

Out of all four accounts, the later reformulation of the *Crónica* takes the most care to avoid an impression that the king had been imposed upon. Toward this end, it offers an account of the decision making process leading to the commission’s appointment, which the more contemporary chronicles did not. In this version, Fray Francisco de Soria, described as “an upright man of good life,” was responsible for the commission idea.⁷⁹ He insisted that the kingdom was divided in two over Álvaro de Luna’s role, and that the king should name impartial arbiters, to be empowered by the contending parties, who would resolve the dispute over what form of government would best serve the king. Two *doctores* of the *Consejo* added their support, since they saw no other way to “avoid great scandal, which the king should seek to do with all his strength.”⁸⁰ Having placed the king above the dispute, while also hinting that there was a real problem beyond just the *infantes*’ complaints, the *Crónica* makes it an extension of his duty to agree to this means to end it.

But beyond that broad framing to protect royal dignity, the specific terminology each account employs is important for understanding just how exactly Álvaro de Luna’s influence,

⁷⁹ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 5, p. 441. Speeches and letters attributed to wise advisors are a feature of the later *Crónica* in general. A large number of them are attributed to Diego de Valera, a key factor behind suggestions of his later influence on it. Moreover, their presence is in keeping with classical historiographical models which become more important in Castilian chronicles in the latter half of the fifteenth century.

⁸⁰ “escusar grandes escandalos, los quales el Rey debia con todas sus fuerzas evitar.” The *Crónica* also claims that Álvaro de Luna opposed the idea. Given its generally positive spin on the proposal and its proponents, that claim implies a subtle criticism of the favorite characteristic of this account.

however defined, was disputed. Despite their differences, each of the chronicles suggests a form of arbitration.⁸¹ The settlement occurred thanks to an agreement between two parties, which the king allowed and, perhaps, set in motion. But he did not empower the judges, or decide, directly.

More specifically, in the contemporary *Crónica*, the settlement is called a *compromiso*, while the commissioners themselves receive the title of *jueces*.⁸² The later *Crónica* also calls the four men selected *jueces*, and insists strongly that they were empowered to settle the issue not by the king, but by the parties involved, namely the *infantes* and their allies, on one side, and Álvaro de Luna and his on the other.⁸³ For its part, the *Refundición* calls the commissioners members of the *Consejo*, who were to “decide and sentence.”⁸⁴ Finally, the *Crónica del Halconero* says of the king that, in order to “avoid other worse conflicts and scandals, he had to concede that the debate be settled” by the four commissioners, which it calls *deputados*.⁸⁵ Their finding was again called a sentence, but uniquely, the *Crónica del Halconero* does not mention that the king, or anyone else for that matter, swore to uphold or abide by it.

But despite his exile having been decreed by the judges, Álvaro de Luna was recalled within a few months.⁸⁶ In explaining this sudden turn, each of the chronicle accounts points to the *grandes*’ realization that despite their temporary success in securing his exile, they had failed

⁸¹ Cavero Domínguez, *Colección documental de la Catedral*, 32-33. The *Partidas* offer guidance for such cases. *p.3, t.4, l.23-27; p.3, t.18, l.15-16*. For an example (1423) of a sentence, see Cavero Domínguez, *Colección documental del Monasterio*, doc. 292, 418. For use in a political dispute see Yolanda Guerrero Navarrete. “Rey, nobleza y élites urbanas en Burgos (siglo XV),” in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *El contrato político*, 241-282.

Also that framing was in line with documentary evidence related to the incident. Before Álvaro de Luna’s recall, in a royal *cédula* dated December 27, 1427, King Juan annulled “a so-called sentence or order included in a document that [the four commissioners] issued and pronounced against you,” due to a “power to settle the dispute (compromiso) which was granted to them,” by the *grandes* and the favorite. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 30, 92.

⁸² *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 8, pp. 449-452.

⁸³ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 5, p. 441.

⁸⁴ “determinasen y sentenciasen.” *Refundición*, ch. 21, pp. 49-51.

⁸⁵ “escusar otros mayores bollicios y escándalos, ovo de conceder para que estos debates se comprometiesen.” *Crónica del Halconero*, 11. However, this account also noted that two of them were Álvaro de Luna’s supporters and two were *infantes* supporters.

⁸⁶ Bothwell, “Internal Exiles,” 133-34.

to end his influence with the king. After his departure, the *Crónica* tradition accounts claim that he and King Juan remained in contact by letter, and insist that *grande* efforts to supplant him in *privanza* did not succeed. Indeed, rather than undermining his influence, the older *Crónica* holds that “the king’s will was closer to him after he left than before,” while the later reworking claims “the king favored the constable even more in his absence than in his presence.”⁸⁷ That enduring regard did not go unnoticed by his opponents, and since the alliance that had forced his ouster broke up soon afterward, they saw no advantage in standing individually against the king’s favorite.⁸⁸

The *Crónica del Halconero* and the *Refundición* each also describe infighting among the anti-Luna party after his expulsion.⁸⁹ Furthermore, they both claim in even more explicit terms that many in that party realized his exile had not substantially disrupted his position. The *Crónica del Halconero* returns to the issue of the king’s will, saying that the victors soon saw that they had not achieved their earlier goal to “divert the king’s will from his constable.”⁹⁰ The *Refundición* adopts similar language, claiming that Álvaro de Luna “held the king’s will entirely,” even though they were apart.⁹¹ As a result, many former foes reconciled rather than continue fighting against the king’s clear preference.

Before the expulsion, each account identified Álvaro de Luna’s separation from the king as a key *grande* goal. But it was not the only goal they described, since his expulsion was also

⁸⁷ “mucho más tenía la voluntad el Rey con él desque partió que antes.” *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 11, pp. 457-58. “el Rey mas se mostró querer al Condestable en ausencia que en presencia.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 7, p. 442. This language is consistent in the later *Crónica* in the 1430’s and 40’s as well. The *Crónica del Halconero* uses it in later cases, but the *Crónica* is the only one to do so for 1427. This may be an instance of the later *Crónica* projecting later arguments back into 1427, but it also shows links between its perspective on 1427 and 1439-41.

⁸⁸ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 13, pp. 461-63; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 6, p. 446.

⁸⁹ *Crónica del Halconero*, 15; *Refundición*, ch. 26, pp. 56-57.

⁹⁰ “desviar el voluntad al Rey al su condestable.” *Crónica del Halconero*, 15.

⁹¹ “la voluntad del Rey, la qual él tenía muy enteramente.” *Refundición*, ch. 26, pp. 56-57.

directed, depending on the chronicle, toward bringing his outsized role in government to a close or ending the personal affinity between him and the king. However, when they recount his return, each suggests that separation had not produced the further results his opponents desired, which they were said to recognize. Moreover, despite their differences in characterizing his alleged pre-expulsion power, they all attribute his recall to enduring favor with the king.

Back to 1420: Aftermath

Returning briefly to the 1420 comparison, while in 1427 Álvaro de Luna's expulsion was mediated by arbitration, in 1420 the victors attempted to justify their much more forceful action after the fact. As opposition to his move gained strength, the *infante* Enrique persuaded King Juan to summon a *Cortes* in order for the representatives of the realm to hear the king's "approval" of his coup at Tordesillas, and register their own acceptance of it.⁹² In effect, he arranged a show of political consensus to legitimize his efforts to seize power over the king and at his court, while claiming to strip it from someone else. Although not a private measure between parties like that described for 1427, it facilitated political approval for an action cast as addressing the political problem of bad advice and misrule.

According to both versions of the *Crónica*, the *infante* Enrique took this step because he was aware that he might face some reproach for what he had done.⁹³ As such, he thought it best that "the king should approve the affair in *Cortes*."⁹⁴ Once the proceedings began, they each highlight a speech they claim was delivered by Gutierre Gómez de Toledo, described as a *doctor*

⁹² Gómez Redondo, "Discurso y elocución," 241-2.

⁹³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 29, pp. 128-131; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 17, pp. 386-87.

⁹⁴ "el Rey aprobase por Cortes el fecho sobredicho." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 29, pp. 128-131; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 17, pp. 386-87.

and famous *letrado*, to justify Enrique's actions.⁹⁵ He alleged that Juan Hurtado de Mendoza, when *privado del rey*, had excluded other nobles from government and relied instead on Abrahén Bienveniste's advice. In this position, he and his associates were responsible for "many irresponsible things."⁹⁶ Enrique and his allies had noticed the bad state of affairs caused by the counsel of those who were then "close to the king," and so they "had to carry out their action at Tordesillas, which was necessary to repair past harms and those to be expected due to the lack of good government."⁹⁷ Afterwards, King Juan, playing the part allotted to him, affirmed his approval and demanded that those present at the *Cortes* also register their own.⁹⁸

Although Juan Hurtado de Mendoza was described as a *privado del rey*, the main significance of this role was that it allowed him to exclude other nobles from court. As such, he was able to monopolize responsibility for counseling the king, which led to abuses. Moreover, in this self-defense orchestrated by the *infante* Enrique, his actions were described as something which he had to do in order to bring an end to the bad government of those who had been "near" the king. Although the origin of Enrique's claimed duty to intervene was not made clear, ultimately, as the chronicle narratives depict it, Enrique's goal in this *Cortes* was not to justify himself to the realm by argument.⁹⁹ Rather, it was to facilitate the king's public confirmation and approval of his actions, and that ultimately is what the attendees were asked to witness. Although

⁹⁵ However, he was said to have been ordered to give this speech by the king. Both chronicle accounts are nearly identical.

⁹⁶ "Muchas desaguisadas cosas." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 29, pp. 128-131; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 17, pp. 386-87.

⁹⁷ "cerca del rey;" "hubieron de hacer el movimiento de Tordesillas, el qual fuera necesario para reparar los daños pasados é los que se esperaban por mengua de buen governacion." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 17, pp. 386-87.

⁹⁸ The *Refundición* does not describe anything like this. That makes sense, in that the *Crónica* tradition accounts pay closer attention to institutions.

⁹⁹ Though there was ample basis in law and custom on which to base such a claim.

Gutierre Gómez de Toledo alluded to a duty to act in the aid of a king in distress, that action became “proper” once the king, “enlightened” by his new counselors, approved it.

That of course is a very different procedure from what the chronicles describe for 1427. However, the role allotted to the king and royal authority was indirect in both. King Juan was not depicted authorizing anything, but rather upholding the legitimacy of the *infante* Enrique’s coup once he saw the “truth.” He, nominally, convened the *Cortes* meeting, but the real force of the moment, as the *Crónica* accounts tell it, was that it served as a venue for a public display of consensus behind what had already been done. Among the fifteenth-century chronicles, the ways in which the removals of favorites and their supporters were authorized in 1420 and 1427 both distanced the king, and his authority, from the measures taken to oust the fallen *privados*. But the means of *privado* removal, along with characterizations of *privado* power, underwent major changes in the aftermath of the failed attempt to force Álvaro de Luna away from the king.

Conclusion

In their narratives of Álvaro de Luna’s 1427 expulsion from court, the chronicles of both traditions depict the ouster of an overly influential *privado* and counselor. His physical control of the court, proximity to the king, and ability to determine who had access angered, and dismayed, others who claimed they had a right to influence as well. Their goal was cast as removing Álvaro de Luna, in a literal sense, from this position of predominance in the king’s counsels. Also, their effort to enforce that departure was described as an agreement between two opposing groups, which the king allowed, but did not initiate, and to which he was not a formal party. Moreover, as the comparison with the events of 1420 suggests, this way of framing the ouster of a favorite, and fighting over control of the court more broadly, was not isolated to Álvaro de Luna specifically. And it owed much to longstanding discourses of counsel and service.

It is somewhat difficult to make a direct comparison between chronicle depictions of these contests over the king and his court and accounts of kings taking the initiative, at least nominally, to disempower subjects. However, it is notable that Álvaro de Luna's power was associated with an undefined, but still literal, position near the king and at his court. In the clashes of the 1430's and 1440's, the *privado*'s rivals, many of whom opposed him in 1427 as well, took a radically different approach. The image of noble bands confronting one another over access and influence at court was replaced by one in which nobles sought to co-opt royal authority to target a rival who, they alleged, was exercising power illegitimately. In effect, a distinct register for describing conflict over influence at court, and its stakes, was abandoned after the 1420's for one based on similar concerns to those which characterized other fifteenth-century accounts of disempowerments, namely the invocation of royal authority to arbitrate the legitimate exercise of power.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ And, more specifically, post 1420's.

Chapter Ten

Álvaro de Luna, Usurper of Royal Power

Over the course of the 1430's and early 1440's, Álvaro de Luna's position was reconceived from one characterized by longstanding ideas of proximity to the ruler, bad advice, and bad government, to one based on the alleged usurpation, and exercise, of royal power. Reflected in royal chronicle narratives and in documents drafted by or for the parties involved, those sources identify the impetus behind these developments as the frustration of his rivals with previous failures to topple him. But that alone does not account for why those adaptations took the specific forms they did. Placed in the context of fifteenth-century Castilian ideologies of royal power, and the institutions through which it could be deployed, that redefinition also reflected, and depended upon, new conceptions of power and its loss which favored the exercise of power over the possession of specific resources or positions.

Moreover, changes in anti-Luna case making, and its representation, had consequences beyond how his power was defined. Early efforts to secure Álvaro de Luna's separation from the king and court, and thus undermine his alleged role there, were cast as mutual agreements between him and his rivals. But beginning in 1441, new measures to target him appeared along with new ways of characterizing his position. Those proposals envisioned bringing royal power, in particular royal justice, to bear against him. A clash over proximity to and influence over the king between rivals, became instead a clash over the legitimate exercise of royal power in which the king's authority, and not noble pact-making, would play the decisive role.

Álvaro de Luna's career and downfalls are a subject of much attention, and this change in case making has certainly been studied. In general terms, François Foronda and José Manuel

Nieto Soria in Castile, and John Watts in England, have examined the role of royal favorites in late medieval government and, in particular, the articulation of opposition to them in moments of conflict.¹ They place these contests in the context of efforts by the nobility to adapt to the institutional structures and ideological claims of the crown, and perhaps turn them to their own advantage. More specifically, Foronda and Nieto Soria register a distinct change in how Álvaro de Luna's opponents defined and attacked his position in the late 1430's, which the latter situates within shifting views of tyranny in fifteenth-century Castile.² However, changes in the characterization of his power, and also the means necessary to disrupt it, should be interpreted in terms of a wider shift in understandings of power and its loss as well.

The *privado*'s rivals' redefinition of his power, based on the alleged illegitimate exercise of royal authority, shows that others besides rulers, *letrados* and royal chroniclers embraced such views. And since Juan II remained behind him throughout, his opponents' approach highlights that ideological developments associated with the crown were not necessarily trump cards for those who wore it.³ But by claiming to act in the interests of royal authority, his opponents adapted to its terms. That exemplifies how, though subject to contestation, royal claims and institutions shaped that contestation in ways which ultimately reinforced their centrality.

¹ Foronda, "La privanza dans la Castille du bas Moyen Âge," 153-197; François Foronda, "La privanza, entre monarquía y nobleza," 23-53; John Watts, "Usurpation in England. A Paradox of State-Growth," in Foronda, Genet, and Nieto Soria, *Coups d'état à la fin du Moyen Âge?*, 115-130.

² Jose Manuel Nieto Soria, "La parole: Un instrument de la lutte politique," 13; Nieto Soria, "Rex Inutilis y tiranía en el debate político de la Castilla bajomedieval," 73-92. See also Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 38-44; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 183-196; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 137, 152.

³ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 111, 124-27. See also Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 31-37; Valente, *The Theory and Practice of Revolt*, 237-253; Watts, *Polities*, 275-279.

From 1427 to 1441

Álvaro de Luna's uneasy reconciliation with his rivals after his 1427 expulsion did not last long. Conflict flared up once again in 1429, but by 1432 it had been brought to a close on terms highly disadvantageous to the *infantes* of Aragón and their *grande* allies.⁴ In 1438 however, a new anti-Luna league was formed and began agitating for his separation from the king, and the *infantes* used the crisis to orchestrate their return in force. In 1439, an accord reached at Castronuño, a small town near Valladolid, obliged the favorite to leave court once again, on terms similar to 1427.⁵ Although he was not able to return quickly this time, throughout 1440 matters remained in flux as this departure did not achieve all his opponents had hoped for either. In December, another breach opened between the two sides. Álvaro de Luna briefly returned to court in 1441, but in June the *infantes* forcefully seized control of King Juan in Medina del Campo and he was forced to withdraw, leaving the king in the hands of his rivals.

Between 1438 and 1441, both chronicle traditions depict three major "rounds" of petitioning, negotiation and, ultimately, imposition. In those efforts, Álvaro de Luna's opponents

⁴ Three chronicle accounts describe the *infantes*, once again, claiming to act so they could to speak directly to the king against those whose bad counsel had caused differences between them. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 3, pp. 40-43; 1430 ch. 9, pp. 81-82; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1429 ch. 4, p. 451; 1429 ch. 17, pp. 459-60; 1430 ch. 18, p. 484; *Refundición*, ch. 37, pp. 72-75. The older *Crónica* includes what it calls a royal response to anti-Luna public letters sent by the *infante* Enrique in 1430. In particular, the king denied that he did not "rule or govern," himself, and also that he was "under the power of, and in subjection to, another." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 25, p. 226. The later *Crónica* says nothing about their content. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 25, p. 488. In the same year, King Juan ordered the city government of Murcia to send him all the letters they had received from the *infantes* regarding their anti-Luna push. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 161, 408. For another view see Baena, *Cancionero*, no. 586, 775-776. To end the strife, the poet urged the king to give a definitive, but merciful, sentence.

In that conflict, the royal women of the Trastámara dynasty (Juan II's sister was Queen of Aragón, and he was married to Maria, *infanta* of Aragón) played important diplomatic roles. María del Carmen García Herrero and Diana Pelaz Flores, "La política femenina de la casa Trastámara a mediados del siglo XV: De la amistad íntima a la colaboración diplomática," in Lafuente Gómez and Villanueva Morte, *Los agentes del Estado*, 427-56.

⁵ The confrontation took several months to play out, until Álvaro de Luna was forced to leave in October. The anti-Luna party received safe conducts to begin negotiations at Tordesillas all the way back in June. AHN Sección Nobleza, Frías, car. 5, n. 4. The so-called Seguro de Tordesillas, to ensure the security of all involved, is something of an archetype of fifteenth-century noble pact-making. AHN Sección Nobleza, Frías, car. 5, n. 5. The negotiations themselves took place that summer, AHN Sección Nobleza, Frías, car. 5, n. 12.

targeted his power at court, and influence with his sovereign, while redefining the role he played in Castilian politics. Although they also offered alternative visions of how the kingdom should be governed, ultimately that was secondary.⁶ The *privado* was put forward as the premier issue, and stood in the way of resolving the others. Compared with 1427, and even between 1439 and 1441, Don Álvaro became, in his opponents' depiction, more than an overbearing favorite. He became a usurper, not only directing the conduct of government, but allegedly exercising royal power.⁷

For studying how the anti-Luna party identified his power and its consequences, the number of royal chronicles is halved, with only the later *Crónica de Juan II* and the *Crónica del Halconero* covering these years.⁸ Moreover, their continuing narratives approach these events differently than those of 1427. Each offers more detailed descriptions of his opponents' claims and demands, and also inserts what they identify as copies of entire documents from both sides.⁹ In addition, thanks to a greater abundance of surviving documents outside the chronicles, the versions presented in them can be compared with those preserved elsewhere, and also with other documents exchanged between the parties involved or circulated publicly.

⁶ The two major royal chronicles broadly agree about what the *grandes* alleged, but tend to differ in characterizing their goals and whether or not they were truly "serving" the king. The *Crónica de Juan II* downplays any imposition on the king, and suggests that the infantes had legitimate grievances. The *Crónica del Halconero* emphasizes *grande* imposition on King Juan and tends to criticize the *grandes*, in particular the *infantes* of Aragón.

⁷ Both the chronicles and outside documents reflected this shift.

⁸ That changes how their narratives are analyzed. For one thing, the sources for the later *Crónica de Juan II* after its coverage of 1434 are not well understood. However, in both chronicles inserted royal letters have a major role in telling this story, and the versions reproduced in both are similar if not identical. They provide an important link between the accounts and also with outside documentation that captures the outlines of the anti-Luna case-making of the *grandes*.

⁹ Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," xxxvi-xxxix. It is possible that, by this point, the later *Crónica* was, in part, based on accounts from the *Halconero* tradition. There are some very similar passages shared between the two, but at the same time, the later *Crónica* after 1434 was certainly not based entirely on *Halconero* tradition accounts.

1439: The Favorite Expelled Once Again

In 1437, Álvaro de Luna had arranged the controversial arrest of powerful nobleman Pedro Manrique de Lara.¹⁰ After a short-lived attempt at a settlement fell apart, following Pedro Manrique's escape from his confinement, he, his relatives, and other *grandes* rose in revolt.¹¹ In that context, both the *Crónica del Halconero* and the *Crónica de Juan II* reproduce what they insist is a letter sent to the king by Pedro Manrique and his brother in February of 1439. In it, they defended their conduct and demanded the favorite's departure from court as a precondition for ending the uprising.¹²

According to the inserted text, virtually identical in each chronicle, this message was not the first Álvaro de Luna's opponents had sent.¹³ Indeed, it opened by expressing surprise at King Juan's rejection of their earlier protests. They insisted that they had only tried to inform him about problems in his kingdom, "which in Spain could not be more fitting from vassals to their lord," and that they had acted in the king's service and for the good of the realm.¹⁴ In particular, they impressed upon him that "you should rule your kingdoms yourself, without the intervention of anyone else, as our Lord entrusted you."¹⁵ The letter then referred more specifically to the *privado* by describing the "the empowerment the constable holds over you and your court."¹⁶ As a result, everything was done according to what "pleases him, whether just or unjust, without any

¹⁰ He was blamed for it, at least. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 221. A royal order from 1437 commanded him to carry out the arrest. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna (1419-1453)*, doc. 44, 138.

¹¹ A letter to the city government of Murcia explained the situation from a court point of view. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 202, 499-503.

¹² Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1438 ch. 5, pp. 549-50; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, p. 257-60.

¹³ Carrillo de Huate's position at court in the 1430's gave him access to a wide array of royal documents and correspondence. Indeed, that is a much remarked upon feature of his account.

¹⁴ "la qual en España non pudo ser más justa de vasallos a su señor" Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1438 ch. 5, pp. 549-50; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, pp. 257-60.

¹⁵ "rijades vuestros reinos por vuestra persona," and "sin enpedimiyento de otra persona alguna, según Nuestro Señor vos lo encomendó."

¹⁶ "apoderamiento que el condestable tiene en vuestra persona y corte"

contradiction.”¹⁷ Finally, they claimed that his empowerment and government was “notorious” to all the *grandes*, and to everyone else as well.¹⁸

Although the rebels cast themselves as petitioners, they had also raised troops and defied royal commands to disband. Taking care to justify those actions, they insisted that “the laws of your kingdoms require us” to protest, since where vassals see “something to your detriment they must correct it any way they can.”¹⁹ They expressed willingness to stand down, but insisted that the king first order Álvaro de Luna “to remove himself to one of his possessions, with all his followers, so your mercy may be at liberty.”²⁰ Until then, they informed Juan they would resist commands that did not seem to be “in his service.”²¹

Overall, according to this letter, the *grandes* claimed that the king was not governing personally, as he ought to do. Instead Álvaro de Luna was visibly playing that role, doing as he pleased without regard for what was just. They, on the other hand, were trying to defend themselves and reconcile with the king, but that could only begin once the *privado* was gone. These claims and demands, though in this instance they are expressed directly in his opponents’ voice, have much in common with how the chronicles described the anti-Luna party’s concerns and goals in their narratives of 1427. However, the letter also included two concepts which did

¹⁷ “a él plaze e quiere, agora sea justo o en justo, syn contradición alguna” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1438 ch. 5, pp. 549-50; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, pp. 257-60.

¹⁸ On “notoriety” see Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 103-13.

¹⁹ “las leyes de vuestros reynos nos constriñen,” “vuestro daño lo deben arredrar por todas las vías e maneras que pudieren.” Indeed, if they did not, then they say that “*caeríamos en mal caso*.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, pp. 257-60. For this principle in the Partidas see p.2, t.13, l.9, 25. That quotation is from the *Crónica del Halconero*, the *Crónica de Juan II* says “all the laws of your kingdoms.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1438 ch. 5, pp. 549-50.

²⁰ “se aparte a una villa o lugar suyo con todos sus parientes e gentes, por que vuestra merced quede todo en vuestro libre poder.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, pp. 257-60.

²¹ The specific phrasing alludes to the “obey but not comply” response to royal commands. Bermejo Cabrero, “La idea medieval de contrafuero,” 301-4; Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 475. This issue appeared frequently in Cortes proceedings, such as that of the 1387 Cortes of Briviesca, where the king accepted that commands or charters *contra fuero* should be obeyed, but not complied with. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 2:371-2. Diego de Valera, referencing the second *Partida*, insisted that subjects obey and comply with all just commands, highlighting distinctions between the two actions. *Doctrinal de principes*, 190.

not appear in any chronicle account of those earlier events.²² Namely, that he was empowered over the king's person and court, and that while he and his partisans were with King Juan, the monarch did not possess *libre poder*.

Neither of these claims was new, in themselves or within royal chronicle narratives. For example, in 1420 the *infante* Enrique, having been excluded from court, seized the palace by force, expelled his rivals, and installed his own followers. Empowerment over the court and king was a prominent issue in accounts of Enrique's action, but that usage was in response to the forceful seizure of the court.²³ This term continued to be used in situations, like the 1441 coup, when an outside party seized the king. Here however, that charge served to explain why Álvaro de Luna was able to do as he pleased, even though he had taken no such action.

As for the alleged lack of *libre poder*, that phrase also appeared in accounts of 1420, but to describe the king's state after the *infante* Enrique's empowerment over the court.²⁴ That is in keeping with how normative sources like law codes envisioned an unfree king, subject to some sort of forceful physical restraint or isolation.²⁵ According to this inserted letter, however, the *grandes* associated the king's lack of freedom with the simple presence of the favorite and his partisans. Even without a forceful takeover of the court that proximity, in the eyes of Álvaro de Luna's opponents, could be abused to isolate the ruler and limit his freedom of action.

²² Both chronicles do so here in the form of a letter. Their own narration does not include it yet.

²³ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 29, p. 130; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 3, pp. 381-82, 387; *Refundición*, ch. 12, p. 33. Even here, the differences between the traditions is apparent. For instance, the *Crónica* accounts describe the *infante* Enrique confronting the king with specific reasons for his action, while the *Refundición* only alludes to justifications based on service. That is, in some ways, similar to how they depicted the king confronting Enrique at Madrid in 1422.

²⁴ In each *Crónica* account of 1420, envoys sent to court by the *infante* Juan after the coup claimed that the king was "not like a king should be, but unable to exercise his will and lacking liberty." *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 22, pp. 117-18; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 12, pp. 384-5. In 1443, when the *infantes* of Aragón were in the ascendant at court, ante-*infante* nobles called the king "oppressed in his person" and unable to "freely execute" his office. Rabade Obrado, "Confederaciones, seguros y pleitos homenajes," 73.

²⁵ In the *Partidas*, imprisoning the king is placed among treasonable offenses, but the text implies literal detention. p.2, t.13, l.26.

But an alleged lack of royal liberty was key for defining, and challenging, the *privado*'s power in ways that departed from what the chronicles described for 1427. That redefinition presents him as a usurper of royal power, and certainly the liberty of the king was crucial for the proper exercise of that power and the fulfillment of royal responsibilities.²⁶ The loss of such liberty, meanwhile, was not only a grave concern for the government of the realm, but also a severe blow to royal prestige.²⁷ Of course, the king's liberty, or lack of it, was often in the eye of the beholder. And in this context, besides anti-Luna case-making, the suggestion that the king lacked liberty was also used as an excuse to disobey his commands and, more broadly, a cause around which to rally.²⁸

But an unfree king could also be a source of danger for his subjects. And given that this letter originated during a rebellion sparked by Álvaro de Luna's arrest of a rival, the charge gains a more specific significance.²⁹ In the chronicle accounts of 1427, his presence and his exclusion of the *grandes* was undesirable for them, but in this 1439 demand the king's lack of liberty,

²⁶ The "libertad del monarca" played a key role in justifying noble pacts. Beceiro Pita, "Parentesco y alianzas políticas en Castilla (Siglo XV)," 27. See also Carrasco Manchado, "Léxico político en el Seguro de Tordesillas," 100-101, 124; Fernando Gómez Redondo, "Elocución y diplomacia: Rivalidades culturales en Tordesillas," in Foronda and Carrasco Manchado, *Du contrat d'alliance au contrat politique*, 58; Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 37.

²⁷ Nieto Soria holds that the monarch and royal power were linked inextricably. An unfree sovereign thus would impact all actions of royal power. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 36. Rabade Obrado, "Confederaciones, seguros y pleitos homenajes," 73-74; Ana Belén Sánchez Prieto, "Un tipo documental fundamentalmente nobiliario: La confederación. Aspectos jurídico-diplomáticos (siglos XV-XVI)," *Cuadernos de Estudios Medievales y Ciencias y Técnicas Historiográficas* 20 (1995): 56.

²⁸ Pérez de Guzmán defended the infantes by claiming that when they seized the court to force out Álvaro de Luna, they protected the liberty of the king's heart if not of his body. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 142-3. And, freeing him embodied the proactive service legal and political traditions encouraged. In the *Partidas*, for instance, subjects are exhorted to discern the king's interests from a distance and work to further them *p.2, t.13, l.3*. See also Beceiro Pita, "Parentesco y alianzas políticas en Castilla," 27.

²⁹ Within the letter, before demanding Álvaro de Luna's departure they pointedly remind King Juan that "in matters of justice, your lordship cannot show favoritism to one party over another." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1438 ch. 5, p. 550; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, p. 258.

associated with the presence of the favorite and his followers, was a more explicit menace to them as well.³⁰

In the circumstances of 1439, *grande* allegations that the king was not free while Álvaro de Luna stood beside him may have served specific “tactical” purposes. But his alleged empowerment, his control of affairs, and the king’s lack of liberty would continue to be closely linked in subsequent anti-Luna case making. In their narratives of the events of 1427, none of the chronicles described his ascendancy as an imposition on King Juan. Indeed the king’s backing, or at least disengagement, was important for his success. Although the notion that the king supported his advisor did not disappear, an argument could and would be made that he was empowered without reference to Juan’s wishes at all. And in that formulation the principal victim of the king’s lack of liberty was not his subjects, but the king himself.

Adaptations and Responses

So, despite the similarities between these demands and those the chronicles described with respect to 1427, new elements contributed to new conceptions of Álvaro de Luna’s power. These differences can be interpreted in light of the immediate political situation, but by the time of the 1439 petition his role had been an issue for fifteen years and efforts to dislodge him had already failed. Chronicle accounts had attributed this failure to a recognized mismatch between

³⁰ The later *Crónica* account, in a divergence from its forebear, also said the *infantes* implied Álvaro de Luna had been acting contrary to *justicia*, but offers no specifics. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 4, p. 381. As an example of this menace to subjects, when describing the king’s alleged subjection to his favorite in 1440, the *grandes* pointed to an incident in which he allegedly killed a man in the royal presence without any consequence. They used this as evidence that he was not “*en libertad*.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 13, p. 566; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, p. 332. That stress on the king’s subjection and the danger the *grandes* claimed to be in is a pattern in the later *Crónica*, and that specific accusation may be a retrospective insert. For example, its account of the 1420 events implies that Álvaro de Luna was already more influential in 1420 than anyone suspected, which none of the earlier accounts does. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1420 ch. 2, pp. 380-81.

what his opponents secured and what they desired, and a similar recognition played a role in how the anti-Luna nobles explained later changes in strategy.

But although I have focused on anti-Luna case making, his opponents' voices were not the only ones involved, and nor were chroniclers only concerned with presenting their views. For instance, in a general letter to the towns of the realm inserted in both narratives, King Juan II responded to the *grande* revolt and their charges. Referring to his ignored orders to disband, he lamented that the rebels, "not fearing me or my justice," had defied him.³¹ He also commanded that nobody help them or believe their claims to be acting in his service. Here, royal authority backed by justice clashed with the legal rights and duties of subjects that the *grandes* invoked.

More directly, the *Crónica del Halconero* includes a supposed royal response to the 1439 demands.³² It offered a different vision of Álvaro de Luna's relationship with King Juan and, pointedly, his rivals' own proper role. In it, the king denied that his *privado* was empowered at court, casting him instead as a trusted advisor, just as other kings had employed.³³ And regarding their resolution to ignore commands they judged not to be in his service, Juan replied "what may be in my service, to the advantage of my royal estate, and to the public good of my kingdoms, pertains to me alone to say."³⁴ Such claims countered the justifications behind *grande* defiance of the king's orders, and also illustrated a challenge faced by the *privado*'s opponents in defending their efforts. Although careful to cast him alone as their enemy, in practice challenging him meant challenging the king.

³¹ "non temiendo a mí ni a la mi justicia." Dated March 1439, it was written in his voice. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1430 ch. 1, p. 551; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 234, pp. 277-278. See also Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 203, 503-503; doc. 204, 504-505. The first letter relates to organizing, and funding, the royal response, while the second orders the city government of Murcia not to give any aid to the "rebels."

³² *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 233, p. 263-276. The *Crónica de Juan II* does not, which fits within its general concern to separate the king and Álvaro de Luna by omitting a defense of his role and their relationship.

³³ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 233, p. 268. On trust, see García Marín, *El oficio público*, 344.

³⁴ "qual sea el mi servicio e provecho de mi real estado, e bien público de mis reynos, esto solo a mí pertenece de lo decir." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 233, pp. 275-6.

Certainly it would be too much to attribute a shift in understanding the nature of Álvaro de Luna's power to this response alone.³⁵ But there was a shift, and the specific form it took worked to neutralize counterarguments like the assertion that the king alone knew what was best for himself and his kingdom. This assertion drew inspiration from the concept of *cierta ciencia*, the idea that the king possessed a unique and God-given knowledge of what was in the interests of the realm.³⁶ As employed here, these arguments responded to the *grandes'* claims to act in the king's service even when ignoring his commands. But more broadly, it denied them the capacity to perceive, on their own, what that service might be.³⁷ That denial clashed with *grande* understandings of their role in guiding the king and ruling the realm, and undermined an important basis on which they could claim to act in the service of a king they characterized as badly informed or badly counseled.³⁸

So, although his opponents had many legal and ideological precedents to work with in making their case, Álvaro de Luna and the king did, of course, as well.³⁹ However, after 1439, the arguments deployed by his enemies worked to get around those rhetorical weapons altogether. No matter what royal authority in the hands of a free king might legitimately entail, the chronicle accounts show them alleging that, thanks to the *privado's* power over the king,

³⁵ Either in the chronicle accounts or as reflected in contemporary sources more broadly.

³⁶ Carrasco manchado, "Léxico político en el Seguro de Tordesillas," 99-100, 122-23; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 117-118; Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 32, 163. According to Diego de Valera *sapiencia* was knowledge of divine things, while *ciencia* was knowledge of worldly things. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 199. It was linked to *poderío real absoluto*. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 115; Guenée *States and Rulers*, 67-8; Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 96; Nieto Soria, 51-58, 65-67, 100, 141; Mackay, *Medieval Spain*, 144; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 96-97.

³⁷ Not if they were later contradicted by the king himself, at least.

³⁸ That does not mean that this claim was accepted always or the notion that a king must be counseled was replaced. For instance, one petition in the *cuaderno* of the *Cortes* of Valladolid suggested that just as people could legitimately disagree over how best to serve God, they could disagree over how to serve the king. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:378.

³⁹ The notion that late medieval monarchs gained an ideological advantage over other political actors is longstanding. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 193; Joseph Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 88.

royal power was no longer in royal hands.⁴⁰ This approach did not replace the discourse of counsel, service and government, but its addition to that discourse played the most significant role in reconceiving the nature of the favorite's power, and, ultimately, how he could be confronted.

1440: New Directions

Álvaro de Luna was not immediately forced from court in response to these demands, but after the return of the *infantes* to Castile, he was pressed into leaving by the agreement made at Castronuño in October 1439.⁴¹ By early 1440 however his rivals asserted, and the chroniclers tended to agree, that the king was still following his advice.⁴² The *infantes* and their supporters made a new league, and in doing so articulated new objections to the influence, and feared return, of the great favorite.⁴³ Both chronicles insert what they identify as a letter from the allied *grandes* to the king.⁴⁴ Each version is arranged similarly, though they vary in terminology and emphasis. Ultimately however, each works to redefine the *privado*'s role in terms of royal power

⁴⁰ Watts argues that fifteenth-century English deponents mostly abandoned trying to justify removing monarchs, focusing instead on proclaiming the new one. Watts, "Usurpation in England," 115-130. Anti-Luna efforts had different dynamics, but there are parallels in how his opponents shifted to working around, rather than against, the king's wishes or royal power.

⁴¹ The *Crónica del Halconero* includes further anti-Luna petitions to the king closer to the agreement. These also stressed *grande* demands about expelling the favorite to make way for their own advice. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 247, pp. 294-96. After Castronuño, though *grande* case making focused on Luna's supposed dominance, his rivals also tried to impose formal restrictions on what the king could do without the approval of the *Consejo*, which they hoped to control. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 227.

⁴² In early 1440, the king had slipped out of their control, though Álvaro de Luna did not yet return to court in person. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 1, p. 558; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 251, pp. 302-303.

⁴³ For the 1439-40 political situation, see Óscar Villarroel González, "Negociación y representación del consenso: Los conflictos de época de Juan II de castilla," in Nieto Soria and Villarroel González *Pacto y consenso en la cultura política peninsular*, 253-254. A royal letter to Murcia dated February 16, 1440, around the time the chronicle accounts place the petition, accused the *grandes* of preparing a rebellion. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 208, 509-10.

⁴⁴ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 5, pp. 560-562; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, pp. 320-334.

and its exercise. As such, I will examine them in detail, side by side, and analyze how that redefinition worked in the context of fifteenth-century Castilian political ideas and institutions.⁴⁵

The letter opens by naming Álvaro de Luna the cause of misgovernment and conflict in Castile. In the *Crónica de Halconero*'s telling, his rivals claimed those problems arose since the king "made and raised him into the estate in which he is, exercising totally all your royal power, both absolute and ordinary, and gathering the honor and preeminence that were due to your royal majesty."⁴⁶ For its part, the *Crónica de Juan II* insists the infantes proclaimed their intention to describe the ills that had befallen since the king "had wished to submit both your absolute and ordinary royal power to the constable, to the great detriment of the pre-eminence due to your royal majesty and totally against what the laws of your kingdoms dispose."⁴⁷ Despite their differences, in each his role was based not on proximity, *consejo*, *gobernación*, or *privanza*, but on his exercise of *poderío real*.⁴⁸

Each chronicle's version of the letter then proceeds to a pointed primer on the differences between two contrasting ways to *señorear*, or rule, which introduced another new element into their depiction of Álvaro de Luna's power. Though organized differently, both versions present a list of qualities that defined a good way of ruling, called *derecho* in the *Crónica del Halconero* and *jurídica* in the *Crónica de Juan II*, to be contrasted with a bad way that both describe as

⁴⁵ Moreover, differences in their presentation of the 1440 complaints tie in with their overall differences in perspective, both in the context of the disagreements since 1438 and in their accounts of other court confrontations, especially 1427.

⁴⁶ "lo fizo e subió en estado que es, usando entera e largamente de todo vuestro real poder, así absoluto como ordinario, e posponiendo la onra y preminencia que debidas eran a vuestra magestad real." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, pp. 320-334.

⁴⁷ "querido someter vuestro Real poderío así absoluto como ordinario á vuestro Condestable, en gran mengua de la preeminencia a Vuestra Real Magestad debida, é contra todo lo que disponen las leyes de vuestros Reynos." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440, ch. 5, pp. 560-562.

⁴⁸ The *Crónica* version also emphasizes the king's submission, which is in keeping with its general priorities and also its later coverage of 1453.

tiránica.⁴⁹ They then compare the favorite's conduct with that of a tyrant, and insist that he had usurped royal power and wanted to make himself king in all but name. And toward those ends, they stress, he had tried to destroy and divide the *grandes* of the realm and keep them away from the king.

More specifically, in the *Crónica del Halconero*'s version of the letter, before discussing tyranny, his opponents suggested it would be clear which path Don Álvaro, "usurping your aforesaid royal power, and wishing to submit and submitting everything to himself, and to make himself monarch in your kingdoms," had chosen.⁵⁰ They also linked his conduct toward the *grandes* with the conduct of a tyrant, saying that he sought to destroy them and prevent them from cooperating among themselves. Based on the entirety of his conduct, they claimed that "with very just and legitimate cause he must deserve to be called and treated as a manifest tyrant."⁵¹ As for the *Crónica de Juan II*, its version holds that since Álvaro de Luna had "occupied and usurped your power," it was also clear to all that he tried to destroy the *grandes* and promoted dissention among them.⁵² He did this because he desired "to make himself sovereign of all with great pride and rampant greed, not only over your household and its servants and officials, but above all of the *grandes*."⁵³ And finally, it accuses the king of having

⁴⁹ This list drew heavily on established ideas about tyrannical rule, especially those of Aristotle. Indeed, not only the content, but even the format, is similar to that presented by Sánchez de Arévalo when discussing tyrants and their rule in his *Suma de la política. Suma de la política*, 285-88. See also Cortés Pacheco, "El tirano y la tiranía," 384-9; Eiximenis, *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 199-207.

⁵⁰ "usurpando de dicho vuestro real poder, e queriendo someter e sometiendo a sí todo quanto es, e fazerse monarca en vuestros reinos." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, pp. 320-334.

⁵¹ "con muy justa e legítima razón necesario es merecedor ser reputado e tenido por conocido tirano."

⁵² "ocupado é usurpado vuestro poder" Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 5, pp. 560-562.

⁵³ "hacerse soberano de todos con gran soberbia é desordenada codicia, no solamente de los de vuestra casa y oficiales e ministros della, más de todos los Grandes." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 5, pp. 560-562. Íñigo López de Mendoza, in his "Doctrinal de privados," also referred to Álvaro de Luna as having enjoyed *soberanía*. "Doctrinal de privados," 158. The "Doctrinal" was not composed until after his 1453 execution, and use of terms related to sovereignty, like *poderio real absoluto*, were another innovation of the early to mid-fifteenth century.

“made way for his horrible, tyrannical and illicit appetite,” rounding out its vision of tyrannical rule.⁵⁴

Having made these accusations, the next section offers specific charges to back them up.⁵⁵ Many of those allegations described how he supposedly distorted the functioning of royal administration to advance his own interests, while others denounced his personal immorality. But some further addressed his relationship with the king, his alleged usurpation of royal power, and in another new development, his encroachment on royal preeminence in the eyes of the realm.

The *Crónica del Halconero*'s version strongly highlights an accusation that Álvaro de Luna had not only usurped royal power in practice, but overshadowed the king in the eyes of his subjects. When reporting that he was seen as the true source of royal offices and *mercedes*, it asserts bluntly that thereby he was “showing himself more powerful than your mercy,” which gave the impression that “your royal office had passed to him.”⁵⁶ Along those lines, a later charge noted that everyone saw that “your lordship gives way to him entirely, and that the said constable every day grows more powerful.”⁵⁷ As a result, Castilians “hold him as sovereign lord,” leaving Juan with only the “name of king” while his *privado* had the “honor and the substance.”⁵⁸ Finally, this version also insists that keeping the *grandes* away was a key part of his ability to maintain control. For example, it claims that he only permitted people of low estate near the king, who did not have the strength to tell him the truth without fear.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ “dado lugar á que oviese efecto su aborrecible e tiránico é ilícito apetito.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 5, pp. 560-562.

⁵⁵ Note that the *Crónica* maintains its concern with the *Casa* and *Corte*, tying Álvaro de Luna's bad government to his machinations at court. It also says that King Juan had “*dado lugar*,” like it did in 1427. This consistent language suggests some passive responsibility on Juan's part. The *Crónica del Halconero* portrays them accusing Luna of usurpation, with less detail about how his power “worked.” Still, both show the *grandes* linking the favorite's role to the exercise of royal power.

⁵⁶ “mostrándose más poderoso que vuestra merced.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, pp. 320-334.

⁵⁷ “vuestra señoría da a todo lugar, é que el dicho condestable de cada día se apodera.”

⁵⁸ “a él reputan por soberano señor;” “nombre de rey;” “hondra y fecho.”

⁵⁹ The *Partidas* insist that subjects must tell the king the truth when advising him. *p.2, t.13, l.5.*

For its part, the *Crónica*'s version reports similar charges. One accusation claimed that Álvaro de Luna had come to be seen as the true source of royal largesse, since "no one could get an office or *merced* except by his hand, from which followed that all the services and graces were offered to him without any mention of your highness."⁶⁰ That, the letter holds, was to the "dishonor of your royal crown and in your disservice."⁶¹ Another charge returned to his conduct toward the *grandes*, reiterating that to keep his position he stirred up dissent among them and kept them away from court. Thus, nobody could tell the king the truth about affairs, and though it seemed there were many people in *Consejo*, in reality there was only one voice, "which without doubt is deplored by all the sages."⁶² As long as the king did not "see justice done and carry out your royal office," the letter warns that disorder would continue.⁶³

The letter closes by returning to the issue of the close relationship between Juan and his *privado*, and its consequences. Both accounts include an extraordinary charge, a claim that everyone who saw what the king had permitted concluded that Álvaro de Luna:

"holds your bodily and mental powers in bondage by means of diabolical magic, so you cannot do anything except what he wants, nor can your mind remember, nor your intelligence understand, nor your will desire, nor your mouth speak anything except what he wishes. So much so that no monk, even in strictest religious order in the world, could be found who is as subjugated to his superior as your royal person is and has been."⁶⁴

⁶⁰ "ninguno puede haber oficio ni merced salvo por su mano, de lo qual se sigue que todos los servicios y gracias se hagan á él sin de Vuestra Alteza hacerse mención." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 5, pp. 560-562.

⁶¹ "es gran deservicio vuestro é menosprecio de vuestra Real Corona."

⁶² "lo qual sin duda es reprobado por todos los sabios."

⁶³ "usar de justicia y cunplir vuestro oficio real."

⁶⁴ "tiene ligadas e atadas todas vuestras potencias corporales e animales por mágicas e deavólicas encantaciones, para que vuestra señoría non faga sino lo que el quisiere, ni vuestra memoria remiembre, ni vuestro entendimiento entienda, ni vuestra voluntad ame, ni vuestra voluntad fable, salvo lo que él quiera e le plaze. Tanto que religioso de la Orden más estrecha del mundo no es ni se podría fallar tan sometido a su mayor, quanto lo á sydo

Then, hearkening back to the earlier discussion of *privanza* and *voluntad*, in both versions the *grandes* conceded that kings had *privados* before, but alleged that Álvaro de Luna's position was unique.⁶⁵ And as represented in the chronicle accounts, they had provided a unique picture of his role in comparison to previous efforts against him or other court figures.

1440: Implications

Many of the complaints described in accounts of earlier contests continued to play a role in the 1440 denunciation. For instance, the issues of access to and influence over the king remained a major concern. However, in terms of the nature and origin of Álvaro de Luna's power, these versions of that denunciation register major departures from 1427 and even from 1439.⁶⁶

First, both versions of these demands associate Álvaro de Luna's role with the king's *poderío real absoluto* and *ordinario*.⁶⁷ This terminology referred not just to power in a sense of capacity, but specifically to the king's executive authority.⁶⁸ That is to say, it suggests that the exercise of royal power, not just practical responsibility for *gobierno* or *regimiento*, was placed

e es vuestra real persona.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, pp. 320-334. The *Crónica* version is mostly the same, though it insists on the king's subjection to Álvaro de Luna's will, adding that his royal person was subjected “al quiere e voluntad del Condestable.”

⁶⁵ The *Crónica del Halconero* also adds that: “no fuese privado tan osado a fazer tales cosas.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, pp. 320-334. And Pérez de Guzmán also insisted on this uniqueness. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 139. Also, recall the 1439 royal response letter as represented in the *Crónica*, in which the king insisted having favorites was normal. Here, his opponents countered by insisting that Álvaro de Luna was something more than that, not to be counted among ordinary favorites.

⁶⁶ And also from 1420.

⁶⁷ For *poderío real absoluto*, and also its relation to the royal will, see Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 115; Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 96; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 51-58, 65-67, 100; Gueneé, *States and Rulers*, 67-8; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 96-97. Meanwhile, Paz Alonso, in her study of Castilian criminal justice, refers to her subject as *jurisdicción real ordinaria*. *El proceso penal*, 1.

⁶⁸ This notion did not appear only in chronicles. In *Generaciones y semblanzas*, Pérez de Guzmán also presented Álvaro de Luna in this way, claiming he was as powerful as a king and that he “mas uso de poderio de rey que de caballero.” *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 121, 133. In Mendoza's “Doctrinal de privados,” exercise of royal power was expressed another way, focusing on justice, with a claim that other *privados* did not “mandaron en cevil nin criminal,” as Álvaro de Luna did. “Doctrinal de privados,” 158. See also Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 197.

in his hands.⁶⁹ Indeed, the invocation of *poderío real absoluto* was an innovation originating in the court of Juan II, and quickly became a potent assertion of royal authority.⁷⁰ Certainly, it served as such in royally instigated depositions during Juan's reign, and in chronicle narratives of those removals. Here however, two royal chronicles show forces opposed to the *privado* and, in practice if not in name the king as well, invoking that concept in an effort to impose their wishes on the king and his court.

I will discuss the implications of this appropriation, which "turned" him into a deposable figure, potentially subject to royal intervention, below. But for now, my concern lies with how Álvaro de Luna was said to have secured his power, before addressing the consequences of his having done so. As noted, the late 1430's shift in anti-Luna attacks has been interpreted in terms of accusations of tyranny, and both versions of the letter include the idea that he was acting like, or simply was, a tyrant. However, they also insist, separately and specifically, that he had usurped royal power.

Theoretically, those concepts were linked, since rulers could earn the designation of tyrant by means of the illegitimate occupation of a particular lordship, or by means of unjust conduct.⁷¹ Such conduct could turn even a legitimate ruler into a tyrant, whereas those lacking legitimacy would rule in unjust ways to secure their control.⁷² For Nieto Soria, in place of a

⁶⁹ The verb *usar* referred to the exercise of an office or power in royal documents and in the chronicles as well. Elsewhere, Pérez de Guzmán used it to refer to Álvaro de Luna's power. It appears also in Enrique de Villena's early fifteenth-century *Doce trabajos de Hércules*, when an angered king strips his sons of the *uso* of their riches, but not possession. Villena, *Los doce trabajos de Hércules*, 35.

The *Crónica de Juan II* assigns some responsibility to the king, but also maintains a separation between his failings and royal power in itself. The *Crónica del Halconero* does not emphasize such a separation. The *Crónica's* greater specificity about how Luna's power "worked" created a distance between the favorite and the king, which facilitated depicting the *infantes'* actions as less of an imposition on him.

⁷⁰ Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 94, 120.

⁷¹ Sánchez de Arévalo urged that a ruler should expand his territories justly, not usurping those of others. And a usurper could also be called a tyrant. *Suma de la política*, 287. See also *p.2, t.1, l.8-10*.

⁷² The subject of the tyrant was much discussed in medieval political thought. Ideas about tyranny relative to this case are discussed in Black, *Political Thought*, 24-25; Mackay, "Ritual and Propaganda in Castile," 13-14; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 137, 152; Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y génesis*, 101; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos*

legitimacy based view, by the fifteenth century identifying a tyrant came to rest more on a ruler's conduct.⁷³ In one sense, that accords with how the term was used in both versions of this letter. The image of a generic tyrant was presented in terms of ways to *señorear* over others, while Álvaro de Luna's tyrant status was established by comparing his conduct to that image.⁷⁴

But although tyranny accusations did constitute a change in how the *grandes* described his conduct and the consequences of his empowerment, they do not explain the change from decrying his *gobernación* to denouncing his wielding of *poderío real*. To be sure, shifts in the meaning of tyranny did not mean that its older sense of illegitimate occupation was abandoned. But even so, the favorite's tyrannical behavior and his supposed ability to exercise royal power were not clearly linked in either form of the complaint. In both, the *grandes* alleged he had secured the exercise of royal power before even mentioning tyranny. Instead, the term usurpation was most directly linked with his alleged exercise of royal authority. Tyranny and usurpation would continue to be employed alongside, but also distinctly from, one another in later case-making

Moreover, Álvaro de Luna's usurpation of royal power, not tyranny or tyrannical conduct, was most directly connected to a set of consequences not featured in previous complaints or accounts of them. Each chronicle's version of the accusations includes charges that

ideológicos, 183-196; Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 27; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 82-88.

⁷³ Eiximenis included both views, but said more about conduct than legitimacy. He also envisioned a tyrant as a ruler. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 91, 189-191, 199-207. Diego de Valera's later work includes both views too. In his *Doctrinal de príncipes*, he advanced a conduct focused view, though the work is a mirror of princes. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 174, 188. In *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, however, Caesar was named a tyrant by virtue of the fact he had no right to "reinar e señorear." Valera, *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, 97.

⁷⁴ Generic tyrant figures were nearly always a titular ruler, which Álvaro de Luna was not. Though my focus is on the anti-Luna case, there were also different perspectives about the king's role in this situation. They overlapped with the concept of the *rex inutilis*, or useless king. However, anti-Luna case making was primarily focused on his role rather than on describing royal shortcomings. For general observations on royal inadequacy and tyranny into the early fourteenth century, see Peters, *The Shadow King*, 210-246.

he acted publicly in such a way that Castilians looked to him as the source of what should be royal largess.⁷⁵ In the *Crónica del Halconero*, his rivals claimed such a situation gave the impression that the *real oficio* had passed to him, leaving Juan with only the title. In the *Crónica de Juan II*, it meant no mention was made of the king at all in those interactions, holding the *privado* up as the source of honors. But either way, in these views, he did not direct royal action by means of influence or counsel, but rather undertook, or appeared to undertake, royal responsibilities on his own.⁷⁶ As a result, both versions suggest, many subjects offered him the esteem that should be directed to the king.⁷⁷ Indeed, his usurpation of royal power was even associated with an alleged attempt to make himself, in practice, monarch or sovereign of Castile.⁷⁸

Altogether, the introduction of the concepts of tyranny and usurpation pointed toward a vision of Álvaro de Luna's role based on his exercise of royal power. Changing views of tyrants and tyranny may have made those terms fitting descriptions for him, and although most hypothetical tyrants were rulers by title, a shift toward a conduct based definition could make that less important.⁷⁹ But ultimately, to be in a position to act tyrannically, he still had to gain access to power. And in each chronicle's portrayal of these charges, that was explained in terms

⁷⁵ Beyond a recognition that his influence would help people get what they want from King Juan. In Castile and elsewhere, the idea that the king must visibly be king, and that his performance set an example for his subjects, was an important late medieval consideration. Contamine, "La royauté française à la fin du Moyen Âge." 48; Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza*, 68; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 36, 85; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 73.

⁷⁶ Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza*, 36-38; Nieto Soria "Corona e Identidad política," 187.

⁷⁷ Subjects were to defend royal pre-eminence, in terms of dignity, honor and reputation, and certainly not undermine or usurp it. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 112-118; Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 153. In his *Tratado de las armas* Diego de Valera, quoting the *Partidas*, insisted it was treason for a subject to make the king lose his dignity. *Tratado de las armas*, 127.

⁷⁸ Nobody claimed Álvaro de Luna was literally trying to become king, but they alleged that his usurpation of royal power made the kingship a rather empty title. On sovereignty and royal power see Black, *Political Thought*, 113; Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza*, 130-133; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 247.

⁷⁹ As Barron points out regarding kings, nearly any ruler could be called a tyrant based on their conduct. Whether one was or was not depended on political circumstances. Moreover, for English kings at least, she says this often occurred in hindsight. With Álvaro de Luna, such charges were used as a weapon in the midst of an ongoing dispute. Barron, "The Deposition of Richard II," 136.

of usurpation. Moreover, while charges of tyranny were justified mainly in terms of his general conduct, especially toward the *grandes*, his alleged usurpation was backed up by more specific claims that he publicly played royal roles, and received the consideration due to kings.⁸⁰

Finally, in accounts of the 1430's and 40's, the accusation that the king had been bewitched is an isolated claim and does not feature elsewhere in the chronicles or other documents.⁸¹ However, the alleged result, that Álvaro de Luna had subdued the king to himself, did appear frequently thereafter.⁸² Coming at the end of the missive, this charge helped to explain both his usurpation of royal power and his ability to act as a tyrant even while a legitimate king still reigned. In addition, it emphasized his rise beyond the status of *privado*. In each version the *grandes* insisted, after making this extraordinary charge, that his role and relationship with Juan II were extraordinary in comparison with other *privados*.

In contrast, none of the accounts of 1427 suggested that the king was not free, while Álvaro de Luna influenced royal action in ways that fit within longstanding ideas about the roles of counselors.⁸³ In 1439, though the *grande* demands reproduced in the chronicle accounts did suggest the king lacked liberty, it was associated primarily with the presence of the *privado* and his followers near the king. In these 1440 articles, however, both the king's subjection and the favorite's power were, allegedly, of a different nature and had different consequences. Rather

⁸⁰ Fifteenth-century England also saw a problem with royal "weakness" with the illness of Henry VI. As a result, the issue of who could or should rule for an incapacitated king became important. Raw, "Margaret of Anjou and the Language of Praise and Censure," 94. And in a larger sense, the notion of ideal kingship, whether it should be abstracted and institutionalized, or revitalized with a more active, personal model, was in debate. Allmand and Keen, "History and the Literature of War," 99-105, 93.

⁸¹ However, Álvaro de Luna was sometimes associated with the antichrist and apocalyptic imagery. José Guadalajara Medina, "Álvaro de Luna y el Anticristo: Imágenes apocalípticas de Don Íñigo López de Mendoza," *Revista de Literatura Medieval* 2 (1990): 195-6.

⁸² For instance, Pérez de Guzmán insisted in *Generaciones y semblanzas* that nothing happened at court "sin voluntad" of Luna. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 121.

⁸³ Accounts of the 1420 incident did suggest that, but not in a mental sense, more in the sense that he was isolated by the people around him.

than an excessively trusted confidante giving bad advice, or even a wicked counselor dominating the court, he had subdued the king's will, usurping his power and wielding it as a tyrant.⁸⁴ The king was dependent on him, and his will was cast as the true force behind royal actions.

Desafío and Justice

Despite those accusations, terms along the lines of the Castronuño settlement were reaffirmed in mid-1440.⁸⁵ However, a new breach opened at the end of the year, leading both to Álvaro de Luna's brief return and his next expulsion in June 1441.⁸⁶ By then, in the terms of previous *grande* justifications, space had been made for their better counsel several times. Yet the king still had preferred his *privado*, who had managed, his enemies alleged, to maintain his grip even from afar.⁸⁷ But in this confrontation, a vision of his power incorporating that advanced in the 1440 demands became and remained a mainstay of *grande* case making, both within chronicle narratives and without. And in addition to a new conception of his power, those sources also depict new measures proposed against him. Although that cannot be understood simply in terms of changes in how his rivals described his position, the reasons why particular proposals made sense in the renewed conflict in 1441 can be. Álvaro de Luna's usurpation of royal power, and its consequences, made him into a figure deposable by that power.

⁸⁴ As discussed in the previous chapter, the royal will could have legal force. More broadly, when discussing why subjects ought to obey their rulers, Sánchez de Arévalo compared the correctness of this order to how "los elementos y cosas baxas obedecen la voluntad y movimiento del cielo," or "how lower things obey the will and movement of the heavens." *Suma de la política*, 304.

⁸⁵ For that reaffirmation, dated April 13, 1440 and April 27, 1440, see Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, docs. 76, 239-45; doc. 77, 246-50. A royal letter to Murcia dated June 18 announced that the king was in Valladolid to put an end to the scandals afflicting the realm. Abellán Pérez, doc. 210, 514-18. For these further efforts, see the *cuaderno* of the 1440 *Cortes* of Valladolid, petitions 1 and 2, in *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:369-71.

⁸⁶ Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 231.

⁸⁷ In the *Crónica's* perspective, that had been an issue since 1427. The *Crónica del Halconero's* treatment of 1427 does not stress it, but its coverage of later *grande* arguments included complaints about Álvaro de Luna's bad advice and their own exclusion from giving it. Pérez de Guzmán, in *Generaciones y semblanzas*, twice insisted that despite all attempts by the *grandes* to "enlighten" the king and to offer "better" advice, nothing had worked. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 120, 122.

As that next round of conflict began, the *privado*'s rivals were led once again by the *infantes* of Aragón. But although the cast of characters was similar to earlier rounds, from the start they approached this confrontation with the constable, and behind him king, in new ways. As 1440 turned into 1441, they declared Álvaro de Luna their enemy according to the Castilian law and custom of *desafío*.⁸⁸ Following that custom, they addressed their declarations to him directly, but according to the chronicles also wrote to the king to explain their actions.⁸⁹

The *Crónica del Halconero* offers a summary of the letter, explaining the *desafío* by claiming that the *grandes* saw “neither by one way nor another could they take the constable from the king’s will,” and believed that the king “was guided by his counsel as much in his absence as in his presence.”⁹⁰ It also suggests the *infantes* continued to accuse Álvaro de Luna of tyranny.⁹¹ In contrast, the *Crónica de Juan II* inserts what it claimed to be a portion of the *grandes*' letter directly. In it, they chided the king for allowing his *privado* to wield so much power, and blamed his refusal to listen to their previous petitions for the necessity of taking forceful action. In keeping with the arguments developed in the inserted letter from 1440, they claimed that:

⁸⁸ The *Partidas* and the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* lay out rules for *desafío*, a step to legitimize inter-noble conflicts. Those who engaged in them without it could face royal justice. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:66-70; p.7, t.11, l.1-3. Alonso de Cartagena and Diego de Valera, in their works on knighthood and military matters, referenced these laws extensively. Cartagena, *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 201; Valera, *Tratado de las armas*, 123. See also Justine, Firnhaber-Baker, *Violence and the State in Languedoc, 1250-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 225-9; Rodríguez-Velasco, “Theorizing the Language of Law,” 78. At the same time, the *infantes* and their allies made a *confederación* among one another, while claiming to act in the service of Juan II. AHN Sección Nobleza, Osuna, car. 1860, n. 3.

⁸⁹ For similar procedures elsewhere, see Hutchison, “Defamation, a Murder More Foul?,” 278. Around the same time, dated December 20, the king annulled Luna’s previous commitments to the *infantes* and allowed him to return to court. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 86, 276-277.

⁹⁰ “por una manera ni por otra no podían quitar de la voluntad del rey al dicho condestable; se guiaba por su consejo así en ausencia como en presencia” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 284, p. 357.

⁹¹ The *grandes*, in their *desafío* letters sent to Álvaro de Luna, made many of the same arguments. The *infante* Enrique’s letter, dated January 24, 1441, largely parallels, though more briefly, the charges from the 1440 petition as described in the chronicles. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 87, 277-280; for Queen María’s letter, dated January 21, 1441, see Calderón Ortega, doc. 88, 281-282. At the same time, the *almirante* of Castile and the Count of Benavente, allied to the *infantes*, also sent *desafío*, letters. BNE, MSS/10445(H.146R.-146V.)

“It has been notorious to all that your will always was subject to the constable, and guided and governed by his counsel, as much in his presence as his absence, which was clearly shown by you having cast out all the *grandes* of your kingdoms from your court, and having with you the servants and followers of the constable.”⁹²

Overall, the complaints advanced in the *desafío* letters mixed together enduring concern with counsel, proximity to the king, and the absence of the *grandes* with added insistence on the favorite’s dominance of the king’s will.

But although the *desafío* added a level of formality and intensity to the conflict, it did not greatly alter the nature of that conflict.⁹³ The *desafío* declarations did, however, also reiterate their authors’ frustration that previous expulsions had not worked.⁹⁴ In fact, the more important change was not to do with the terms on which the rivals confronted one another, but with the role that the king and royal power, rather than noble pact-making, might play in forcing the *privado* out again.

Indeed, according to both royal chronicle narratives, during the first months of 1441 the prospect of Álvaro de Luna facing *justicia*, not raised in their accounts of previous confrontations, was advanced as a potential means for bringing conflict to an end. The *Crónica de Juan II* describes a royal settlement proposal early that year, which offered three possible methods to end the disputes, including renewing the 1440 terms and calling a *Cortes*. However, the third method envisioned the selection of two judges to decide who bore responsibility for

⁹² “á todos era notorio que siempre su voluntad estaba sujeta al Condestable, é que se guiaba e gobernaba por su consejo, así en ausencia como en presencia; lo qual claramente se mostraba porque habia desechado de su Corte a todos los Grandes de sus Reynos, é tenia consigo a los criados e familiares del Condestable.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1440 ch. 23, p. 570.

⁹³ The insistence that the *grandes* opposed Álvaro de Luna, not the king, was an important distinction they attempted to maintain throughout. Though as noted, the two principal royal chronicles display differing degrees of sympathy for this view.

⁹⁴ Both the *infante* Enrique’s and the queen’s letters complained that Álvaro de Luna’s exile after Castronuño did not work. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 87, 277-80; doc. 88, 281-82.

disorder in the kingdom, who would then present their findings to the *Consejo* so that “justice could be done to the guilty.”⁹⁵ Although this was the only proposal directly connected with justice in this offer, the *Crónica* describes a further message, sent by the king later that spring, deploring that the *infantes* remained in rebellion even though he had declared that “by *vía de justicia* he was ready to review these matters and punish the constable if it should be found that he deserved it.”⁹⁶ They, however, replied that they would agree to nothing while their rival remained at court.

The *Crónica del Halconero*, for its part, offers a similar picture of the offers made in the early months of 1441, including the suggestion that Álvaro de Luna could be made to face justice.⁹⁷ But it also refers to the contents of a letter sent by his opponents to a potential ally, the Count of Medinaceli, asking for support. That communication placed the prospect of justice in a context other than just negotiations between the king and the *infantes*.⁹⁸ The vision of the *privado*’s power it adopted emphasized the king’s subjection, and it accused Álvaro de Luna of being a tyrant, mirroring the *desafío* letters.⁹⁹ But it also impressed upon the count that Luna must be held as an enemy until “the king should punish him by justice as he deserved, or they

⁹⁵ “se haga justicia de los culpantes.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 ch. 4, 572.

⁹⁶ “por un via de justicia era presto de ver estos hechos, é punir y castigar al Condestable, si hallase que lo mereció.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 ch. 18, 581.

The *Crónica* also displays sympathy toward the *infantes* in its treatment of the first half of 1441. It inserts what it calls a letter by Diego de Valera, in which he cited historical examples to argue that battle was an unreliable test of whether a cause was just and advocated for a settlement. Shortly after, the *Crónica* suggests pro-Luna counselors hardened the king against the *infantes*, casting the favorite’s allies as the chief obstacle to a settlement. See also Diego de Valera, “Tratado de las epístolas enviadas por Mosén Diego de Valera en diversos tiempos e a diversas personas,” ed. Mario Penna, *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles* 116 (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas 1959), 1.

⁹⁷ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 286, p. 366; ch. 309, p. 400.

⁹⁸ The *Crónica del Halconero* claims that they also wrote to others in a similar fashion. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 294, p. 381.

⁹⁹ For instance, it casts Álvaro de Luna’s conduct as calculated to enable him “freely exercise his office of tyrant.” Generally, the *Crónica de Juan II* emphasized accusations of subjection, not the *Crónica del Halconero*. However, this letter is clearly presented as an *infantes* message.

have him expelled.”¹⁰⁰ Though not the only option put forward, royal justice was now, for the first time, presented as a possibility.¹⁰¹

Justice and Royal Power

That previously unseen suggestion points away from the characterization of Álvaro de Luna’s power and toward measures designed to secure, and legitimize, his separation from the king and his court. In June of 1441, his opponents seized control of the court at Medina del Campo, forcing the *privado* to flee.¹⁰² In its aftermath, although ultimately he was not subjected to judicial procedures at this time, their shadow hung over him as his rivals sought to confirm his exile.¹⁰³ This new prospective approach to his exclusion worked in specific ways to counter his position as redefined since 1440.

Past removals were described, in the chronicles and in other documentary sources, as results of agreements between contending parties.¹⁰⁴ In 1427 for instance, four men were given

¹⁰⁰ “el señor Rey lo castigase por justicia como merecía, o lo obiesen desempachado.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 294, p. 381.

¹⁰¹ Justice was a premier royal responsibility. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 136. Indeed, the *grandes* were not placed in the role of bringing him to justice. The king, or people designated by him, were envisioned in that role.

¹⁰² The *Crónica* sympathizes with the *infantes*, while the *Crónica del Halconero* presents their action as an imposition on Juan. For instance, after the seizure of Medina del Campo, the *Crónica* reports simply that Álvaro de Luna’s remaining supporters were ordered to leave court. The *Crónica del Halconero* characterizes that same order as the *infantes’* explicit empowerment over the king and court, leaving a rather forlorn Juan “solo, sin sus oficiales.” The *Crónica del Halconero* also alleges that following the seizure of the court, the royal household was looted by soldiers in the service of the victors. The *Crónica* makes no mention of any such misbehavior on their part. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 ch. 28, pp. 586-87; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 317, pp. 417-21.

¹⁰³ The *Crónica* inserts the text of a *carta de poder* issued by the king after the coup empowering four people, including three rivals of Álvaro de Luna, to proceed “por via de justicia, como por via despediente ó de arbitramiento,” meaning according to ordinary process, truncated process, or mandatory arbitration. This power is not specifically directed against the favorite, but settling his position is a key element in the sentence the four eventually handed down with that power. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 ch. 30, pp. 595-96. The *Crónica del Halconero* does not include this letter, saying only that the *infantes* insisted that the king give full authority to the four commissioners, without specifying what specifically it was for. *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 317, pp. 420-21. See also, from the summer of 1441, Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 215, 525-530; Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 91, 285-96.

¹⁰⁴ Making alliances against kings could be treason, hence the importance of casting the dispute that way. *Tratado de las armas*, 127; *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:538. It is covered in p.7, t.2, l.1.

power, by the *grandes* on the one hand and Álvaro de Luna on the other, to review the question of his presence at court.¹⁰⁵ They convened under the king's auspices, but were not directly empowered by him.¹⁰⁶ Altogether, the descriptions of their authority and the terms of their sentence owed much to the forms and language of arbitration. As for the Castronuño accord, it was represented as a negotiated settlement. Though the talks were conducted and the terms set with formal royal permission, they were given force by the oaths of the parties involved.¹⁰⁷

These approaches to confronting the favorite's power were in keeping with contemporary Castilian political culture and practice.¹⁰⁸ However, at the time of the *desafío* and afterward, anti-Luna *grandes* could look back on several such settlements meant to achieve or solidify his separation from the king, none of which had worked to their satisfaction.¹⁰⁹ In that context, it is perhaps unsurprising that new ways of approaching the problem began to appear in various sources. But that alone does not account for why, in contrast to previous efforts that placed the

¹⁰⁵ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 8, pp. 449-450; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1427 ch. 5, pp. 441-442; *Crónica del Halconero*, 11-12; *Refundición*, ch. 21, pp. 49-52. Before Álvaro de Luna's recall, in a royal *cédula* dated December 27, 1427, King Juan annulled "a so-called sentence or order included in a document that [the four commissioners] issued and pronounced against you," due to a "power to settle the dispute (*compromiso*) which was granted to them," between the *grandes* and the favorite. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 30, 92.

¹⁰⁶ Even when the king was not a formal party, royal authority could still play a role in legitimizing settlements. Rabade Obrado, "Confederaciones, seguros y pleitos homenajes," 81. The *Partidas* and the *Ordenamiento de Alcalá* establish a royal role in settling disputes. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 1:532-33, 559.

¹⁰⁷ The *Crónica* relates that, after the accords were signed and oaths sworn, Álvaro de Luna left the king's side, while the *Crónica del Halconero* claims that at Castronuño the "the affairs and disagreements of the kingdom were settled." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1439 ch. 14, p. 557; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 249, p. 300. A letter to Murcia dated October 30, 1439 announced the agreement and the *privado*'s exit. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 207, 506-9. See also a letter from King Juan to Álvaro de Luna giving him permission to make a pact with the *infantes*, dated October 15, 1439 and the pact itself, dated October 20, 1439 at Castronuño. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 63, 201-204; doc. 64, 204-209.

¹⁰⁸ Villarroel González identifies both the sentences of 1427 and 1441 as examples of arbitration. However, in 1427 the arbiters were empowered by the contending sides. In 1441, that power formally came from the king. Villarroel González, "Negoción y representación del consenso," 242-243.

The first half of the fifteenth century has been called the high point of such pact making in Castile. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 214; Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 19, 114, 171; Owens, 'By my Absolute Royal Authority', 13, 40.

¹⁰⁹ The failure of Castronuño was referenced directly in the *desafío* letters, though 1427 was not.

king in a mediating role, the most distinctive new method proposed was that the *privado* should face direct action on royal authority and even, perhaps, royal justice.¹¹⁰

The provision of justice was a premier royal responsibility, while within fifteenth-century deposition narratives, judicial procedures both mediated and legitimized the action of royal power. Certainly, *grande* anti-Luna case making had included allegations of conduct that could, in theory, be cast as criminal and leave him open to the king's justice.¹¹¹ And in the *desafíos*, the *grandes* added to that list by accusing Álvaro de Luna of having broken the oath-sealed Castronuño agreement, which could itself be construed as a crime for which he might face royal justice.¹¹²

Yet agreements had been broken before, and such a charge would only be one more among many. But looking beyond what Álvaro de Luna was alleged to have done to the *grandes*, in no account was the route of royal justice or other appeal to royal authority proposed without also accusing him of subjecting the king's will. That, after all, was said to facilitate his tyrannical usurpation of the exercise of royal power. And although he did not face formal justice in 1441, this time, in a major departure with previous settlements, the delegated authority of the commissioners appointed to settle matters came not from the parties involved, but directly from the king whose power had been, allegedly, so misused.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ José Manuel Nieto Soria, "La nobleza y el 'poderío real absoluto' en la Castilla del siglo XV," 250.

¹¹¹ For example, knowingly giving the king bad advice deserved serious punishment. *p.2, t.13, l.7*.

¹¹² Dated September 1, 1441. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 215, 525-530. Breaking such agreements, even if the king was not a party, still could subject the breaker to justice. Sánchez de Arévalo, *Suma de la política*, 228. See also *p.4, t.12, l.3-4*.

¹¹³ In 1427, the commission was balanced between the two sides. This time there was no concern for such balancing. Only one of the four commissioners was allied with Álvaro de Luna. In an English context, similar uses of royal authority were associated with times of royal weakness. Bothwell, "Internal Exiles," 151.

The *Crónica de Juan II* includes many documents which detailed the nature of the commission's authority and other aspects of its operation.¹¹⁴ Although the individual documents are dated separately between June and August 1441, the *Crónica* presents the whole set as a package sent together to Seville in September.¹¹⁵ The opening letter, in the king's voice, began with a review of what it cast as the *infantes*-Luna conflict since Castronuño. It repeated the *grandes'* claim that Álvaro de Luna had not lived up to his end of the bargain, which justified their *desafío* with him. The letter whitewashed the events at Medina del Campo, and then Juan declared that "I delegated [the settlement of] these affairs with full and complete power, and permission, to provide and order and command," to the commissioners.¹¹⁶ Their mission was to decide what arrangements would be in his service, "as if I had been able to do it in person," and now that they had finished he approved their decision and ordered it put into effect.¹¹⁷

Focusing further on the power given to the commissioners, just before the terms of the sentence themselves, a *carta de poder* reproduced in the chronicle further described the authority they received. It was quite extensive, allowing them to proceed "by means of justice, or of fiat,

¹¹⁴ In addition to dealing with Álvaro de Luna, most royal *mercedes* granted since the beginning of the revolts in 1438 were suspended pending review by the commissioners. As such, the sentence had significance far beyond the *privado*. Indeed, the majority of the royal messages sent to the city government of Murcia in its aftermath had little to say about him directly, focusing instead on the massive undertaking of the review.

¹¹⁵ Dated September 1. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 chs. 29-30, pp. 587-606. The city archives of Murcia contain several letters from the summer of 1441 relating to the sentence of Medina del Campo. Of particular importance is a letter dated September 1, 1441. It is shorter than that allegedly sent to Seville, but does present matters in a very similar way. In it, the king offered a review of events since 1439, casting the political battle as an *infantes*-Luna fight. He also described the Castronuño accords, in which the favorite had agreed "that he would go, and ought to go away from my court, promising not to return and enter into it without the permission and consent of some *grandes*," as having been "agreed, signed and sworn to" between the two parties with his permission. And like in the letter in the *Crónica*, he asserted that the *infantes* had turned on Luna because he had broken the agreement. When describing Medina del Campo, the letter mirrors the *Crónica's* depiction of the affair, and notes that the king gave full power to the commission to decide what manner of settling the conflict would be best. Then, the king confirmed the sentence they gave, and ordered it executed. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 215, 525-28. See also doc. 214, 524-25.

¹¹⁶ "cometí todos estos hechos con plenario poderío e facultad para proveer é ordenar é mandar en todo." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 chs. 29-30, pp. 587-606.

¹¹⁷ "así como yo por mi propia persona lo pudiera haver." According to the version in the *Crónica*, it was formally presented to the king on July 10, when his approval, before witnesses, was attested by *escribanos*.

or of arbitration.”¹¹⁸ Toward that end, the king declared that he had bestowed “each and every part of my *cierta ciencia* and *propio motu* and *poderío real libre o absoluto*, which I wish to use, and do use, in this matter in order to establish peace and tranquility in my kingdoms, and I give you my free, total and complete power.”¹¹⁹ What they decide, he claimed, would be “as if I myself did it,” and he promised to confirm whatever they determined and to do whatever was needed to make it effective.¹²⁰

The *Crónica del Halconero*, in keeping with its more relaxed approach to procedure, is more taciturn. It reports that after Medina del Campo was stormed, Álvaro de Luna’s rivals arranged matters so that “the king would give his full power” to a commission to settle matters between them. Afterward, it inserted the sentence they issued.¹²¹ Although lacking the extensive evidence of the commission’s authority provided by the *Crónica*, it still makes clear that in this case it was empowered by the king, not by parties settling the disputes between themselves.

The fact that at the same time sources registered new accusations of Álvaro de Luna’s empowerment and usurpation, they also described a new method, royal authority, for dealing with those problems is more than a coincidence. As new understandings of his power, and specific examples of its consequences, were incorporated into anti-Luna case making, the king, or the crown, was more directly cast as an aggrieved party at the hands of his *privado*. That stood in contrast to the petitions and debates that preceded the previous settlements.¹²² *Grande*

¹¹⁸ “por la vía de justicia, como por vía despiciente o de arbitramiento.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 chs. 29-30, pp. 587-606. On these methods, see Fernández Gallardo, “Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política,” 128-30.

¹¹⁹ “todo y cada cosa y parte dello de mi cierta ciencia e propio motu y poderío real libre o absoluto de que en esto parte por dar paz y sosiego en mis reinos quiero usar y uso, vos doy mi libre y bastante e cumplido poder.” Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 chs. 29-30, pp. 587-606.

¹²⁰ “ansí como yo lo he.”

¹²¹ “Los quales juezes deputados, así puestos, determinaron e sentenciaron esta sentencia siguiente.” *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 317, pp. 417-421.

¹²² Quintanilla Raso casts noble pacts such as those behind Álvaro de Luna’s previous expulsions as serving to conserve noble *dignitas*, meaning status and practical power, a purpose reflected in the terms in which they were

grievances were still present, but their complaints were directed less toward asserting their own position, and turned instead toward demonstrating the favorite's ascendancy over the king.¹²³

For instance, in the 1440 petition, *grande* complaints about their treatment and exclusion served as evidence that Álvaro de Luna was a tyrant as much as a basis for the *grandes* to demand a greater role for themselves in the government of the realm. In both versions of the letter, they suggested that he acted in a tyrannical way toward them because he knew his position was not legitimate and thus not secure. Though his ability to continue playing this role depended in part on their exclusion, overall their absence was less a precondition for bad government, and more a sign and consequence, among many, of his empowerment over the king.¹²⁴

In addition, the sense that his usurpation was personally humiliating for the king grew in significance and became more specified.¹²⁵ Certainly, in accounts of previous confrontations the *grandes*, drawing on the rhetoric of service and disservice, had insisted that the *privado* playing as large a role as they claimed was not in the king's best interests. But in the 1440 petition and accounts of subsequent debates, his usurpation of royal power meant also his usurpation of the respect and gratitude owed to kings for offices, *mercedes*, and other boons.

made. Quintanilla Raso, "Relaciones contractuales y propaganda de estatus," 30. Though the anti-Luna nobles still had expectations for themselves in 1441, their petitions focused less on those goals than in 1427 and 1439, and more on the king's power.

¹²³ Both chronicle accounts report a letter sent in the spring of 1441 from the *infante* Juan claiming that their revolt was of a type which was allowed by law to persons *agraviadas*, as they had been by Álvaro de Luna. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1441 ch. 18, pp. 580-582; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 306, p. 396.

¹²⁴ Sánchez de Arévalo had different priorities. For him, the tyrant was a ruler who drove away the wise. *Suma de la política*, 285. Eiximenis included both the wise and the powerful among a tyrant's targets. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 191.

¹²⁵ For instance, in the *Crónica del Halconero*'s account of the 1440 petition the *grandes* insisted, when accusing Álvaro de Luna of being different from other favorites, that none of the others had held their lords "in such contempt and disdain and little respect." *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 263, p. 332. As noted, such actions could in themselves be considered criminal.

Taken together, they cast the king as a victim of his advisor's misdeeds, and not a mediator between opposing factions as he had been in previous rounds.¹²⁶ And with the king in that position, the suggestion that his royal power, and even royal justice, should be applied against the constable, the man allegedly responsible for placing him there, appeared for the first time.¹²⁷ By redefining his role in terms of the exercise of royal power, his rivals turned him into a more deposable figure, who could be attacked with the powerful tools of royal authority which transformed chronicle narratives of depositions at the king's hands.

Conclusion

Chronicle accounts of the 1420's described Álvaro de Luna as an overly influential favorite. But after repeated failures to bring this role to an end, by the early 1440's some of those same narratives, echoing documentary sources, register significant changes in the characterization of his position and its consequences. In the wake of that redefinition, new methods for proceeding against him and targeting his power, namely submitting him to royal justice, were recorded for the first time. Although this path was not taken in 1441, it would prove to be the means by which he met his final downfall in 1453. However, it was not necessarily an obvious option for any favorite, but rather became one for this particular favorite in the context of shifting political debate across a prolonged series of confrontations.

Although Álvaro de Luna's conduct may have been defined in terms of tyranny from the late 1430's, the most important change was the allegation that he usurped and exercised royal power in a visible way. In fifteenth-century Castilian deposition narratives, loss of power came

¹²⁶ In the 1439 letter, the *grandes* complained that in matters of justice, the king could not allow some subjects to be favored over others. In this formulation, the king would not be favoring one side, but defending himself.

¹²⁷ Even though Álvaro de Luna did not face justice in 1441, the power granted to the commissioners after Medina del Campo came directly from the king, something which had not occurred in any of the previous cases.

to be associated with a loss of the capacity to act, while royal judicial procedures became a means for showcasing the action of royal power to deny that ability. Although the long political struggles involving Álvaro de Luna had different underlying dynamics than those removals, his power too came to be interpreted in terms of exercise, and his removal as a matter to be submitted to royal authority.¹²⁸

Indeed, despite the absence of formal judicial procedures in 1441, that change opened the door for the king's direct, though coerced, role in authorizing the specific measures taken against the favorite in comparison with 1427. Given King Juan's support for his *privado*, that might seem a strange path. But by 1440, his opponents expressed both resignation and frustration that despite all their attempts to offer "better" counsel, the king remained behind him. However, calling him a usurper of royal power and royal preeminence cast his position as not just a problem for them, but for the king as well. With the monarch as an aggrieved party and the prestige of royal power on the line, Álvaro de Luna was placed in the sights of one of the premier tools of that power.¹²⁹ But although that had potential advantages for his opponents, once they had seized control over the king and his court at least, it also represented a turn away from an independent assertion of *grande* roles, and from measures they could undertake on their own authority.¹³⁰

Fifteenth-century shifts toward understanding power and its loss in terms of exercise rather than possession placed the king, backed by robust royal power, as more the arbiter of

¹²⁸ Rather than a change from possession to exercise, Álvaro de Luna's power was refined from a matter of influence to exercise. Even though that power started out defined within a different context than that associated with the aristocrats of section two, or the masters of section three, it was still redefined in terms of exercise.

¹²⁹ Vallerani, *La giustizia pubblica medievale*, 42-5. In name at least, the king would be reasserting himself after a humiliation. Hutchison, "Defamation, a Murder More Foul?," 269.

¹³⁰ Even with "weak kings," the language and institutions of royal authority shaped debate. For English examples, see Ralph Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422-1461* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 715-46; King, "'War', 'Rebellion' or 'Perilous Times'?" 128-9.

power in the realm than he had been in earlier deposition narratives. In this instance, although the king consistently backed Álvaro de Luna, his royal power and its exercise was crucial for understanding not only his position, but also for articulating his opponents' cases against him and, ultimately, even for authorizing his 1441 dismissal and exile. Though they may have been arguing in terms of royal power for their own ends, his opponents adapted their case to its terms and their own demands were subordinated to the service of royal authority.¹³¹ Its needs and its institutions were called in by the "outsiders," in ways which they had not been in 1427 or 1439. With respect to Álvaro de Luna and, more directly, his rivals, royal claims to power, even when contested or appropriated, reshaped the terms of political discourse in a way that reinforced their preeminence.

¹³¹ Rhetorically at least. In practice, that did not mean their own agendas were thwarted entirely, or even mostly. Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469)," 224.

PART FIVE

Chapter 11

Depositions in Debate

Thus far, I have focused on narratives of removals which royal chronicles, and other sources as well, presented as legitimate and effective. But not all depositions received such treatment even in chronicles, and certainly not outside them. Accounts that present separations of person and power as contested or illegitimate, amid wider political debates over controversial removals, offer important perspectives of their own.¹ In particular, isolating the key points upon which arguments about the legitimacy of removals from power turned, and the types of actions criticized or defended, tests the degree to which the expanded royal claims of the fifteenth century, and their distinctive consequences, shifted the terms of contestation over power more broadly in comparison with the fourteenth.

Altogether, the focus of late fourteenth-century critical accounts which originated in, or commented on, debates about removals from power is how, or whether, judicial procedures were employed to punish the target. In contrast, those of the early to mid-fifteenth century principally deal with how, and why, royal authority was invoked to unmake the power of others. Specifically, in late fourteenth-century discussions, the legitimacy of removals from power depended on the king's use, or not, of judicial procedures to determine guilt and punishment. But in later narratives, royal authority advancing royal interests played major executive and justificatory roles. And that is where authors of sources critical of fifteenth-century removals tended to direct their attention. Above all, they focused on alleged mismatches between the "real" and stated reasons for taking action.

¹ Palonen, "Concepts and Debates," 98.

More specifically, Pedro López de Ayala expressed firm ideas about the importance of following proper judicial procedures for monarchs who wished to unmake a troublesome subject. That viewpoint was shared by other contemporary chroniclers, such as the author of the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*. Moving on to fifteenth-century controversies, the depositions of Ruy López Dávalos and Álvaro de Luna both caused much debate, in which their defenders offered alternate viewpoints to those advanced in royal chronicles or documents. In contrast to their forebears, judicial procedures played only a minor role in the objections of these critics, who focused instead on the motivations of the king, or his advisors, for arranging these downfalls.

Cautiously compared with more sympathetic accounts, these windows into controversy contextualize their depictions of royal authority and new conceptions of power. Moreover, differences between earlier and later approaches mirror the changes between fourteenth and fifteenth-century chronicle accounts regarding the separation of person and power. That is to say, when describing removals from power, or interpreting their results, critical and skeptical representations share many ideas and expectations with those that sought to legitimize them. The subject of debate moved away from the procedures of the king's justice, and toward the invocation of royal authority to disempower subjects.² Royal motivations for using that authority were challenged, but the essential legitimacy of monarchs doing so outside the bounds of traditional judicial forms was, on the whole, not. As such, the power of a governing king, and the consequences of his actions, were at the core of the later debates about the legitimacy of removals from power, whether a commentator approved or not, solidifying their status as central reference points of political life.

² Moreover, their appearance in the wider array of sources surveyed below further establishes that new conceptions of power and its loss were significant beyond narratives of the *crónica real* genre. Freedden, "Conceptual History, Ideology and Language," 120; Marion Navarro, "Les comportements politiques: Continuité ou opposition entre les générations?," *Regards croisés sur l'économie* 7, no.1 (2010): 72.

The Late Fourteenth Century: Pedro López de Ayala and his Contemporaries

Throughout his body of work, Pedro López de Ayala insisted that kings should rule with justice and honor its procedural forms.³ However, the most significant event he recounted, and justified, was the downfall of a ruler he claimed did not. His depictions of King Pedro's behavior toward those who drew his ire stand out for his almost total disregard for them.⁴ That lack served as a basis to deny the legitimacy of the king's actions to depose, and often kill, his targets.⁵

But Ayala's focus on the absence of judicial forms as a key marker of illegitimacy when critiquing kings confronting, and perhaps executing, powerful subjects, was not limited to his chronicle of Pedro's reign. For instance, in his depiction of the 1385 *Consejo* debate about the procedures to be employed against the *infante* Alfonso, examples of past kings putting nobles to death in ways that proved unacceptable featured prominently.⁶ Failure to follow judicial forms lay at the core of that criticism, and had serious consequences for the rulers responsible.⁷

The first incident on Ayala's list of precedents was King Alfonso X's execution of his brother Fadrique during the 1270's. He insisted that since it was carried out secretly, and without public justification, it caused alarm among the nobility. Indeed, Ayala connected this action to Alfonso's own quasi-deposition in 1282 at the hands of his son Sancho, who gathered supporters to "withdraw the administration of the kingdom" from him because he did not "use the sword of

³ And not just in his chronicles. In *Rimado de palacio* he emphasized the king's duty to maintain justice, but also more pointedly connected it to his keeping the "throne of his kingdom." *Rimado de palacio*, 41, 59.

⁴ Like, for instance, in his dealings with masters of the military orders.

⁵ Ayala was involved in an effort to legitimize Trastámara rule after Enrique II came to power in dubious circumstances. Pedro, he insisted, deserved to fall because of his misrule. The effort to assert the legitimacy of the new dynasty was fluid, and continued long after Pedro had been supplanted. For example, Ayala's chronicle work mostly postdates the marriage of the Trastámara heir with Pedro's granddaughter, so earlier arguments that he was illegitimate are absent. Valdaliso Casanova, *Historiografía y legitimación dinástica*, 169-179; Valdaliso Casanova, "La obra cronística de Pedro López de Ayala," 193-211.

⁶ *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385, ch. 5, 94-97.

⁷ In context, the purpose was to show why King Juan I should act with restraint and only move against the *infante* Alfonso by means of extensive, and publicly impartial, procedure.

justice well.”⁸ Secondly, Ayala described how Sancho, once on the throne himself, killed Lope Díaz de Haro, Lord of Vizcaya. He tried to arrest him by surprise, but Lope Díaz resisted and was killed “in his chambers,” implying a private setting, by the king’s *ballesteros*.⁹ But far from solving political problems, Ayala insisted that this action led to further conflict.¹⁰ Finally, Alfonso XI’s actions also came under scrutiny, with the execution of Juan Alfonso de Haro singled out as problematic for the nobility, since he had been killed “without being heard.”¹¹

Ayala stressed that none of these actions ended political troubles for the rulers involved, but multiplied them. He also lamented that they damaged their reputations.¹² And although not necessarily suggesting deliberate cruelty, he emphasized missing or troublesome elements in each instance. Above all, that meant that the targets were not offered a chance to defend themselves, and that little public explanation was offered for their fates. Looked at in contrast with his sympathetic depictions of removals at royal hands, Ayala developed a consistent critique of monarchs punishing subjects without “due process,” mirroring his insistence that they should act through it. Although lack of justification could feature as well, that was a secondary factor.¹³

⁸ “tirasen al Rey Don Alfonso la administracion del Regno;” “le debia ser tirada la espada de justicia de la mano, por quanto non usara bien della.” *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, pp. 94-97. See also *Crónica del rey Don Alfonso décimo*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66, (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953), ch. 68, p. 53; ch. 76, pp. 60-62.

⁹ “en su cámara.” *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, pp. 94-97. See also *Crónica del rey Don Sancho el bravo*, ed. Cayetano Rosell, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 66, (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1953), ch. 5, pp. 78-79.

¹⁰ An anonymous fourteenth-century chronicle about the Haro family calls this death cruel and says Lope’s good service had been forgotten that day. *Crónica de los muy ilustres Señores de Vizcaya del linaje de Haro*, ed. Andrés de Manaricua and A. Rodríguez Herrero (Bilbao: Gran Enciclopedia Vasco, 1971), 58.

¹¹ “sin ser oido.” *Crónica de Juan I*, 1385 ch. 5, pp. 94-97. See also *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 35, p. 263. This event was also an enduring memory of Alfonso’s reign, mentioned in later chronicles that provide only a brief summary of the era. Moya García, *Edición y Estudio de la Valeriana*, 301.

¹² In the *Rimado de palacio*, Ayala insisted that the “name of king” came from ruling well, and that a true king was one who governed and defended his people. *Rimado de palacio*, 236. The honor and reputation of kings were major concern, with true service involving their defense along with that of his person. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 153.

¹³ In his chronicle of Pedro’s reign, he criticized the king’s reasons for acting as well. However, objections of that type were not stressed in his treatment of the Alfonso *Consejo* consultation. Proper procedure was the common denominator. Hyams, “Due Process versus the Maintenance of Order in European law,” 71-72; Meccarelli, “La dimension doctrinale,” 80-85.

However, his critiques are also focused on certain kinds of consequences, the execution and, at times, permanent dispossession of noblemen.¹⁴ In the context of his larger project, the narratives in which these critiques were placed did not necessarily serve to depict illegitimate separations of person and power, but brutal acts that reflected poorly on rulers.¹⁵ Nonetheless, in doing so he focused on permanent punishments that followed, or ought to follow, formal sentences and findings of guilt.¹⁶ That tight connection between punishment and loss mediated by justice mirrors the accounts studied in chapter one. Although, in his accounts of late century removals, treatment of material losses separate from sentences was more extensive, they did not receive the distinct identity that analogous actions consistently received in fifteenth-century narratives.¹⁷ And his critiques also did not stress such losses, focusing on the more defined penalties associated with sentences, and on the procedures which ought to precede them.

The Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI

Ayala's late fourteenth-century accounts of illegitimate removals were embedded in the context of his larger project of justifying Pedro's fall and Trastámara rule. The depiction of the 1334 fall of Juan Alfonso de Haro in the *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI* puts those critiques in perspective.¹⁸ Dating to the late 1370's, that account reinterpreted the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* in a

¹⁴ Death as a punishment was more common in chronicle coverage of the early and mid-fourteenth century. So, this focus could be a result of his having to deal with more deaths while later chroniclers did not. But by the late fourteenth century, executions were already less common even as they retained Ayala's attention. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 168.

¹⁵ In the *Rimado de palacio*, he complained about different standards for rich and poor, and that the poor were executed while those with something to take were fined. Ayala, *Rimado de palacio*, 351.

¹⁶ Also, despite his adaptation to late century developments in judicial procedures and institutions, each of Ayala's critiques of these mid-century removals still focused on a key "moment" of justice. A moment that led both to personal and material consequences, though on the whole material consequences were less of a concern.

¹⁷ In describing the removals of the *infante* Alfonso, for instance, he noted the stripping of his possessions over the course of processes of justice, but before their culmination. Procedural and institutional factors had some influence on how they unfolded, but less directly on how power and its loss were conceived.

¹⁸ Juan Alfonso de Haro's removal was a significant event in its own time. But Ayala identified it, even decades later, as a controversial execution at the hands of the king.

way that was more sympathetic to the political expectations of the nobility.¹⁹ In recounting this particular incident however, it did not critique Alfonso's actions against Juan Alfonso, at least not as either the earlier *Cronica* had, or Ayala would, describe them. Instead it explicitly defended them, by insisting that he had received more judicial process than either of those accounts suggested. In other words, its effort to defend the king's actions in this particular, and controversial, incident also upheld a broader principle that kings should respect judicial procedures when dealing with troublesome noble subjects.

According to the *Gran Crónica*, after the king learned of Juan Alfonso de Haro's misdeeds, he consulted with his *privados* about how he should address them.²⁰ They agreed that his actions were worthy of punishment, and recommended that Alfonso should summon him and demand an explanation, though he refused to come.²¹ Neither a consultation, nor an opportunity for Juan Alfonso to explain himself, appeared in the older narrative. But otherwise, the *Gran Crónica* mirrors the *Crónica* almost verbatim as Alfonso condemned and executed him, followed by the seizure of his possessions.²² After recounting his death however, it makes another addition, stressing that his demise was a punishment for the "great and ugly crimes into which he had fallen."²³ It insists "Don Alonso de Haro Lord of Los Cameros died exactly as this history has told you, very justly, and no blame should be placed on the king," doubling down on the

¹⁹ This account is based on the *Crónica*, but it is longer and, most importantly, takes a more aristocratic perspective. Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, 99; Funes, "Historiografía nobiliaria," 5-38; Martínez, "La *Crónica* y la *Gran crónica de Alfonso XI*," 43-8.

Ayala, despite his efforts to establish dynastic legitimacy, also had such a concern. José Ramón Díaz de Durana Ortiz de Urbina, "Sobre la justificación del poder nobiliario e hidalgo en la obra cronística del Canciller Pedro López de Ayala y de Lope García de Salazar," in *Poder en Europa y América: Mitos, tópicos y realidades*, ed. Ernesto García Fernández (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, 2001), 69-94.

²⁰ He had acted in a rebellious manner toward the king, after he agreed to serve him and accepted a royal subsidy.

²¹ The charges were the same as Sánchez de Valladolid described, pocketing a royal subsidy and robbing royal lands.

²² *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 35, p 263; *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 157, 2:88-89.

²³ "cosas e yerros tan malos e feos en que havia caydo." *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 157, 2:88-89.

assertion that his death was a just response to his crimes.²⁴ The *Crónica de Alfonso XI*, in contrast, only said his death came after the king's presentation of those crimes to him.

At first glance, that defense of a king for ordering the death and dispossession of a powerful noble might seem odd if the *Gran Crónica* advanced a "noble" perspective. But, although it denies suggestions that Alfonso had treated this particular noble badly, it does so not by asserting that what the king had done, based on the *Crónica de Alfonso XI*'s depiction of unilateral action, was right, but rather that the affair did not actually unfold that way.²⁵ Though it describes the justifications in the same way as the older chronicle, it certainly leaves less room for accusations Juan Alfonso de Haro was killed without judicial process and, thus, illegitimately. In its telling, the king had not acted alone, but rather in consultation with others, and also had offered Juan Alfonso a hearing, which he rejected.²⁶ Alfonso had not simply intervened to take out a political rival, but punished one, in reaction to criminal acts and according to his judicial role.

Moreover, the means by which he did so, involving a broader consultation an opportunity for Juan Alfonso to offer a defense, fits with the more consultative and procedural vision of royal justice laid out in Ayala's work on the late fourteenth century. Considering this narrative next to Ayala's own suggests parallels with respect to his procedure based critiques.²⁷ Although the main problem identified by Ayala was that Juan Alfonso was not "heard," the *Gran Crónica*, in defending Alfonso, insists that he was at least offered the chance to be. So both these later narratives, though they interpret the event differently from one another, depart from the earlier

²⁴ "E ansi como la ystoria vos lo a ya contado fue muerto don Joan Alfonso de Haro Señor de los Cameros; e murio a gran derecho, e sin culpa del rey." *Gran Crónica de Alfonso XI*, ch. 157, 2:88-89.

²⁵ Alves Moreira, "A *Crónica Geral de Espanha de 1344*," 23-31.

²⁶ Though the counselors advised him about what course he should take, the execution of justice itself, and the decision about what to do with Haro's possessions, was placed in royal hands.

²⁷ And also his specifically late fourteenth-century depictions of a more procedural justice.

account in the sense that the process it described was cast, whether explicitly or implicitly, as insufficient.

Moreover, the *Gran Crónica* may reinterpret King Alfonso's actions in a way intended to defend their legitimacy, but it does so in terms that also constrain legitimate royal action by containing it within the limits of justice and punishment.²⁸ Indeed, this account, and Ayala's critiques more broadly, suggested that legitimate removal should be mediated by proper procedure and a formal sentence. And the consequences on which they focused were permanent penalties that would, or should, follow such a determination of guilt. In both those senses, these critical or re-interpretive narratives share similar, persistent views of royal justice and loss of power with more sympathetic contemporary accounts.

Two Fifteenth-Century Removals, and their Critics

In fifteenth-century royal chronicles, institutional growth and procedural developments, joined with new ways of conceiving royal power and roles, made room for depictions of a wider variety of royal interventions to undermine the power of a subject. Though mediated by judicial procedures, actions cast as the justified work of a governing king's authority, and their consequences, gained prominence as the principal means of separating person and power.²⁹ However, just as they did not entirely replace the longstanding roles of guilt and losses of possession within chronicle narratives, they did not close off avenues for other observers to question or condemn such separations in the context of wider political debate.³⁰

²⁸ Mainly his death, but the loss of possessions was, like in the earlier narrative, also a post-sentence matter.

²⁹ That is to say, actions that for Ayala might seem arbitrary, or were left unexplained, could be defined and fit into a justifying framework thanks to new ideas about, and ways of expressing, royal power and responsibilities.

³⁰ Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 31.

In particular, the removals of Ruy López Dávalos and Álvaro de Luna were subject to diverse interpretations and direct critiques.³¹ Overall, in contrast to the fourteenth-century works, procedural issues did not play a large role in supportive or critical sources. Instead, the key point in question within debates over both incidents was whether royal authority, and the judicial procedures through which it worked, were applied for honest or legitimate purposes.

Given the prominence assigned to royal authority and interests in sympathetic chronicle accounts, it is perhaps not surprising that critics directed themselves to them as well. However, the terms in which critics objected to the use of that authority are significant. They attacked the reasons for its application in specific circumstances, not the assertion of royal authority, acting in royal interests, itself. In other words, limitations on legitimate royal action were not defined by the means available to royal deponents, but their ability to convincingly justify their actions. In this way, even if authority claims did not always translate into effective power for the person of the monarch, they did serve to strengthen his position, as far as claiming legitimacy was concerned, to prevail.

Ruy López Dávalos

As discussed in section two, Constable Ruy López Dávalos rose from humble origins to play a decisive role in Castilian affairs, but later lost everything thanks to the intensity of court politics.³² His 1422-23 downfall was not a quiet one, however, since observers questioned both the purpose and legitimacy of his deposition, in ways that were also reflected, though not

³¹ Those critical accounts were not necessarily responses to royal chronicles. Both the supportive and critical accounts are examined as parts of, or reflective of, larger contemporary debates surrounding these removals. Also, there was no fifteenth-century equivalent of Ayala's anti-Pedro project. But the critiques also offer another way to contextualize chronicle narratives. In sections one and two, they were contextualized against a backdrop of normative works and royal documents. Here, I look at them as part of debates over specific, controversial issues.

³² Luís Suárez Fernández, "Auge y caída de un hombre nuevo: El condestable Ruy López Dávalos," *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia* 195, no. 1 (1998): 43-80.

necessarily advanced, within royal chronicle accounts. Additionally, there is significant surviving evidence from his own efforts to defend himself, including his public protests of innocence and a portion of the records from the *proceso* carried out against him.³³

First, even supportive royal chronicle accounts, from both traditions, acknowledge an important basis for criticism that dogged anti-Dávalos efforts. His actions had left him open to a number of charges, the most dramatic of which was an alleged conspiracy with the king of Granada. However, the letters that “revealed” the plot were later found to be forgeries, and he was not convicted on that charge.³⁴ Despite that, it took until 1428, when the also-maligned *infante* Enrique was in the ascendant at court, for the forgery to be made public.

Neither the contemporary *Crónica de Juan II* nor its later reworking criticize his removal outright. But, describing the later exposure of the forgery did undermine a key justification they reported for his arrest and the sequestration of his possessions in 1422.³⁵ Indeed, when describing both actions, they each note that the constable’s *mayordomo* had insisted there was more to the story with respect to those missives.³⁶ The earlier *Crónica* offers few specifics, but the later version adds, to an account which otherwise follows the older one closely, that he suggested the letters were false. It also points out that, ultimately, charges based on them were not pursued as the *proceso* against Ruy López unfolded.³⁷

³³ That makes his removal particularly interesting, since it was immediately controversial. Moreover, that controversy was recorded from many perspectives and, in the case of the *proceso* documents, some unusual ones. Those records include the *acusación* and the sentence, but most come from his appeal, in which his defenders questioned certain aspects of the process, not to mention its outcome. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 28-48, 54, 120.

³⁴ Besides the falsified letters, he had genuinely been involved in the seizure of the king’s residence by force in 1420, in conjunction with the *infante* Enrique, and the expulsion of several rival courtiers.

³⁵ In both narratives of the *Crónica* tradition those accusations were a major justification for his arrest and for the sequestration of his possessions. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 14, pp. 287-9; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 12, pp. 417-19.

³⁶ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 17, pp. 291-2; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, pp. 418-19.

³⁷ The text includes speculation that the author of the earlier account did not know the details of the forgery. This aside is not the only intervention of other voices in the later chronicle, even while depicting events also covered in the earlier iteration of the tradition.

Both narratives also describe the means by which the forgery was made public in 1428. The earlier *Crónica* recounts the forger's arrest and execution at the also-implicated *infante* Enrique's urging.³⁸ Moreover, it insists that he asked the king to send out letters announcing that act of royal justice in order to restore his reputation. The later *Crónica* follows the older account, but highlights instead how the discovery cleared the constable's reputation.³⁹

As for the accounts of the *Halconero* tradition, just as they were not very concerned with Ruy López Dávalos's trial and dispossession, neither showed much concern for the discovery of the forgery and its impact.⁴⁰ The *Refundición*, in fact, does not mention it at all, though it does report the constable's death in 1428, and claims that at the time the *infante* Enrique had been working, in an unspecified way, on his behalf.⁴¹ However, the *Crónica del Halconero*, after reporting Ruy López's demise, then recounts the forger's execution in Valladolid the same year.⁴² It insists that the *infante* Enrique was imprisoned, and the constable forced to flee the realm, because of the forger's actions.⁴³ And after the execution, it describes the king sending letters to deny the suggestions made in 1422 that Enrique, though not specifically Ruy López Dávalos, had acted in a treasonous manner.⁴⁴

Within the accounts of the *Crónica* tradition, a principal justification put forward for the constable's arrest and the initial seizure of his possessions, though not his conviction, was thus

³⁸ *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 5, pp. 9-11. Back in 1422, the *Crónica* accounts had described Ruy López Dávalos's fall as being intertwined with the *infante* Enrique's. And Enrique had been named as an accomplice in the forged letters. The *infante*, unlike Dávalos, had made a comeback, and indeed was ascendant at court in late 1427 and early 1428.

³⁹ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1428 ch. 5, p. 445. The *Crónica del Halconero* also focuses on the *infante* Enrique's reputation. However, Pérez de Guzman was sympathetic to Ruy López Dávalos, and if he was involved in shaping the later *Crónica*, that could account for its more pro-Dávalos stance.

⁴⁰ *Crónica del Halconero*, 9; *Refundición*, ch. 19, pp. 46-47.

⁴¹ *Refundición*, ch. 24, p. 54.

⁴² *Crónica del Halconero*, 15.

⁴³ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 2, p. 19. That is in fact the first time it explained Ruy López Dávalos's absence in that way.

⁴⁴ *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 4, p. 23.

also undermined at the same time.⁴⁵ As for the *Halconero* tradition accounts, both assert that his case was being reconsidered at the time of his death in 1428, which the *Crónica del Halconero* specifically connects to the public disclosure of the forgery from 1422. But ultimately, none of the royal chronicles directly critiques the actions taken against Ruy López by the king in a procedural sense, and nor do they deplore his material losses.⁴⁶ Instead, the principal harm the forgery caused was to the reputations of those maligned by it. In the *Crónica* accounts in particular, loss of reputation is singled out and isolated from the other consequences of the specific, and ultimately disproven, charge of conspiracy, which they extensively recounted.⁴⁷ Rehabilitating reputations, however, did not lead to a reconsideration of the entire set of consequences they described the king imposing, supposedly in good faith, upon him.⁴⁸

Critiques, Defenses and Debates

Outside of royal chronicles however, among the works of other political observers, the role of the forged letters in his downfall formed the foundation for more pointed critiques of his fate. For example, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán's *Generaciones y semblanzas* is critical of many

⁴⁵ Paz Alonso discusses the overturning of a case based on false proof as a distinct process. But in Ruy López Dávalos's case, the letters were not used as evidence for conviction. The impact they should have on interpreting the case against him as a whole was, however, a point of controversy. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 61. See also *p.3, t.26*, for the reversal of findings based on false proof, including forged documents, and also *p.7, t.7* for crimes of falsehood, including forgery.

⁴⁶ They did not depend entirely on the "evidence" provided by the forged letters, however.

⁴⁷ In a general sense, the idea that a knight should value his honor and reputation was quite commonly expressed in literature and works dealing with knighthood or political society. Eiximenis, *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 269. It was also a legal concept, with infamy springing from certain crimes, and to accuse someone of such a crime was cast as a serious matter. *p.7, t.6, l.1*. In these narratives, however, it seems to be applied more in the sense of reputation, separating the material consequences from those to his reputation, allowing rehabilitation without restitution.

⁴⁸ The *infante* Enrique already had his possessions restored, whereas Ruy López Dávalos was in exile and, by the time the forgery trial was completed and the letters sent out, dead. For him, reputation restoration was enough. Also, Dávalos was a "new man," which contributed to why he was so harshly treated. Too many people had been rewarded with the constable's former possessions, and he did not have the *infante*'s status, or powerful siblings, behind him. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 41.

leading Castilian political figures from first half of the fifteenth century.⁴⁹ But Ruy López Dávalos gets a sympathetic portrayal, and his disgrace is singled out as an act of injustice.⁵⁰ Specifically, Pérez de Guzmán mentioned only what he called the untrue charge of treason when explaining his flight to Aragón to avoid arrest, of which “false infamy,” he specified, the former constable was later cleared. But although that helped his reputation, the author complained that “though innocent, he did not receive restitution, from which it appears that he was tried more from greed for his possessions than zeal for justice, thanks to the avarice which has entered Castile and taken hold of her.”⁵¹ For Pérez de Guzmán, the lack of restitution suggested that the whole move against him, though it took the form of justice, was never about justice at all.⁵²

Generaciones y semblanzas does not mention any of the other evidence used against the constable, or that the letters were not ultimately used to convict him, which most directly led to the confiscation of which Pérez de Guzmán complained. But he both critiqued Ruy López Dávalos’s downfall, and advanced a larger argument that avarice was destroying Castile, by suggesting that he was not targeted for a real crime.⁵³ Indeed, he insisted the constable was tried and punished in order to satisfy the greed of others.⁵⁴ In his account the falsehood of the charges,

⁴⁹ It dates to the mid-fifteenth century. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, xx-xxii, 31-34. Pérez de Guzmán, at that stage of his life, lived in informal internal exile at his home in Batres. However, he had been an ally of Ruy López Dávalos, and is also put forward as having a role in the compilation of the later *Crónica*. Certainly, out of all the chronicle accounts, it has the most to say about the forgery. The critique here, however, was more pointed than anything in the *Crónica*. See also Folger, “A Genealogy of Castilian Historiography,” 51-2.

⁵⁰ He lamented, for instance, that the constable had lost so much in his old age. And as an old associate of Ruy López Dávalos, he had little reason to love either King Juan of Álvaro de Luna, with whom he was out of favor.

⁵¹ “pero el inocente [no] fue restituydo: de lo cual se parece que mas por cobdicia de sus bienes que por zelo de justicia fue contra el procedido, gracias a la avaricia que en Castilla es entrada e la posee.” Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 31-34.

⁵² And a sign that Pérez de Guzmán was aware of the “case” presented in the chronicle, though that does not necessarily mean he had its narrative in mind. Gómez Redondo, “De la crónica general a la real,” 17.

⁵³ He also complained that the richest man was reckoned the noblest. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 49.

⁵⁴ A 1422 poem in the *Cancionero de Baena*, attributed to noted poet Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino, also zeroes in on covetousness. However, focusing on the duties of subjects to be loyal to their king, envy and pride were cast as the root of many vices which led people, like Ruy López Dávalos, into “error.” Baena, *Cancionero*, no. 218, 246-47.

coupled with a lack of restitution once that became known, undermined the entire anti-Dávalos case. The forms of justice were employed, but the purpose behind them, and their results, had little to do with actually upholding it.⁵⁵

Overall, this critique rests on a mismatch between the forms employed, the purposes behind them, and their results. Personal interests were advanced behind a mask of justice, but not thereby legitimized.⁵⁶ The *Crónica* tradition accounts and *Generaciones y semblanzas* express or suggest a degree of unease based on the forgery, later revealed, casting a shadow over Ruy López Dávalos's disgrace and dispossession. The chronicles accommodate it by making its consequences mainly a matter of his damaged reputation. *Generaciones y semblanzas* however, focuses on material outcomes, the endurance of which, despite that "rehabilitation," suggested something more sinister behind the entire process.

None of those narratives, however, directly suggests problems with the procedures by which he was tried. In the more immediate objections raised by Ruy López Dávalos and his defenders, such issues were more significant. But a sense of underlying falsehood played a major role in them as well, helping to build objections not just to the process, but to its purpose.

First, after leaving for Aragón and exile, the constable protested his innocence. A portion of this defense was represented in a 1422 royal letter to the city of Murcia, included in the royal message to set up its subsequent refutation.⁵⁷ As depicted, he advanced two lines of defense. First, he claimed that he had been unaware of why the king had acted against him.⁵⁸ When

⁵⁵ Still, he strongly associated legitimate loss of possessions with the results of justice by saying that, once his innocence was proved, his possessions should have been restored.

⁵⁶ On the other hand, another contemporary poem by Alfonso Álvarez de Villasandino, before the forgery was made public, celebrates Dávalos's fall. It alludes to the idea that those who push too far above themselves just end up having farther to fall, "especialmente cuando la prueba los descredita." Baena, *Cancionero*, no. 211, 240-41.

⁵⁷ Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 65, 219-21. However, only a portion of Ruy López Dávalos's inserted defense remains. Like in the case of the *grandes* targeting Álvaro de Luna, public letters were not exclusively a tool of kings and their circles. Hutchison, "Defamation, a Murder More Foul?," 269.

⁵⁸ Suggesting, perhaps, that the charges were so preposterous that he could not even guess them.

defending his flight from justice, he explained that he had received a letter from the king's sister, Catalina, instructing him to come to her at Segura.⁵⁹ He followed those instructions, rather than answering King Juan's summons to court, in order to learn why the king had "ordered my capture and arrest, and to take my possessions."⁶⁰ And once he heard about the letters accusing him of plotting with Granada, turning from mystified to indignant, he denied the charge, insisting it would be out of character given his past service to both King Juan and his father.⁶¹

The letter then moves on to complaints about procedure.⁶² In no uncertain terms, Ruy López insisted he was "aggrieved," since he had not been "heard" before the king had ordered serious action against both his person and goods.⁶³ He also lamented that "it had pleased God in his old age" to see him "disinherited, wrongly and without cause," but added that he was more worried about the infamy of the charge of treason than his losses.⁶⁴ He begged the king to hear his defense, to learn the whole truth about the accusation, and not to allow him to bear such defamation.⁶⁵ If it was true, he agreed he certainly must suffer cruel justice, but if it was found to be false, as he was sure it would be, then the accuser should suffer such a penalty.

⁵⁹ She was also the *infante* Enrique's wife, who was targeted at this time as well. Indeed, Ruy López Dávalos helped her to flee the kingdom, adding to royal ire against him.

⁶⁰ "mandaba ally çercar e prender, e tomar a mis bienes." Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 65, 220.

⁶¹ As well as ungrateful, given how much he owed Juan's father, Enrique III. Interestingly, he also focused on the charges of treason "revealed" by the forgery, not mentioning his involvement in the court coup of 1420. For an English example of a similar protest see McVitty, "The Prisoner's Voice," 33.

⁶² Such defences were very common. Carraway Vitiello, *Public Justice and the Criminal Trial*, 145-6.

⁶³ But sparing the king direct blame, it suggested that whoever had counseled the king to act in such a way was not a good servant.

⁶⁴ "desheredado syn porque e contra razon." Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 65, 221. This protest came before the sentence, but he already called himself *desheredado*. Along with his protest about his goods being seized before he was heard, that seems to suggest a more limited interpretation of what could be done with the property of the accused pending sentence, at least in terms of really legitimizing a "disinheritance." On the other hand, it acknowledged the effectiveness of losses authorized by royal command, showing a *via de justicia* at work. For a French example of a similar sentiment, see Hutchison, "Defamation, a Murder More Foul?," 255-9.

⁶⁵ It could also have repercussions for descendants. Morín, "Los castigos hereditarios en el corpus Alfonsino," 1.

Ruy López Dávalos's objections, lodged after the arrest and sequestration orders but before the completion of the *proceso*, alleged a mismatch between the case made and the true reason for the actions taken against him. He asserted that any messages showing he had been in contact with Granada were forged. Also, since he called the charges lies, not just mistakes, he suggested judicial procedures were being abused to attack him. And those procedures were not only based on false pretenses, but also flawed, particularly since the king ordered seizures without a chance for a defense.⁶⁶ His protest did envision that royal justice should ultimately decide the matter, but it implied that such seizures should not be ordered in the meantime.

To a degree, that advances a more limited view of a king's or court's ability to seize possessions on their own authority, in the course of a *proceso*, than in either *Crónica* narrative, a reminder that new royal claims did not sweep all before them. But the *Crónica* accounts also suggest the measures the king authorized were justified, in part, as a response to specific misdeeds by the constable. Here, asserting that those misdeeds did not in fact occur, Ruy López may simply have been implying that the king had acted hastily based on unproven claims.

However, such objections did not have much impact elsewhere. As the constable's trial at court, which extended into 1423, got underway, he was given a chance to be heard. Though in exile, a series of lawyers managed his defense. They denied the charges and questioned specific points of procedure, but most procedural objections described in the records were swiftly countered.⁶⁷ For instance, his lawyers complained that his *emplazamiento* was not issued in the

⁶⁶ Seizures could be cast as ordinary powers of a court in cases where property was at stake or to use as pressure to get defendants to appear. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 174. Moreover, for Ruy López Dávalos, the *fiscal* recommended immediate seizure because the accusation, and his position, made him especially dangerous. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 58. Complaints about seizures undertaken without the targets "being heard" appeared periodically in *Cortes* proceedings. However, they were mainly about permanent seizures of resources which were then passed on to others.

⁶⁷ Early on, Ruy López Dávalos's representatives complained that the judges were biased, and the original judges were replaced. They also demanded a more complete version of charges from 1423. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 28-29. According to Paz Alonso, objections of that type normally had to be entered at the

proper form.⁶⁸ But in response, the *fiscal* argued that since the crimes for which he was principally tried, related to his participation in the 1420 court coup discussed in chapter nine, were notorious and had been committed in the king's presence, such details did not matter.⁶⁹ The judges agreed, and nearly all procedural points were dismissed on the grounds that the king was overseeing the procedure at court, or that he had personally witnessed many of the crimes at issue.⁷⁰ As such, the burden of proof was low and procedural corners could be cut.⁷¹ Royal authority, acting through justice, created a "legal steamroller" that swept aside procedural objections.⁷²

But the defense also questioned the purpose and integrity of the anti-Dávalos effort as a whole.⁷³ First, in excusing the constable's decision to leave the realm, his lawyers noted that he had not been told, and did not know, the charges he faced. Related to that point, they also recalled that in 1422 his ally, the *infante* Enrique, had been given a safe conduct to meet with the king in Madrid, but had been arrested there anyway.⁷⁴ These objections presented him as feeling

beginning of the *proceso*. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 17. However, most of the surviving records come from the direct appeal to the king, or *suplicación*, made by Dávalos's lawyers after the conclusion of the *proceso*. Paz Alonso, 277.

⁶⁸ Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 37.

⁶⁹ Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 87. Notoriety, moreover, could be used to justify denying appeals, since such crimes had to be punished quickly to prevent scandal. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 27.

⁷⁰ Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 30-31. That did not mean process could be ignored, but it could be used as the basis to justify a truncated or otherwise altered form. See also Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 293-5.

⁷¹ Paz Alonso suggests that in cases brought by accusation, the burden of proof often lay, in practice, on the accused. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 29-30.

⁷² *Poderio real absoluto* was explicitly invoked to overcome procedure objections. In fact, the defense itself conceded that the king may choose to act without regard for law and procedure, guided by his *conciencia*. Guerrero Navarrete, *Proceso y sentencia*, 38, 96-7. See also García-Gallo, *Manual de historia*, 794.

More broadly, the view of the trial presented in these documents is quite different from in the chronicle accounts. In them, after the king's initial orders to seize his possessions and set the process in motion, his involvement declined. But according to these records, he remained involved in the process. That could be because of chronicles focus on other royal roles, but as has been noted before, the *Crónica* tradition accounts tend to be somewhat institutionalist, so perhaps depicting so much personal involvement would not be desirable.

⁷³ Establishing these objections could potentially be important in the context of an appeal. So, in the context of a legal case, even if they failed in the immediate sense, they could have a purpose.

⁷⁴ In the *Crónica* narratives, the new evidence of the letters was used as an excuse for arresting him, saying he had only been promised security against arrest for crimes the king had known about at the time the safe conduct was given. *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 13, pp. 282-286; Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1422 ch. 11, pp. 416-17.

his way through an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear. The second, in particular, also suggested an abuse of power beyond improper legal forms. Stressing the betrayal of Enrique implied that some at court, though the king himself was not named directly, were not acting in good faith against those who had opposed them.

More importantly, the defense claimed that the distribution of Ruy López Dávalos's financial reserves among royal supporters, before the trial had even concluded, was troubling.⁷⁵ Certainly, that could mean a purely legal disagreement over what could be done with sequestered, as opposed to confiscated, possessions. However, the objection was not simply about the action itself, but also that once seized, the money was shared out to people identified as supporters of the king. The stress on the beneficiaries suggested that, regardless of legal forms, the seizures were motivated by a desire to get hold of his possessions to use as political rewards.⁷⁶

These three different critical interpretations of the constable's treatment do not work together as a united effort. Yet, they are roughly contemporary and tend to agree on the basic outline of the process against him.⁷⁷ Pérez de Guzmán alleged a mismatch between what Ruy López would deserve according to justice, and how he and his possessions were treated. The self-interested goals of his adversaries were not masked by what he, nonetheless, still described as judicial forms. As for documents produced in the course of his defense, in both the letter and the *proceso* records procedural objections were combined with doubts regarding their purpose, their results, and the good faith of his opponents in general.

⁷⁵ Giving things held in sequestration to others was an ordinary step. The issue here seems to have been that the king had specific people in mind, drawn from among his own supporters.

⁷⁶ Procedurally, this premature reward anticipated a penalty that had not yet been properly decided. But that could be countered with *poderío real*. The accusation of greed, however, could not just be waved away with procedural arguments.

⁷⁷ Mainly from the 1420's to 1450's. The big exception is when the later *Crónica* departs from its source in discussing how the forgery was discovered before the sentence was handed down.

However, in the *proceso* documents, when procedural objections were raised, the court had answers.⁷⁸ Although that might be expected given the context, objections of that kind also did not feature in sources commenting on his arrest and trial from the outside. But the questions about the “true” purpose of those procedures in the defense were not, it appears, so easily answered. And it was criticisms, or at least concerns, of that type which featured prominently in narrative sources as well.

In fifteenth-century royal chronicles, the deployment of royal power in the service royal interests, within the framework of a *vía de justitica*, legitimized separations of person and power. In comparison, both Pérez de Guzmán’s critique and Ruy López Dávalos’s defenses relied on showing that the judicial procedures against him were based on false and self-interested pretenses, not any real royal interest. However, doing so did not involve challenging the legitimacy of deploying royal power through justice in the interests of “good government.” In fact, these critiques suggest an adaptation to those ideas, not focusing on the judicial processes themselves or their potential applications, but on the specific reasons behind them in a particular situation. The purpose, not the process, was the most intense field of contestation.⁷⁹

Álvaro de Luna

Even more than Ruy López Dávalos’s fate, the 1453 downfall of Álvaro de Luna inspired extensive commentary.⁸⁰ The *Crónica de Juan II* is supportive of his deposition, and many

⁷⁸ That was in fact one of the purposes of summary or curtailed procedure, to maintain appearances while achieving quick results. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 287.

⁷⁹ That stands in contrast to Ayala’s approach. He focused his criticism on process, even when the king’s reasons also left something to be desired. Here, accepting judicial procedures as a tool for royal authority, debate focused on the reasons for their initiation in the first place, even if those procedures were insufficient.

⁸⁰ Álvaro de Luna, until just before his arrest, appeared to be at the height of his influence. Suárez Fernández, *Nobleza y monarquía*, 264. See also Isabel Pastor Bodmer, *Grandeza y tragedia de un valido: La muerte de Don Álvaro de Luna* (Madrid: Caja De Madrid, 1992).

Given the degree of power he had accrued over the years, his downfall actually proceeded relatively smoothly. There was some resistance from his supporters, as a series of *capítulos* forming an alliance between his

contemporary observers were favorable as well, even if they did not always embrace the same interpretations promoted by the crown or the *Crónica*.⁸¹ But he had defenders, one of whom composed a chronicle, the *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, critiquing the procedures to which he had been subjected, the justifications for them, and the significance which more supportive accounts sought to attach to his fall. As such, it provides a pathway to analyze and compare anti and pro-Luna cases.

Nicholas Round studied Álvaro de Luna's fall in terms of the legal campaign undertaken to neutralize his power base and seize his possessions. Taking place mostly before his execution, he called that campaign a process of derogation, essentially "unmaking" him as a legal and political actor by means of *poderío real absoluto*.⁸² But he also insisted that the procedures employed were appropriate in the context of fifteenth-century Castilian royal justice.⁸³ However, although those measures were undoubtedly an important aspect of the *privado*'s demise, neither

wife, son and other *grandes*, including some former rivals, attests. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 130, 388-96. But a combination of force and negotiation quickly brought it to an end. The fact that his opponents were able to capture him, however, certainly helped, as did his family being allowed to keep a fairly large proportion of his possessions in exchange for their acquiescence. The specific terms on which they did so, however, defined them as new grants, re-given after they had been confiscated by the crown. Canteaut, "Confisquer pour redistribuer," 316.

⁸¹ It is the last major incident it records, since Juan II died in early 1454. But by this point, the narrative had long passed by the end of the older *Crónica*'s coverage in 1434, and also past that of the *Halconero* tradition as well. Its composition is poorly understood.

Traditionally, this *Crónica de Juan II* was credited to Fernán Pérez de Guzmán in the mid fifteenth century, though it did not reach the form it is known in today until the early sixteenth. Beltrán, "Estudio Preliminar," xviii-xxi; de Mata Carriazo, "Estudio Preliminar," xx-xxvi; Moya García, *Edición y Estudio de la Valeriana*, lxxii-lxxvi; Sanz, introduction to *El Victorial*, xxxiv. Juan de Mena is also put forward as having a possible role. He, however, was largely supportive of Álvaro de Luna. Juan de Mena, *Laberinto de Fortuna*, ed. Miguel Angel Perez Priego (Madrid Espasa Calpe 1989), 176-80. Certainly, its overall evaluation of Luna's fall has much more in common with that advanced by Pérez de Guzmán in *Generaciones y semblanzas*. Diego de Valera, who died in 1488, almost certainly had a hand in it later, particularly in coverage of Álvaro de Luna, of whom he was an opponent. In any case, this account does not form the basis of the analysis below, but it should be understood that despite being part of the same published account, this part of it is very different in character than its coverage of events prior to 1434, and even the mid 1440's. See also Owens, 'By My Absolute Royal Authority', 38.

⁸² For more on these derogatory clauses, and their uses, see Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 475; Nieto Soria, *Legislar y gobernar*, 46, 122. After reaching the deal with his family, the king invoked those same powers to cancel previous orders he had given not obey any of his relatives or allow them to collect rents. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 133, 399-400; doc. 134, 401.

⁸³ There was a difference between the decrees necessary under the developing legal regime and broader case making for the king's action. Despite this language, the king still had to take advice, make his case, and act in public.

they nor their consequences were what the chronicle narratives, royal communications regarding the arrest, or other commentators were most concerned with. Rather, it was the motivation for royal moves against him, and their significance, that dominated discussion.

A Downfall to Celebrate

Before discussing critiques, the anti-Luna case as represented in sympathetic sources requires attention. First, in a message sent in the king's name to city of Murcia announcing Álvaro de Luna's arrest in April of 1453, King Juan admitted "the great place near me and in my household and court and even in all my kingdoms Álvaro de Luna...has for a long time usurped."⁸⁴ As a result, he had been unable "to freely govern and administer my kingdoms," with serious consequences both for his honor and the execution of justice in the realm.⁸⁵ But now, he had been inspired by God to take charge himself, and more specifically had received a denunciation from the *fiscal* about his *privado*'s alleged involvement in the murder of a royal official, Alfonso Pérez de Vivero.⁸⁶ Therefore, he had ordered his arrest and the sequestration of his possessions, pending an investigation.⁸⁷ That was necessary both as part of his royal duty to ensure justice and peace, and to set an example to other potential malefactors.⁸⁸

Although the letter presents the *fiscal*'s denunciation as the proximate cause of the arrest, it also alludes to Álvaro de Luna's alleged empowerment, and the king's determination to end it

⁸⁴ "el grand logar que cerca de mi e en mi casa e corte e aun en todos mis regnos de grand tiempo aca ha tenido eusurado don Álvaro de Luna maestre de Santiago, mi condestable." Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 323, 669-671.

⁸⁵ "libremente regyr e administrar mis regnos." On this language see Carrasco Manchado, "Léxico político en el Seguro de Tordesillas," 100-101, 124.

⁸⁶ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 76.

⁸⁷ Suggesting a serious criminal case. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 438.

⁸⁸ A similar sense of both cause and purpose was advanced in a royal command from April 1453 ordering Gómez Fernández de la Cámara to collect payments that had been owned to Álvaro de Luna, but now were sequestered and under *embargo*, on the king's behalf. Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 128, 384-386.

and rule himself.⁸⁹ Such accusations had been launched against the favorite by his enemies since at least 1439. Now that the king had joined their ranks, they were folded into royal justice.

Coupled with the idea of the king taking back control, his punishment also set an example of the king's resolve to take up his responsibilities and put an end to the great favorite's usurpation.⁹⁰

The case presented in the letter, however, was muted compared to the *Crónica de Juan II*. In its telling, after extensive planning the king ordered Álvaro de Luna's arrest.⁹¹ Subsequently, he chose twelve *doctores* of the *Consejo* to carry out a *proceso* against him and to sentence him "as they should find according to law."⁹² Although no sequestration order was noted, before the *proceso* ended, the *Crónica* describes the seizure of some of his possessions. Ultimately, the judges recommended a death sentence in light of his many "deeds and things done in your disservice and in harm of the public welfare of your kingdoms," which the king approved, along with the *Consejo*.⁹³ Accompanied by a herald crying "this is the justice which our lord king ordered be done to this cruel tyrant and usurper of the royal crown: in payment for his crimes he orders him to be beheaded," he was executed in Valladolid in June.⁹⁴

Shortly after describing Álvaro de Luna's demise, a letter cast as a public explanation for this political earthquake is inserted into the *Crónica*.⁹⁵ It is not necessarily what it claims to be,

⁸⁹ A function of a *fiscal* was to represent the king in his role of keeping order. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 84.

⁹⁰ For example, in the letter to Murcia the king explained that he ordered the favorite's arrest and an investigation "so there may be punishment for the guilty, and an example not to dare such things or anything similar," while in the letter to Gómez Fernández, he ordered the arrest and investigation "so there may be punishment [for Álvaro de Luna] and an example to others." Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 323, 670; Calderón Ortega, *Álvaro de Luna*, doc. 128, 385. Justice, in both phrases, punished the wrongdoer while also serving as an example to others not to do the same.

⁹¹ Guzman, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 1, pp. 679-81. The death of Pérez de Vivero, though mentioned, was not a major factor in bringing that about since it claims that the king had the *deliberada voluntad* to arrest Luna long before.

⁹² "segun por derecho hallasen." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 2, p. 682.

⁹³ "hechos é cosas cometidas en vuestro deservicio y en daño de la cosa pública de vuestros Reynos."

⁹⁴ "Esta es la justicia que manda hacer el Rey nuestro Señor a este cruel tirano é usurpador de la corona real: en pena de sus maldades mándale degollar por ello." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 2, p. 683.

⁹⁵ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 3, pp. 684-291.

but in terms of discussions surrounding his death it is still significant.⁹⁶ It advances, in contrast to the specific case in the letter to Murcia, a whole range of accusations similar to those made by the *privado*'s enemies since 1439, and extensively develops the notion of his empowerment and the exemplary nature of his downfall. Despite its uncertain authenticity as a royal letter, the larger debate surrounding his fall was conducted in terms more akin to those envisioned by *Crónica* than the more limited case presented in the letter to Murcia.⁹⁷

Like the *Crónica*'s narrative, the inserted letter stresses that Álvaro de Luna received proper judicial procedure.⁹⁸ But more significant is its discussion of the reasons for, and significance of, his fall, which contained three principal themes. The first consisted of specific crimes he committed over the course of his career. The second focused on how he was a tyrant and usurper, who had subjected the king to his will. That set up the third, which focused not on punishing him, but on Juan's role and power as monarch. In short, the *privado*'s very public fall made clear Juan's reassertion of his personal authority, and his determination to carry out his royal duties.⁹⁹ That would mark the end of Don Álvaro's usurpation, and ensure that no one else would dare to act likewise.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the maintenance of royal authority, and its defense, were

⁹⁶ It does not match existing contemporary examples. There are many overlaps with genuine ones, but on the whole it contains a different message than those sent out in 1453. For one thing, it emphasizes king's "subjection" to Álvaro de Luna far more. Using the form of a royal letter, however, placed the argument in a familiar and authoritative format. Most likely, it was added in at a later date. For the purposes of supposed documents in chronicles, see Barron, "The Deposition of Richard II," 136; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 28.

⁹⁷ At the *Cortes* of Burgos in 1453, though Álvaro de Luna was not mentioned by name, the representatives expressed their approval of the king's determination to rule personally. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:669.

⁹⁸ Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 3, 688. More specifically, it states that after ordering his arrest, the king received true information about his former favorite's crimes, while others, given that they were notorious and done in his presence, needed no such proof. He put the matter to the *Consejo*. The letter emphasizes the presence of the *grandes* first, but also notes many legal professionals in attendance. Under oath, they eventually decided that he deserved death and the loss of all his goods and offices, and that the king could and should, for the sake of justice, act accordingly.

⁹⁹ Juan claimed that he has been given a "place" by God upon the Earth to do justice. This act allowed him to show he was back in charge through carrying out that justice. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 2, p. 689.

¹⁰⁰ A similar sentiment is found in the chronicle's narration. Before ordering the *proceso*, it claims the king received advice from Diego de Valera, who told him that the kingdom was in a sorry state because the king had submitted his will and power to that of Álvaro de Luna. To restore the kingdom, words were not enough, but action

not just side effects, but put forward as specific reasons to depose him.¹⁰¹ Although arrest, trial and execution punished him and brought about his fall, their wider significance was as a sign of the king's return to his proper role.¹⁰²

Finally, other contemporary observers agreed Álvaro de Luna's fall was exemplary, though even those unsympathetic to him did not necessarily share the views of either the royal letter or the chronicle as to what example should be taken. For instance, Íñigo López de Mendoza's poetic reflection on the event, the "Doctrinal de privados," presents his whole career as an example of what not to do after achieving a position of influence with a monarch.¹⁰³ In its telling, it was fitting that he ended as he had.¹⁰⁴ But Mendoza primarily attributed that end to God's judgement and the workings of fate, not a newly responsible king taking back his power.

To be sure, invocations of God and fate were not uncommon.¹⁰⁵ However, in Fernán Pérez de Guzmán's *Generaciones y semblanzas*, they are more than just a literary convention,

necessary. If the king left things as they were, he could not escape blame. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1452 ch. 2, p. 682.

¹⁰¹ Round notes that the case focused more on royal rights than on Álvaro de Luna's crimes. Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 115.

¹⁰² Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 36. The king must visibly be king, presenting the "perfect idea" of a king.

¹⁰³ López de Mendoza, "Doctrinal de Privados," 154-168. He was both a prominent nobleman and literary figure, who was no friend of Álvaro de Luna even though he did, usually, support the king against the *infantes* of Aragón. But by 1453, that conflict was in the past, and Mendoza certainly did not display much sympathy for the fallen favorite.

¹⁰⁴ The poem is written in Álvaro de Luna's voice, and at one point he suggested that just as he had mistreated others or acted badly, now he was suffering similar treatment. But for the most part, it implies he deserved his fate.

¹⁰⁵ Views of the connections between fortune, fate and providence were complex and varied. Dios Mendoza, *Fortuna y providencia*, 34-35, 51, 93, 274-75. See also Valera, *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, 141-42; Mena, *Laberinto de Fortuna*, 94; Bernat Metge, "Libro de Fortuna e Prudencia," in *Obras de Bernat Metge*, ed. Martín de Riquer (Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 1959), 68-69.

As for how they worked to topple people from power, although royal documents claimed it was the king who was sending a message by removing Álvaro de Luna, many other commentators preferred these other forces instead. Fortune was an important theme, unsurprisingly, in Juan de Mena's political allegory. *Laberinto de Fortuna*, 55-59. It was also prominent in the poetry of the *Cancionero de Baena*. A clerical observer, for instance, attributed Ruy López Dávalos's first fall from grace, in 1398, to the turnings of fortune. Baena, *Cancionero*, no. 348, 623-5. Such ideas were very common in literary works, but highly influential in historiography as well. Arias, *El concepto del destino*, 287; Mendoza, "Doctrinal de privados," 160.

but part of a more pointed critique.¹⁰⁶ It attributes Álvaro de Luna's fall to divine judgement as well, but also rejects any suggestion that it should be taken as an example of the king asserting his authority.¹⁰⁷ *Generaciones y semblanzas* is quite critical of Juan, and here it insists that he did not have the strength of character to do such a thing on his own.¹⁰⁸ In fact, after this burst of activity, it comments, the king returned to lethargy in the few months before his death in 1454.

The royal letter and the *Crónica de Juan II* present Álvaro de Luna's fall as an act of royal justice, in the service of royal authority, from which others should take an example. Contemporary commentators also suggested that his fall was exemplary, but the nature of that example was subject to more diverse interpretations. Still, all the works surveyed above were supportive of his fall, and where they do diverge, the broader significance of the event, rather than the process according to which it unfolded, stands at the center of debate.

The *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*

Arguments about significance, not process, are also at the core of the *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*. It is a product of the late 1450's or 60's, and is most commonly attributed to Álvaro de Luna's protégé, Gonzalo Chacón.¹⁰⁹ It depicts him as a loyal servant of the king in the face of his grasping enemies. Regarding his downfall, although it challenges the legitimacy of the judicial procedures by which he was condemned, more importantly, it also advances a

¹⁰⁶ Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 126-28.

¹⁰⁷ Although it also suggests proper procedure was followed and that Álvaro de Luna got justice. The king had received *informaciones*, and proceeded as in a *cosa notoria* with the advice of *letrados*. As a result, he gave a sentence that he should be beheaded and, in *forma de justicia*, he was.

¹⁰⁸ In fact, Pérez de Guzmán described his fall in its sketch of King Juan II, not of Álvaro de Luna himself. He also considered the event quite shocking and surprising. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 127-28. Guzmán had no reason to love either Álvaro or Juan II, and he presented a negative portrait of both men individually and of their relationship.

¹⁰⁹ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ed. Josef Miguel de Flores (Madrid: Antonio de Sancha, 1784), xv-xxvi. First printed in Milan in the mid-sixteenth century, there are two earlier surviving manuscripts. See also Alvar and Lucía Megías, *Diccionario filológico*, 293-6; Deyermond, "La ideología del estado moderno," 185; Jorge Sanz, introduction to *El Victorial*, xli-xlii.

striking denunciation of the purpose for which they were employed, and decried the example that should be taken from his fate and the king's role in it.¹¹⁰

In its telling, the king began to turn against Álvaro de Luna and plan his arrest long before it was put into effect.¹¹¹ The person principally responsible, it insists, was Alfonso Pérez de Vivero, the same man the favorite was accused of killing.¹¹² This account admits he did, and makes no apologies for it.¹¹³ But his death was an important turning point, since the chronicler insisted that although the king continued to put up a false front of friendship, afterward his ill will became apparent and the *privado* began to suspect trouble.¹¹⁴ However, his sense of loyalty and his pride kept him at court even as his enemies circled.¹¹⁵ Finally, after the king had gathered supporters, the arrest order came. To ensure his surrender, the king offered him terms which, in the chronicler's opinion, were not honored.¹¹⁶ Later, he was executed in Valladolid, preceded by a "lying proclamation," in an almost pathetic attempt to justify it.¹¹⁷

At first glance, the way the narrative unfolds is not dissimilar to the version of events presented in the royal letter and in the *Crónica de Juan II*. Its interpretation of those events, however, is quite different. Looking first to the account of Álvaro de Luna's trial, this *Crónica* protests that he was not given a chance to defend himself in person or even to have a defender speak for him. Moreover, it also describes the judges who decided on his death not as *doctores* of the *Consejo*, but as enemy *grandes* who "were all in [the king's] *Consejo*, without having among

¹¹⁰ Among, in particular, an aristocratic audience. Claussen, *Chivalry and Violence*, 55.

¹¹¹ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 108, pp. 286-291.

¹¹² *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 107, p. 281. Other accounts attributed that change of heart to the influence of Juan's second wife, Isabel of Portugal.

¹¹³ He accused him of being a traitor. *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 113, p. 304; ch. 114, p. 309.

¹¹⁴ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 111, p. 295. Pérez de Vivero's death also served an important turning point in Pérez de Guzmán's *Generaciones y semblanzas*. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 126-7.

¹¹⁵ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 119, pp. 322-26.

¹¹⁶ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 122, p. 343; ch. 123, p. 357.

¹¹⁷ "mentiroso pregón" *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 128, pp. 379-383.

them a single friend of the noble master, each one said his piece, and finally all came to the conclusion that he had to die.”¹¹⁸ Both these views tend to undermine the legitimacy of the process, but the second is particularly important, suggesting that whatever forms may have been employed, the force behind them lay with his powerful, and personal, foes.¹¹⁹

That theme is developed as the chronicle describes the motives behind the decision. The author opined that the *grandes* knew Álvaro de Luna had strong support in Castile and feared that the king would forgive him if he remained alive, which would put them in the path of his vengeance. Moreover, he suggested that they believed his death was the quickest way to secure his possessions for themselves. And finally, when describing his execution, he complained that the only thing they could say against him was the vague charge that he had been “empowered” over the king. He then asked the reader to question how that could be true, since it was the king himself who had approved his execution. Here, his death is presented not as a deserved punishment or exemplary justice, but a convenience for his enemies and dictated by them. On the other hand though, the decision is still called a *sentencia* and the gathering of *grandes* given the status of a *Consejo* meeting, even if it was a biased one.¹²⁰

But ultimately, the chronicle does not devote much space to criticizing procedures. Other problems get much more attention. In a post-sentence lament, the author suggested that the entire move against Álvaro de Luna, from planning his arrest onward, was not undertaken in good

¹¹⁸ “fueron entrados en su Consejo, sin aver entre ellos un solo amigo del digno Maestre, cada uno dellos disce su parescer, é finalmente todos vienen en esta conclusión, que él deba morir.” *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 127, p. 373.

¹¹⁹ Although not every judge had to be a *letrado*, a strong case could be made that their involvement was, at the very least, preferable. Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 124; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 259.

¹²⁰ Several later critiques did devote attention to what they considered severe procedural abuses. But they originated several decades later, and focused on a strict legalism which neither the pro nor anti-Luna narratives of the mid-fifteenth century shared. A somewhat closer observer, jurist Alonso Díaz de Montalvo, considered the *proceso* against Álvaro de Luna void. Among his objections was that the charges on which he was convicted were too vague. *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, appendix 5, 467. On the other hand, according to Paz Alonso, sentences were often brief and, in principle, did not need to be extensively explained. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 75, 260.

faith, and that theme dominated much of his criticism. His fall, he insisted, was due to the greed, fear and duplicity of his enemies while the king, his former friend, collaborated with them to his discredit.¹²¹ The chronicle also repeatedly emphasizes the differences between the king's public face, and public justifications, and what it casts as his true feelings and motives. Claiming to work through the forms of royal justice, and in royal interests, did not mask those "truths."

In addition, according to this chronicle, the arrest had been planned for a long time. But it calls such planning part of a "deception," and suggests that long before the arrest itself, the hatred that had been growing in the king's heart against his *privado* began to show on his face.¹²² Then, after the death of Pérez de Vivero, the chronicle declares that the king began to lie directly to his longtime advisor, saying that his heart did not match his speech when interacting with the old favorite. Despite shows of friendship, he had already conceived an "evil intention." Once intention was turned into action, criticism of the king's attitude escalated, with ingratitude added to duplicity. On the day of his arrest, Álvaro de Luna is described lamenting that the king was acting "without seeing nor having memory of the many, great and well known services I have done in this world for his royal lordship," and that he could not believe that he had been swayed to turn on his staunchest defender.¹²³ Later, in the process of negotiating his surrender, he commanded a royal messenger to tell the king to remember the honor of his high estate, and to remind him that ingratitude was a great sin.

¹²¹ That is a serious charge. Alonso de Cartagena, drawing on an extensive body of law, singled out loyalty as one of the highest virtues. It also went both up, and down, hierarchical scales. *Doctrinal de los caballeros*, 27. See also Eiximenis, *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 113, 119; Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 185. However, sometimes rulers did need to free up resources in order to continue rewarding supporters. Favorites, powerful but also often disliked, were prime sources. Olivier Canteaut, "Confisquer pour redistribuer," 55.

¹²² *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 105, p. 291; ch. 111, p. 295.

¹²³ "sin mirar nin aver membranza de los muchos, é muy señalados é grandes servicios que yo he fecho en este mundo á su Real señoría." *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 121, p. 340. He also lamented that many of those who swayed him had fought against him at Olmedo, the 1445 battle that put an end to the *infantes* of Aragón in Castile.

Piling on further duplicity, the chronicle then describes how the king promised Álvaro de Luna and his followers protection “from death, from injury, and from prison,” if they agreed to surrender and not resist arrest by force.¹²⁴ Although warned that this promise might not be kept, the still loyal Luna declared that he refused to ever go against the will of the king, saying “the king my lord made me, and he can unmake me, if he so wishes.”¹²⁵ After he was imprisoned, the chronicle expounds at length on how the king did just that, breaking his word.

And in doing so, it insists, he actually set a poor example. Moving backward in the narrative, when describing the king’s behavior before the arrest, the author commented that of all lies, those of kings were the worst.¹²⁶ Once his downfall was put into effect, such dishonesty had been made publicly apparent. Afterward, the chronicler lamented, “What example will your vassals, your subjects and your *naturales* take from you, o king? You have to be a clear example, a mirror to your people, since as they see you do, so will they do, and all will be your responsibility.”¹²⁷ With this exclamation, he invoked the commonplace idea that people will take their monarch’s actions as a model for their own. But here he modeled dishonesty and ingratitude by turning against his servant for motives very different than those advanced publicly. In fact, the chronicle compares Juan’s actions with kings who “fell from their estates and were lost.”¹²⁸ Far from reasserting himself, he had placed his throne in jeopardy.

¹²⁴ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 122, p. 345. According to the *Crónica de Juan II*, Álvaro de Luna was promised he would not be harmed in his person or goods, but it also added that the promise specified only that nothing *contra justicia* would be done to him. Guzmán, *Crónica*, 1452 ch. 1, p. 680.

¹²⁵ “El Rey mi señor me fizo, él me puede desfacer, si quisiere.” *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 122, p. 347.

¹²⁶ *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 122, p. 343.

¹²⁷ “¿Qué enxemplo tomarán de ti, ¡o Rey! tus vasallos, tus subditos, é tus naturales? Ca segund ven que tu fasces, que has de ser como claro miralle, ó espejo en que se remiren, assi farán ellos, é todo será á cargo tuyo, é a tu culpa.” *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 123, p. 358.

That mirror metaphor is not uncommon. Medina Ávila, “Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto,” 806. See also Rieke Trimcev, “Historicizing strong metaphors. A Challenge for Conceptual History,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7, no. 2 (2012): 36.

¹²⁸ “cayeron de sus estados, é vinieron en total perdicion.” *Crónica de Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 121, p. 341.

Finally, in the author's estimation this duplicitous and ungrateful king was motivated by nothing more than greed to set such a poor example for his subjects. Calling avarice the root of all maladies, he suggested that the king was covetous of Álvaro de Luna's vast possessions and that "some say" that was the reason he turned on him.¹²⁹ That also motivated the other figures who conspired against him, though in their case greed was joined with envy and ambition. He dismissed the publicly offered charges, insisting instead that the whole process was based on the personal vices, and self-interest, of those involved.¹³⁰

Compared with sympathetic accounts, this critical one advances a radically different interpretation of both the basis for, and the significance of, Álvaro de Luna's fall. Judicial forms notwithstanding, he was targeted for illegitimate ends.¹³¹ More broadly, in fifteenth-century royal chronicles, royal authority and royal interests played extensive justificatory and executive roles in separations of person and power. And that is what this critique, and the larger debate, also focus on. By questioning royal motives, it undermines the application of the same force on which the more supportive interpretations depend. However, although it offers a strong and direct condemnation of what had been done to Álvaro de Luna, it does not challenge specific royal power claims. It even presents him as being somewhat resigned to his fate at the king's hands, accepting Juan's power to unmake him, even as he lamented the shame the abuse of that power for illegitimate ends would bring to the ruler he had served so long.¹³²

¹²⁹ Chacón was kept confined because the king wanted to know where his treasure was. *Crónica de Álvaro de Luna*, ch. 125, p. 362. On the dynamic of "sacrificing" a favorite to gain possession of his wealth, see Canteaut, "Confisquer pour redistribuer," 325. In *Generaciones y semblanzas*, Luna was described as the greedy one, making it fitting that ultimately fortune would turn on him. Pérez de Guzmán, *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 133.

¹³⁰ According to Watts, the private interests and public responsibilities of rulers were not often described as being in conflict. Watts, *Polities*, 91. However, that was by no means always the case. A key point in accusations of tyranny was pursuing private over public good. Black, *Political Thought*, 25.

¹³¹ And his posthumous chronicler sought to defend his reputation, not gain a courtroom victory.

¹³² Demonstrating obedience, an important fifteenth-century theme, without expectation of, though perhaps still hope for, royal reciprocity. Faith S. Harden, *Arms and Letters: Military Life Writing in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 2020), 43.

Fifteenth-Century Critiques in Context

These records, narratives and interpretations of prominent removals both reflect, and formed part of, contestation or disagreement about distinct events. They each address specific concerns, but even very different sources contest similar ground in criticizing, or defending, the depositions in question. Although they may address both the processes employed and the justifications offered, procedural issues were less important, and appear less impactful, than objections that sought to undermine the premises of royally initiated removals from power entirely.¹³³

Given that royal chronicles of the fifteenth century reflected, among other developments, the consequences of a more procedural justice, it might seem curious that procedural criticisms played a relatively minor role. But such depictions of judicial procedures also served as vehicles for strongly defined royal authority to act in its legitimate interests, one tool among many for a proactive, governing king. And in each critical interpretation, like in legitimizing narratives, what counted most were the purposes of the deposer, or at least the deposition, not the specific procedures employed or even the personal merits, or demerits, of the deposed.¹³⁴

Indeed, in situations where rulers and their interests were involved, procedural details often mattered least. The possibilities for kings backed by *poderío real absoluto* to mold judicial

¹³³ That said both the *Crónica de Juan II* and the *Crónica del Halconero* report an attempt by Álvaro de Luna and other conspirators to arrest several prominent nobles in 1448. The partially successful effort caused a backlash, and both accounts identify a lack of process and public explanation as a major factor in causing it. However, the instigator was not the king, but the favorite and his allies, and both suggest that Álvaro de Luna's ambition to have absolute command of Castile was a principal cause of it. So although the lack of process was a problem, the whole affair was also cast as a cloak for private ambition. Indeed, although the arrests were ordered in the king's name, neither account suggests that they were really his idea, and the *Crónica* specifically claims he was reluctant to allow them. Lack of process was more important in these accounts, but the controversy was also based on a mismatch of real and stated reasons, and connected with allegations of Luna's tyranny and abuse of royal power. Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1448 chs. 2-4, pp. 656-59; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 364, pp. 499-501; ch. 368, pp. 505-6; ch. 377, pp. 527-9.

¹³⁴ In other words, what really condemned a deposition was not the disempowerment of an innocent person, but the fact that royal authority and justice were used, deliberately, to do so.

procedures, if not entirely dispense with them, were quite extensive.¹³⁵ That did not mean such measures could escape all comment or opposition, but in general rulers lacked effective legal restraint on their actions.¹³⁶

More particularly, in the records of Ruy López Dávalos's defense, objections based on procedure were swatted aside. And although that might be expected in a royal court, complaints of that type do not play a decisive role in any of the other critical accounts.¹³⁷ In sympathetic narratives, showing that kings acted for sound reasons through passable procedures was more significant than specific procedural detail.¹³⁸ And for these critical observers, discussing whether the target was removed for legitimate reasons had a more prominent role, in a wider variety of sources, than identifying procedural failings.¹³⁹ The specific course of justice, one tool among

¹³⁵ Summary procedure was important in high level cases and was frequently used by specially named judges, both of which apply to the cases considered here. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 287-294. Also, cases of "notorious crimes" (*deleitios notorios*) had to be punished quickly, and required less proof, since they were publicly known and not dealing with them quickly might undermine faith in justice. Paz Alonso, 289, 310; Dios, *El Consejo Real*, 429-439, 451. Of course, in deposition cases, it was also advantageous for royal deponents not to be hindered by their own tool.

¹³⁶ A law-making king could more easily make breaking the law into changing the law. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 13. Anthony Black suggests a common sense that kings had a moral obligation to obey laws, but not a legal one. Black, *Political Thought*, 152. Indeed, in the *Siete Partidas*, kings are urged not to desire to do anything against *derecho*, but not prohibited. *p.2, t.5, l.13*. In his *Doctrinal de príncipes*, dedicated to Fernando *el Católico*, Diego de Valera admonished that kings ruled according to law, while tyrants followed their own will. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 188. Sánchez de Arévalo, in his slightly earlier *Suma de la política*, was more ambiguous. On the one hand, he connected justice with the observance of written law, and admonished kings to do so. He envisioned departing from them as a matter of clemency, not necessity. However, he also considered the king and his commands, once made, to be owed obedience. *Suma de la política*, 298-303.

But my concern is not so much with whether judgements accorded with law, but how, and why, they were reached. On that score, at the *Cortes* of Toledo in 1436, the representatives complained about procedural abuses in royal courts, yet allowed that exceptions might be made in *casos notorios*. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:305. But in 1438, at Madrigal, representatives demanded that justice in royal appellate courts be done according to simplified procedures, accepting departures from formal procedures to avoid delays. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:332.

¹³⁷ Despite the fact that the *recurso de nulidad*, arguing proper procedure had not been followed, was a standard path of appeal. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 281-83.

¹³⁸ That is not to say judicial trappings did not matter in those accounts, since chronicles of both traditions placed downfalls in specific institutional settings and associated them with the work of legal professionals. However, they served mainly as venues for showing kings deploying power and making the case for it. As discussed, after setting the process in motion, actually carrying it out was left in the hands of others.

¹³⁹ Fernández Conde has a generally favorable view of the education of Castilian aristocrats. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 25. See also Beceiro Pita, "Argumentos ideológicos de la oposición nobiliaria bajo los Trastámaras," 212-23; Theresa Earenfight, "Political Culture and Political Discourse in the Letters of Queen María of Castilla," 138; Fernández Gallardo, "Cultura jurídica, renacer de la Antigüedad e ideología política," 124. García-Gallo notes popular dictionaries of legal terms for educated readerships in the fifteenth century. Kagan notes

many for a governing king, was less important than the reasons that moved the king, or those who influenced him, to act.¹⁴⁰

Turning from fields of contestation to the more specific terms in which that controversy was expressed, deploying royal authority in the service of royal interests could be cast as helping rulers meet royal governing responsibilities. And doing so through judicial procedures worked as a legitimizing tactic, connecting proactive royal government with older notions of royal justice. However, critics of removals from power at royal hands had grounds on which to offer their own interpretations of what the motives behind them “really” were.

Royal interests and royal whims were not, in principle, the same thing.¹⁴¹ Authors of contemporary works on political thought, and political actors, expressed specific ideas about what constituted royal service or the public good, the causes in which deposing monarchs were often described as acting by sympathetic accounts.¹⁴² Satisfying greed or pursuing grudges,

this as well, and holds that a generally educated Castilian would know the basics of law and procedure, and perhaps methods of legal reasoning. He also adds that from the 15th century at least, rulers sponsored the circulation of *ordenanzas reales*. These were not law codes, but were dedicated to keeping people updated about new decisions. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants*, 145. That suggests that the relative lack of attention to issues of procedure was not because audiences would not have understood them.

¹⁴⁰ Justice and other forms of administration were bound together, making applying judicial procedures for purposes other than punishing crimes easier. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 560; Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 314. Moreover, although institutionalization implies a certain degree of specification of function and regularization of procedure, the king himself retained, and in some formulations ought to retain, a degree of personal independence from institutions.

However, those ideas opened up avenues for critique as well as justification. Indeed, in his *Doctrinal de príncipes*, Diego de Valera allowed that there was a difference between a king making a *derecho juicio* and justice itself. In other words, a *justa sentencia*, one made in proper form, could still lead to an injustice. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 200. Moving beyond royal justice and its procedures Nieto Soria, studying Trastámara propaganda, considers it as an effort to turn power into something acceptable, and even desirable. These critiques worked to deny that acceptability for these particular acts of power. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 42-46.

¹⁴¹ In the *Partidas*, subjects are exhorted to discern the king’s interests and work to further them. *p.2, t.13, l.3*. Also, one petition from the 1440 *Cortes* of Valladolid suggests that just as people could disagree over how to serve God, they could disagree over how to serve the king. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:378. Both suggest subjects were capable of knowing what the king needs without actually hearing it from him.

¹⁴² They still left quite a bit of room for making royal claims, but also room to challenge them. Nieto Soria identified the public or common good as the newest element in this trífeca. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 147-148, 224-225. For his part, García de Valdeavellano identified the common good in terms of the maintenance of peace, defending the kingdom, defending the faith, and preserving justice. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 390, 410, 428.

which featured as alleged motivations in the direct objections to Ruy López Dávalos's and Álvaro de Luna's removals, were not among them.¹⁴³ In fact, ruling for personal gain rather than the public interest was a central pillar in defining tyranny.¹⁴⁴ And in the criticisms above, even when the forms of procedure were not questioned, or were questioned only in mild terms, they did not mask what were cast as the "true," illegitimate motives for the removals in question.¹⁴⁵ Their impact rested not on identifying faults in those procedures, but in highlighting the faulty reasons behind them.

Moreover, allegations of that type overlapped with another sphere of contestation that focused not on the charges made against a target, but instead on the conduct of the ruler who targeted them.¹⁴⁶ The way in which a king behaved was a longstanding concern, but was of renewed interest to fifteenth-century commentators.¹⁴⁷ With great claims to power came great

¹⁴³ In his *Doctrinal de príncipes*, Diego de Valera urged kings to flee from avarice. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 186. See also *p.2, t.3 l.3-4*. And in 1438 rebels demanding Álvaro de Luna's removal from court reminded the king that "in matters of justice, your lordship cannot show favoritism to one party over another." Guzmán, *Crónica de Juan II*, 1438 ch. 5, p. 550; *Crónica del Halconero*, ch. 231, p. 258. Diego de Valera, expressing a common sentiment, also proclaimed that kings should not judge out of wrath, but sober consideration and justice. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 185.

Returning to objections to Ruy López Dávalos's treatment, Pérez de Guzmán lamented the lack of restitution but did not assign responsibility for it, avoiding such a direct charge against King Juan. But in the *proceso* documents, his defenders came closer to criticizing the king's motives, by stressing that his sequestered property was shared out, prematurely, exclusively among royal supporters who had contributed to the constable's downfall. See also Bertelloni, "La construcción de la figura del Emperador como soberano absoluto," 1619.

¹⁴⁴ Black, *Political Thought*, 25. For Sánchez de Arévalo, a key mark of a tyrant was selfishness, greed and using unjust methods to satisfy them. *Suma de la política*, 285-286.

¹⁴⁵ That is, in most of them besides Ruy López Dávalos's direct defense. Even the *Crónica de Álvaro de Luna*, although it points out that Álvaro's enemies arranged the proceedings against him and that there were no friends of his among the judges, does not dwell on that fact outside the immediate narration of the incident, whereas it returns to the falsehood, greed and jealousy of the king and his other opponents again and again.

¹⁴⁶ They overlap in the pro-Luna chronicle in particular, since there the charges against him were not just said to be untrue, but the king and the anti-Luna *grandes* also were accused of knowing they were untrue and making them simply to bring him down.

¹⁴⁷ For instance, the thirteenth century *Siete Partidas* explain how a king ought to behave in his daily life as well as toward his subjects. *p.2, t.4, l.1*. But in the fifteenth century, he became the center of a greatly expanded court ceremonial. Francisco de Cañas Gálvez, "La cámara de Juan II," 81-196; Nieto Soria, *Ceremonias de la realeza*, 15-20, 120-123; Villarroel González, "Las deposiciones y sus ritos," 211-246.

Interestingly, in the pro-Luna chronicle, the author noted that in his time as favorite Don Álvaro took great care to bring into a state of "great perfection manners and gentility in the Spanish nation, both in matters of knighthood, and in all other acts and ceremonies which are owed to the royal majesty and its pre-eminence and its crown." *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna*, 396.

expectations of character to match. Maintaining justice was strongly connected with maintaining the legitimacy of royal power, but virtue, both promoting it and exhibiting it, was put forward as an important measure of legitimacy as well.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, the ways in which monarchs lived and ruled, and were seen to do so, were not only important for their own image, but also were often held to be exemplary, models for the realm to follow.¹⁴⁹

Ultimately, both royal virtue and royal justice contributed to setting an example to the realm. And the question of what example was being set was a concern for both supportive and critical observers.¹⁵⁰ In a basic sense, punishments handed down by royal justice were exemplary in that they, ideally, discouraged others from daring to attempt what was penalized.¹⁵¹ However, the king executing justice was not just presented as a lesson for others to avoid a particular

¹⁴⁸ Castilla Urbano, "La idea del cuerpo místico en Alonso de Cartagena," 365; Fernández Gallardo, *Alonso de Cartagena*, 333-4; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 84; Tjällén, "Teaching virtue through the law," 59-61; Julio Vélez-Sainz, "Boccaccio, virtud y poder en el *Libro de las claras e virtuosas mugeres* de Álvaro de Luna," *La corónica* 31, no.1 (Fall 2002): 115-17.

That virtue was defined in primarily Christian terms. See *p.2, t.5, l.7-8*. In his *Doctrinal de príncipes*, Diego de Valera urged that kings should be just, clement, truthful and merciful. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 175. That parallels claims of the king's unique connection to God. Fernández Conde, *La religiosidad medieval*, 115; Medina Ávila, "Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto," 809; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 51-58, 100. Yet, he also had to live up to the demands of that connection. Black, *Political Thought*, 7, 15, 137; Nieto Soria, 55, 83-86. See also Valera, *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 174; Valera, *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*, 92; Sánchez de Arévalo, *Suma de la política*, 283, 286.

However, other kinds of virtue associated with a chivalric warrior ethos were also expected, at least for male rulers. Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 12-44.

¹⁴⁹ Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 78, 85; Strayer, *Medieval Origins*, 73. According to Diego de Valera subjects would follow the king's example in their own lives and actions, while the morality of a ruler's subjects reflected on the ruler himself. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 188. See also *p.2, t.5, l.4-6*. And it could have other practical consequences as well. Francesc Eiximenis put forward Alfonso XI's many illegitimate children, and their conflict with his legitimate son Pedro, as an example of the public problems private faults could cause. *Lo regiment de la cosa pública*, 173.

¹⁵⁰ And there was room for interpretation, even in the face of careful messaging. Ward, "'Chronicle' and 'History,'" 101-128.

¹⁵¹ Aguiar Andrade, *A construção medieval do território*, 67; Gauvard, "Justification and Theory of the Death Penalty," 200-1; Kaeuper, *War, Justice, and Public Order*, 256; Mucciarelli, "Fama e giustizia a Siena al tempo dei Nove," 622.

crime. His doing so, and being seen to do so, could also be cast as a visible sign that he was living up to his responsibilities.¹⁵²

But in accounts where judicial forms did not mask base motives, although there were still lessons to be learned about the king and his rule, the example he set was cast very differently.¹⁵³ With regard to Álvaro de Luna's deposition in particular, that issue was a point of contention across several accounts, both supportive and critical. For instance, the *Crónica* casts his downfall both as exemplary justice in itself, and also as a sign of the king's return to personal rule. For their part, the other sympathetic commentators suggested a salutary example of God's judgement, or of the fate that fortune reserved for those who pushed too far. But in the critical chronicle, the king's disgraceful conduct offered a terrible example, not of justice and royal responsibility, but of deceit and treachery toward an old and faithful servant.¹⁵⁴

So, new expressions of power and attendant claims, like *cierta ciencia*, certainly did not place monarchs above reproach. However, in the letter recounting Ruy López Dávalos's objections, he presented himself as being resigned to his losses, at least the material ones, while in the pro-Luna chronicle, its subject was said to admit that the king made him, and could destroy him if he chose.¹⁵⁵ And to make the case that the king's conduct set a bad example to the realm, that same account implicitly accepts a powerful view of kingship that placed the monarch

¹⁵² As crimes became more a concern of the whole community, so did punishment. Paz Alonso, *El proceso penal*, 91. See also Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 152; Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned*, 211-12. For Diego de Valera, ensuring justice was the best way for a king to secure his *fama*, and he also opined that it was the highest royal virtue and key to the others. *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 186; *Exortación de la paz*, 81.

¹⁵³ On distinctions between legal and moral justice, see Tjällén, "Teaching virtue through the law," 67

¹⁵⁴ In contrast to expectations that kings should be truthful and reward service. Valera, *Doctrinal de príncipes*, 180; Valera, *Exortación de la paz*, 81. See also *p.2, t.4, l.3*. For Ruy López Dávalos, Pérez de Guzmán offered a strong sense that he was not treated with good faith. Although he did not blame the king personally, the pro-Luna account did. And in both cases, the removals were authorized in his name.

¹⁵⁵ Compare that sentiment to the observation of Alfonso Fernández Coronel, for whom it was "Castile," not kings, that made men and broke them. However, it should be noted that Pérez de Guzmán also repeated that phrase in his *Generaciones y semblanzas*, so it still had some resonance. *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 108.

and his conduct in a central role, disagreeing with more sympathetic accounts principally over the way in which he was playing it.

Those expressions of resignation have particular roles in their respective accounts.¹⁵⁶ But they also highlight that both approving narratives and critical viewpoints share similar conceptions of royal authority, and its roles in separating person and power. Specific procedural objections had a limited role at most, and none of the critiques questions whether, properly justified, kings had extensive discretion to disempower subjects along, or associated with, a *vía de justicia*.¹⁵⁷ Instead, they insist that in particular circumstances, royal power and its tool, justice, were being abused for selfish or dishonest ends.¹⁵⁸

Conclusions

For Pedro López de Ayala, evaluations of legitimacy hinged on whether kings acted through judicial procedures, a concern shared by the *Gran Crónica*. And both those late fourteenth-century accounts cast judicial procedures as limiting factors for legitimate royal action. But later chroniclers presented judicial procedures as vehicles for royal actions of many

¹⁵⁶ Certain strands of fifteenth century thought emphasized the duty of obedience subjects owed to kings as opposed to more reciprocal arrangements. Reacting, or presenting their reactions, in that way could emphasize their own character even in the face of unjust action. Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 116. On the other hand, in line with the ideas about fortune discussed above, they also display a defiant disdain for the world and its rewards. Mendoza, “Doctrinal de privados,” 162. In his early fifteenth-century *Doce trabajos de Hércules*, Enrique de Villena lamented that avaricious men did not care about virtue, placing all their hope in earthly gains, whereas even more directly, Bernat Metge called worldly honors meaningless. Villena, *Los doce trabajos de Hércules*, 19; Metge, “Libro de Fortuna e Prudencia,” 71.

¹⁵⁷ Limited outside of the specific context of the Ruy López Dávalos defense, that is. Sometimes, Álvaro de Luna’s execution is considered extra-judicial, but I agree with Round that it was presented as being “legal enough.” Rucquoi, “Privanza, fortuna y política,” 342.

¹⁵⁸ That fits with the idea that royal power had theory on its side, and subjects resisted mainly by action. And more specifically, that nobles did not generally develop a coherent ideological program to counter royal power but sought, where they could, to co-opt it. Iglesia Ferreiros, *Historia de la traición*, 185. See also Robert S. Chamberlain. “The Concept of the Señor Natural as Revealed by Castilian Law and Administrative Documents,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 19, no. 2 (May 1939): 130-137; Estepa Díez, “Naturaleza y poder real en Castilla,” 163-182. For an example of a more coherent though ultimately isolated noble effort, see Moran Martin, “‘Alteza... mercenario soys’,” 93-114.

types, enabled by royal authority and undertaken in its interests. For their part, commentators in later debates did not, primarily, target specific procedures, but rather the reasons advanced for and through them.¹⁵⁹ Those differences reflect the contrasts between the earlier and later royal chronicle representations of separations of person and power.¹⁶⁰

But in some respects, the earlier and later critical commentators were concerned with different consequences, complicating comparisons between them. Ayala and the *Gran Crónica* focused on executions, while the fates of a target's resources of power played much larger roles in the later critiques. That was, to be sure, a product of the circumstances of specific removals, but it means that there is an important difference in how the earlier and later sources frame the events they described.¹⁶¹ For Ayala, lack of procedure made for an arbitrary and cruel king who killed his subjects. The more varied later accounts, for their part, share a common theme of misrepresented motives making for a greedy, ungrateful or dishonest ruler who allowed his servants to lose their possessions, or even sought to secure them for himself.¹⁶²

But considered in a larger historical and historiographical context, the terms of the fifteenth-century critiques, and the indeed of the broader debates of which they formed part, offer

¹⁵⁹ The more diverse fifteenth-century royal chronicles unsurprisingly do not present such a consistent image among themselves, and in fact, they each offer much less in the way of direct critique in general.

¹⁶⁰ Moreover, in comparison to fourteenth-century accounts, more elements could contribute to a sense of process, and sentences were less central. Therefore, identifying individual missing pieces may be less impactful than undermining the alleged reasons why those procedures, and the authority behind them, were being used at all.

¹⁶¹ Certainly, executions continued in the fifteenth century, though authors expressed a sense that they should not be taken lightly. For instance, in his *Exortación de la paz*, urging reconciliation between the king and the *infantes* of Aragón, Diego de Valera urged the king to avoid imposing that penalty. *Exortación de la paz*, 82-83.

¹⁶² Concern for the king's image or reputation was a consistent element across many critiques. But what aspects of his conduct would impact his reputation were different in Ayala's work than in fifteenth-century sources. On the other hand, the fact that these two controversial incidents did involve formal *procesos* and sentences, which arranged very harsh fates for their targets, speaks to the enduring significance of procedural justice and its effects. None of the fifteenth-century incidents discussed in previous chapters which did not include completed *procesos* and sentences generated as much enduring debate as these two did. So, the relative lack of criticism with respect to temporary suspensions of exercise, arranged by royal authority acting in its interests, may also reflect their relatively lower stakes compared to permanent dispossession or execution. However, the ways in which these fifteenth-century observers critiqued those *procesos*, and their results, still focused on the motivations, stated or hidden, for the application of royal power against the target. They were mainly political, not legal, debates.

a window into the rise of the crown, its institutions, and royal authority as central reference points of political life.¹⁶³ Each critic questioned reasons offered for particular royal actions, and some inverted their alleged significance, but only Ruy López Dávalos's defense even approached questioning the legal legitimacy of those actions in specific procedural terms.¹⁶⁴ Instead, most critical arguments worked in response to specific situations and personalities, perhaps effectively, but ultimately within rather narrow parameters.¹⁶⁵

That is not to say that more extensive challenges were not, or could not be, advanced.¹⁶⁶ Or, more broadly, that royal centrality translated into an ability to dictate the course of political events. But it could play a major role in shaping them and, even more, shaping political discourse. Certainly these critics, in expressing their concerns, accepted, or at least did not challenge, views of royal power similar to those which legitimized royal action in more supportive accounts.¹⁶⁷ In that sense, new royal claims were not just advanced by monarchs and

¹⁶³ Other groups, particularly nobles, did not develop effective ideological counters to such claims. They relied on their "hard power" to resist when their interests were threatened, and more importantly, found ways to work with the crown to their advantage. So, in many ways, it was not in noble interests to oppose these claims. González Mínguez, "Crisis sucesoria y conflictividad social," 339-368.

¹⁶⁴ And that was in a very specific context, not really part of a public debate. Ladero Quesada, "El ejercicio del poder real en la Corona de Aragón," 36.

¹⁶⁵ In a more legal-institutional context, Owens discusses how invocations of royal authority did not sweep all before them, but became points of contention in lawsuits. Those suits, however, ended up in royal courts. That served to reinforce the centrality of the crown, not simply by commanding unilaterally, but by deciding disputes which its own actions and claims set in motion. Owens, *By my Absolute Royal Authority*, 144.

¹⁶⁶ Eduardo Fuentes Ganzo, "Pactismo, Cortes y hermandades," 415-452; Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 22-34; Nieto Soria, *Fundamentos ideológicos*, 112-20; Watts, *Politics*, 147.

¹⁶⁷ *Poderío real absoluto*, and its exercise, became an object of contestation as much as a royal claim. For instance, at the *Cortes* of Valladolid in 1442, meeting in the aftermath of the extensive grants made to the infantes and their allies following the Medina del Campo coup of 1441, the urban representatives pushed back against it. Along with complaining about the granting of city possessions, and even whole towns, to nobles, they protested an excessive use of derogatory clauses and terms like *poderío real absoluto* and *cierta ciencia* in royal documents. Those claims, after all, were involved in arranging those losses. In response, the king pledged to limit their application in private disputes. *Cortes de los antiguos reinos*, 3:394, 406.

On the other hand, that same year the town of Lorca, near Murcia, received a royal promise that it would not be alienated from the crown, depending heavily on invocations of royal power and making extensive use of derogatory clauses to pre-emptively deny any such grant that may be made in future. That is an example of how those claims to power could be troublesome, but also useful, to others besides rulers, depending on circumstance. That dual potential helped drive it, and the rulers claiming it, into the center of political discourse. Abellán Pérez, *Documentos de Juan II*, doc. 228, 554.

their supporters, but were assimilated, and employed, by critical observers of their actions as well.

Conclusion: Power Redefined and Kings and Empowered

In the spring of 1445, fresh from victory over the *infantes* of Aragón in the First Battle of Olmedo, Juan II, or perhaps more accurately Álvaro de Luna, convened the *Cortes* of Castile.¹ This meeting became known as the *Cortes del real de Olmedo*, signifying it was held in the royal camp near the battlefield, closely associating it with military triumph.² At the meeting, many of the strong claims of royal authority advanced by court officials over the past few decades were promulgated in a sweeping assertion of power.³ That assertion, however, is often ridiculed as an absurd pretense. In fact Juan II was, the 1445 triumph notwithstanding, in a weak political position for much of his reign as noble bands fought to control him, the court, and the resources of the crown. After his death in 1454, his successor, Enrique IV, ended up in a similar position, caught between favorites, warring bands, and even a rival claimant to the throne.⁴

Claiming authority did not mean rulers and their allies could impose their wills upon the realm unchallenged, and in fact those claims often served victorious noble bands who pressured the king to use his royal power to disenfranchise their rivals.⁵ But that did not mean that the assertions made at Olmedo were insignificant either, and more astute or fortunate rulers, like

¹ The strategically located town, south of Valladolid, was the site of two key battles in Castile's fifteenth-century internal conflicts.

² On the whole, Castile's fifteenth-century internal conflicts were of relatively low intensity, certainly when compared with contemporary England. Indeed, they were referred to in different terms than "cruel war" with outside and, especially, non-Christian foes. At Olmedo, there were about two dozen reported fatalities. José Manuel Nieto Soria, "Expresiones de la cultura política Trastámara," 35-39. In literature, the discrepancy between the martial pretensions of the fifteenth-century aristocracy, and their perceived reluctance to actually engage in combat, inspired the *Coplas de la panadera*, a satirical take on the battle whose unidentified author mocked its key participants. *Coplas de la panadera*, ed. Vicente Romano García (Pamplona: Aguilar, 1963).

³ Blas Medina Ávila, "Juan de Mena, propagandista del poderío real absoluto," 826; Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469)," 180-4.

⁴ A particular problem for royal authority was the alienation of much of the *realengo*, places under direct royal jurisdiction. García de Valdeavellano, *Curso de historia*, 532.

⁵ Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469)," 161-2, 186-8, 223.

Isabel and Fernando, would capitalize on them as they consolidated power in the final decades of the fifteenth century.⁶

However, asserting those new ideas was just one part of a larger shift in how power was contested and conceived. Examined through the lens of chronicle narratives, adaptations to late fourteenth-century innovations in judicial institutions facilitated new ways of depicting the separation of person and power. Royal justice continued to mediate that process, or at least legitimize it. But rulers' most direct interventions moved away from determinations of guilt and punishment, and from stripping away the possession of resources supporting power outright, both of which had dominated accounts from earlier in the fourteenth century.

In chronicles of the early and mid-fifteenth century, deposing monarchs deployed distinct new justifications, and executive forces, through which they effected legitimate disempowerments of their subjects. But the losses resulting from their use were also described in distinctive terms, targeting the exercise, rather than the possession, of power. Formal sentences and permanent losses, or the prospect of such, were still present in accounts from the fifteenth century. But they were most significant for legitimizing the position of those who would receive resources seized from royal rivals, not for opening up those rivals to royal intervention in the first place.⁷ This enduring but displaced role for permanent losses mandated by formal sentences highlights the distinctiveness of losses defined in terms of capacity to act, and authorized by royal authority acting in its interests.

⁶ That consolidation was not just a matter of imposition though. Part of the appeal of such sweeping claims of royal authority was that they could bestow a strong legal basis for aristocrats great and small to keep what they had secured, by fair means or foul, over the past half century. Ladero Quesada, "El ejercicio del poder real en la Corona de Aragón," 91; Nieto Soria, "El poderío real absoluto de Olmedo (1445) a Ocaña (1469)," 163-5, 169, 224; Nieto Soria, "La nobleza y el 'poderío real absoluto'," 242. In a different context, Ormond observes that similar dynamics in fifteenth-century England did not destroy England's precocious "state." Ormond, *Political Life in Medieval England*, 134-5.

⁷ And especially in the *Crónica* tradition accounts.

That new definition also found expression beyond accounts dealing with the removal of nobles from power, and beyond chronicle narratives themselves. For one thing, depictions of the depositions of the masters of Castile's military orders paralleled those of "secular" nobles in the same chronicles. Although new conceptions of power in the fifteenth century have been associated with the changing nature of aristocratic power bases, the masterships were unique positions whose essential nature remained stable throughout the period under consideration. So, those changes were not driven by modifications to the office itself. They were instead the results of new assertions of royal power employed to suspend, rather than depose, masters.

In addition, fifteenth-century chroniclers depicted actors besides kings and their supporters adopting new ways of defining, and targeting, power in the service of their own goals. Álvaro de Luna's rivals recast the nature of his power at court from a matter of influence over royal decision making to one of the usurpation, and exercise, of royal power. And as his power was redefined, the means to target him were reimagined as well. No longer a "private" person to be constrained by pacts among equals, depicting him as an illegitimate exerciser of royal power also turned him into a legitimate target of royal authority, and even justice. To prevail, his rivals adapted their case to the language, and tools, of royal authority.

Finally, the terms that defined larger debates about the legitimacy of particular removals reflected the concerns of chronicle narratives sympathetic to, or at least not overtly critical of, those same depositions. Late fourteenth-century observers, like Pedro López de Ayala, focused on the presence or absence of proper judicial procedures as the key marker of legitimacy in deposition accounts. Although that concern did not disappear, fifteenth-century critics focused on the justifications offered for the application of royal authority to disempower targets before,

or pending the outcome of, such procedures. Those were the same forces that, when cast as justified, authorized losses in supportive contemporary accounts.

The image of a king proactively managing affairs to suit his and the realm's interests, and new ideas of power and its loss, were closely related and mutually reinforced one another. New claims of royal power, and attendant justifications for its use, widened the scope for chroniclers to depict monarchs interfering legitimately in the power of their subjects. But the interference thereby justified was of a distinctive type, targeting exercise rather than possession.

Looked at the other way, the capacity for new claims and justifications to legitimize royal actions depended, in part, on defining those actions in a new way. The prospect of determinations of guilt and punishment, and their association with formal losses of possession, did not disappear from fifteenth-century accounts. New royal claims did not overwhelm that association or make it irrelevant. Instead, they bypassed it by articulating legitimate losses of power on other terms. As such, differences between chronicle narratives of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth did not just reflect the relative power of political players shifting in material or ideological terms. They were also based on a redefinition of the power at stake, beginning in the late fourteenth-century and solidified in the fifteenth.

Altogether, institutional and ideological changes, reflected in the medium of chronicle narratives, drove an important shift in political discourses and culture. The new articulation of what it meant to lose power at the heart of that shift was not extensively theorized or codified in explicit terms. But in chronicle narratives, considered in the context of a wider web of normative and documentary sources, it was nonetheless expressed. As for the executive force behind these removals, royal power claims were more directly advanced in contemporary sources. However,

the embodiment of those claims in the figure of a proactive, governing king was not. That image, likewise, appeared within chronicle narratives that showed this figure at work.

Looking to broader historiography, a key tension at the heart of work about late medieval politics, governments, and their institutional and ideological bases is that the capacity of centralized power increased alongside other trends that promoted the patrimonialization and diffusion of power. Likewise, prominent roles for institutional structures operating according to, at least in theory, formal rules existed alongside particular, and even ad-hoc, arrangements among the powerful. These two interpretations are not mutually exclusive or always contradictory. Indeed, the intertwining of noble power bases and the crown is a major part of traditional and revised “state narratives,” and even outright rejections of them. In a specifically Castilian context, the settlement of the *reyes católicos* in the late fifteenth-century depended, in part, on using the ideological and institutional capacity of the crown to marshal aristocratic acquiescence to their rule, while also affirming the power and position of noble lineages. But their juxtaposition is still somewhat challenging for efforts to understand the nature, centers, and distribution of power in late medieval polities, both in themselves and in relation to other forms of political organization.

In chronicle accounts of depositions, those two processes can be seen at work alongside each other, creating a distinctive form of political action and political culture. Compared with their fourteenth-century forbears, in fifteenth-century chronicles political power, and more specifically the exercise of power, was placed more at the discretion of a ruler whose authority and interests served as the basis for a wide range of legitimized actions to disempower subjects. However, within those narratives, defining those interests also meant that power and its loss were also portrayed in more contextual terms. Rather than clear cut losses cast as punishments for

crimes, they described suspensions of exercise based on what were cast as royal needs in a particular situation, and which were designed to meet those needs. However, that ad-hoc way of establishing the proper context for royal action based on the issues and personalities involved, as opposed to emphasizing the observance of proper judicial forms, was in fact a key mechanism behind a more empowered, and certainly more central, monarch. Far from a limitation or weakness, it was a path of empowerment, since rulers were depicted as meeting particular needs freed from limiting forms, while still able to justify their actions in a consistent idiom.⁸

Returning to the political struggles of the mid-fifteenth century, in 1453, just eight years after the *Cortes* of Olmedo, a prime architect of the claims to royal authority asserted there, Álvaro de Luna, fell victim to them himself. Thanks to a conjunction of royal disfavor, emboldened opponents and, on his side, a degree of complacency, he was arrested and disempowered. Ultimately, he was also executed, but that sentence came after his capacity to act had been neutralized by other means. His downfall serves as an example of how effective royal authority acting in its interests, joined with but distinct from judicial procedures, could be for rulers to deny problematic subjects the ability to exercise power and, in so doing, magnify their own.

⁸ That does not mean everyone accepted the justification, only that a plausible case could be built.

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AHN —Archivo Histórico Nacional

ARS —Archivo Real de Simancas

BNE —Biblioteca Nacional de España

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