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From the Hall to the Bedroom.

Royal Power and Reclusion in Late Medieval Castile

[Communication à l'International Medieval Congress *Power and Authority*, les 14-17 juillet 2003 à Leeds, session n° 1217 *Exhibition and Dissimulation*, coordonnée par Jean-Philippe Genet. Inédite] © dell'autore –

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From the Hall to the Bedroom Royal Power and Reclusion in Late Medieval Castile

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According to the chronicles of the fourteenth century the issue of « Exhibition and Dissimulation » still seems to be having a strong link with the political propaganda. For example Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid rather insists on the exhibitionist side of Alfonso XI (1312-1350) when he depicts him holding public audience ; whereas Pedro López de Ayala describes the dissembling side of Pedro the Cruel (1350-1369) when he lures his victims into his bedroom to have them executed. In other words the good king shows off while the tyrant hides. Set up around the middle of the fourteenth century this principle became such a stereotype that the historians at the end of the fifteenth century made of Enrique IV (1454-1474) a new tyrant and contrasted him with the kind Queen Isabel (1474-1504). Whichever the tyrant, the momentum seems to remain the same : from the hall, the place of the good government, to the bedroom, completed by its demise in the fifteenth century, this space of excessiveness where only a few sicaires remain. And yet sometimes the tyrant resists this confinement discursive, and he insists in wanting to have a public audience, as the good king he longs to be, would. Then the historian attempts to distort reality, to conceal the hall where the tyrant wanders in order to lock him up in the hell of stereotypes and of political libelling. It is one of these way out and recoveries that I have chosen to analyse to try and bring additional ideas to the topic launched by Jean-Philippe Genet.

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Towards the end of July 1455, in Seville, a young virgin is abducted by the man who loves her. According to Alfonso de Palencia, in charge of revising the mistakes of the royal historian Diego Enríquez del Castillo, the Seville abduction becomes the ultimate evidence of the tyranny under Enrique IV¹. Other

¹ Version A : « Neque Mauris Granatensibus qui ut preferetur prosequerentur regem commoditas hospitiorum defuit, uerumtamen Mofarrae et Reduano

historians recount that event : in *Crónica castellana* (or *anónima*) written from 1481², in the *Memorial de diversas hazañas* written

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

² Version B : « E acaesçio que Mofarias, un moro de los que alli venian con el rey, fue aposentado en la cassa de un mercador llamado Diego Sanchez de Origuela, el qual tenia una fija muy hermosa, de la qual aquel moro se enamoro, e como a la donzella fuese aborresçible la habla suya e no quisiesse dar lugar a la voluntad del moro, el aguardo tienpo en que el padre e la madre no fuessen casa, e tomo la donzella e atapole la boca de manera que pudiese dar boce, e atole las manos e pusola ençima de vn cavallo e çiertos moros con ella, e asi la lleuo de la çbdad. E quando los padres vinieron e fallaron su fija llevada, començaron a dar muy grandes gritos, a que toda la vezindad se junto, e ovieron del caso tan gran turbaçion quanto la razon queria que se oviesse de tan enorme delito, e asi junta una grand multitud de gente se fueron al palaçio real donde la madre y el padre, dando muy grandes bozes e llorando gravemente, demandaron al rey justiçia ; y el rey oyda su querella vitupero fuertemente a la madre, diziendo ser loca e aver puesto mal recabdo en su fija dexandola sola en su cassa, diziendo ellos aver dado cabsa al caso acaesçido, con la qual respuesta los padres dieron muy mayores bozes, demandando a Dios justiçia ; de lo qual el rey ovo tan grande enojo, que mando llamar un verdugo mandando que los açotassen por la çibdad.

by Diego de Valera between 1480 and 1486³, and finally in the chronicle by Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal in 1517⁴. The several

E llegandosse a esto don Alonso Pimentel, conde de Benavente, y el conde Gonçalo de Guzman oyendo el mandado del rey, el conde Gonçalo le dixo : señor, dezid ¿ como dira el pregonero quando se esecutase esta justiçia que mandays fazer ? El rey ovo enojo de lo quel conde Gonçalo le dixo, e metiosse en su palaçio ; e los que çerca del rey estavan fizieron yr de alli a los que con esta quexa vinieron. E asy el moro Mofarias llevo la donzella e pusola en salvo en un lugar de Granada, e asy la tovo por mançeba, en ynjuria de nuestra santa fee catolica », *Crónica anónima de Enrique IV de Castilla, 1454-1474 (Crónica castellana)*, M. P. Sánchez Parra ed., Madrid, 1991, p. 46-47.

³ Version C : « Y estando el rey en aquella çiudad, acaescieron dos cosas muy estrañas y feas, las quales fueron que Mofarás, vn moro quel rey consigo traya, fué aposentado en la casa de vn mercader llamado Diego Sánchez de Orihuela, el qual tenia vna hija muy hermosa, de que el moro se enamoró ; y como a la donzella fuese aborrecible la habla suya y no quisiese dar lugar a su voluntad el moro aguardó tiempo en que el padre y la madre estuviesen fuera de casa, y tapóle la boca de manera que no pudiese dar boçes, y atóle las manos y púsola en vn caballo y con ciertos moros la sacó de la çibdad. Y quando los padres vinieron y hallaron su hija lleuada, dieron muy grandes boçes, a que toda la vezindad se juntó, y así vna gran muchedumbre de gente fueron al palacio real con el padre y la madre, que yban dando muy grandes boçes, muy agramente llorando, demandando justicia. Y llegados al rey, oyda su querella, el rey vituperó muy fuertemente a la madre, diziéndole ser loca, y aver puesto muy mal recado en su casa y fija dexándola sola, y dando el cargo al padre y a ella del caso acaescido, con la qual respuesta ellos començaron muchas mayores boces, demandando justicia a Dios ; de que el rey ovo tan grande enojo, que mandó llamar un verdugo para que los açotase por la çiudad. Y en este punto llegaron allí don Alonso Pimentel, conde de Benavente, y el conde don Juan de Guzmán ; y viendo el mandamiento, el conde don Juan le dixo : — Señor, ¿ cómo dirá el pregón quando se esecutare esta justicia que mandáis fazer ? Y el rey con enojo se metió en su palacio, y los que cerca dél estaban fizieron yr de allí a los que con esta querella venieron ; y así el moro Mofarás llevó la donzella y púsola en saluo en vn lugar de Granada, y así la tomó por manceba, en injuria de nuestra sancta Fe », Diego de Valera, *Memorial de diversas hazañas, crónica de Enrique IV*, J. de M. Carriazo ed., Madrid, 1941, p. 29.

⁴ Version D : « Con todo eso la gente del rey fue muy bien aposentada y graziosamente rezivida por los huespedes, pero acaescio que Mofarrax, un moro de los que alli venian con el rey, fue aposentado en la casa de un mercader llamado Diego de Origuela, que tenia una hija muy hermosa, de la qual aquel moro se enamoro, y como la donzella fuese aborrezible su hablar e no quisiese dar lugar a la voluntad del moro, el aguardo tiempo a que el padre y la madre no estuviesen en casa y tomo la donzella y tapole la boca, de manera que no pudiese dar voces y atole las manos e pusola encima de un cavallo e ciertos moros con el e ansi la llevó e de la ciudad. Y quando los padres vinieron e fallaron su hija lleuada, començaron a dar muy grandes voces e gritos, a que toda la vezindad se junto, e vinieron del caso tan grande turbación quanta razon queria que se tuviese de tan enorme delito y ansi junta una gran multitud de gente se fueron al palazio real, donde la madre y el padre dieron muy grandes voces y llorando, gravemente demandaron al rey justicia, y el rey oida su querella, vituperó mucho a la madre, diziendo ser loca y aver dado la causa al caso acontecido y puesto mal recaudo en su hija dejandola sola en su casa, con las quales respuestas los padres dieron muy mayores voces demandando a Dios justicia ; de lo qual el rey ovo tan grande enojo, que mando llamar un berdugo para que los açotase por la ciudad.

narrations of the event do not bring any major transformations. Indeed the pattern of narration set up by Alfonso de Palencia is only translated, simplified and often shortened. From one version to another the integration of the event confirms the leniency with which the reign of the Catholic Kings accepts the defamation of a King in order to make him politically repulsive.

But what are the facts? A Muslim of the King's guard who was living with Seville tradespeople seized the opportunity of their absence to abduct their daughter with whom he was in love. The parents come back home, they alert their neighbours by their screams and they go to the palace to demand justice. The king hears the case, scolds the parents for their lack of responsibility. Annoyed by their intensification of their screams and their call for god's justice, he orders them to be flogged in public. Some influential people react to the king's decision with indignation. They give the king their views about his sense of justice, which annoys Enrique IV even more. He then leaves and the victim's parents are asked to go. The king's Muslim takes shelter in the kingdom of Granada where he marries the young Christian girl at the expense of catholic faith.

The event causes a double scandal: the abduction and the king's reaction to the parent's request. The case is horrendous, not because of its nature but because it was committed by a Muslim. Thereby it is not the abduction that is at stake but the transgression of a taboo and of a legal prohibition. The argument did not appear in the next versions (B, C, D) that only mention the disgust of the victim for any contact with a Muslim man. Yet Alfonso de Palencia (A) famous for being a misogynist in blaming the young woman for her initial lightness, who well aware of the codes of seduction, flirts with the forbidden rules and falls for her guest. In fact Palencia uses woman's frivolity to excuse the young girl for a corruption whose true core is the court. Its set up in Seville disturbs relations between the different communities and obliges Christian tradesmen to host a Muslim in their home at the expense of a royal law that should be caring for segregation.

The presence of Muslims in the royal suite is nothing new though. Since Juan II (1406-1454) Muslim knights join in the court

Y llegando a esto don Alonso Pimentel, conde de Benavente y conde Gonzalo de Guzman; oyendo el mandado del rey, el conde Gonzalo dixo: « Señor, ¿ dezir como dira el pregonero quando se executare esta justicia que mandais hazer? ». El rey ovo enojo de lo que el conde Gonzalo le dixo, y metiose en su palacio, y los que cerca del estavan hizieron ir de alli a los que con esta queja vinieron, y ansi el moro Mofarrax llevo la donzella y pusola en salvo en un lugar de Granada y la tuvo por manceba en injuria de nuestra sancta fee catolica », Lorenzo Galíndez de Carvajal, *Crónica de Enrique IV*, in Juan Torres Fontes, *Estudios sobre la « Crónica de Enrique IV » del Dr. Galíndez de Carvajal*, Murcia, 1946, p. 109-110.

and they become protected by the king's as any other young member of the nobility, partly due the vassalage links between the kingdoms of Granada and Castile. As it was the case under his father, Enrique IV's court is a meeting place for the young princes and noblemen of Granada. It is also an asylum that allows them to escape from the bloody chases provoked by the faction fights in the nasride kingdom. The transgression is more a result of the king's attitude towards these men than of their presence alone. Already around Cordoba in early May some young noblemen get indignant about the king's inability to make war against Granada. The reason for these men who plot to overrun the king are the horrible murders that Enrique IV has committed since he was a child. Thus Seville's abduction contributes to fuel the stereotype of the *nefandum*. However typical the defamation by Palencia shows a tendency to make the tyrant's denunciation Islamic.

Thereby the abduction leads to the king, to the stereotype of the *nefandum*, to a real defamatory system also mentioned in the *Crónica castellana* (B) and Galíndez de Carvajal's chronicle (D) — *enorme delito* — that Diego de Valera (C) tackles cautiously — *cosas mus estrañas y feas* — without questioning Palencia's stereotype. Once the abduction noticed by the parents, the neighbours' gathering because of the screams, the tears and bereavement, the way to the palace comes as a compulsory step to ask for justice. The court is in Seville and any crime committed during his stay therefor comes under the king's justice. The community knows that this is the only possible procedure of justice. The event creates havoc in the community, publicly displayed by the noisy procession led by the victim's parents through the streets of Seville. This is when the abduction turns into a judiciary and political scandal. The story of the arrival of the parent and the group to the king varies from one version to another. According to Palencia (A) the encounter takes place outside the palace unexpectedly as the king was going out. In the other versions of the episode (B, C, D) the parents seem to be taken to the king to get a hearing.

The fortuitous nature of the meeting with the king in Palencia's version is all but a surprise. A parallel has to be drawn between the king leaving his Seville's *alcazar* and his entering the city or rather avoiding it. Indeed Enrique IV, as a tyrant should, prefers not submitting himself to the rite of entry and enters directly into his palace through a postern, unseen. The avoidance of the king provokes the surprise and the discontent of a city that has not seen a king since the solemn entrance of Enrique III in 1395. Thus the king appearing just as the victim's parents are about to ask for justice gives them an opportunity to appeal directly to his authority. Consequently the royal audience is improvised : a king

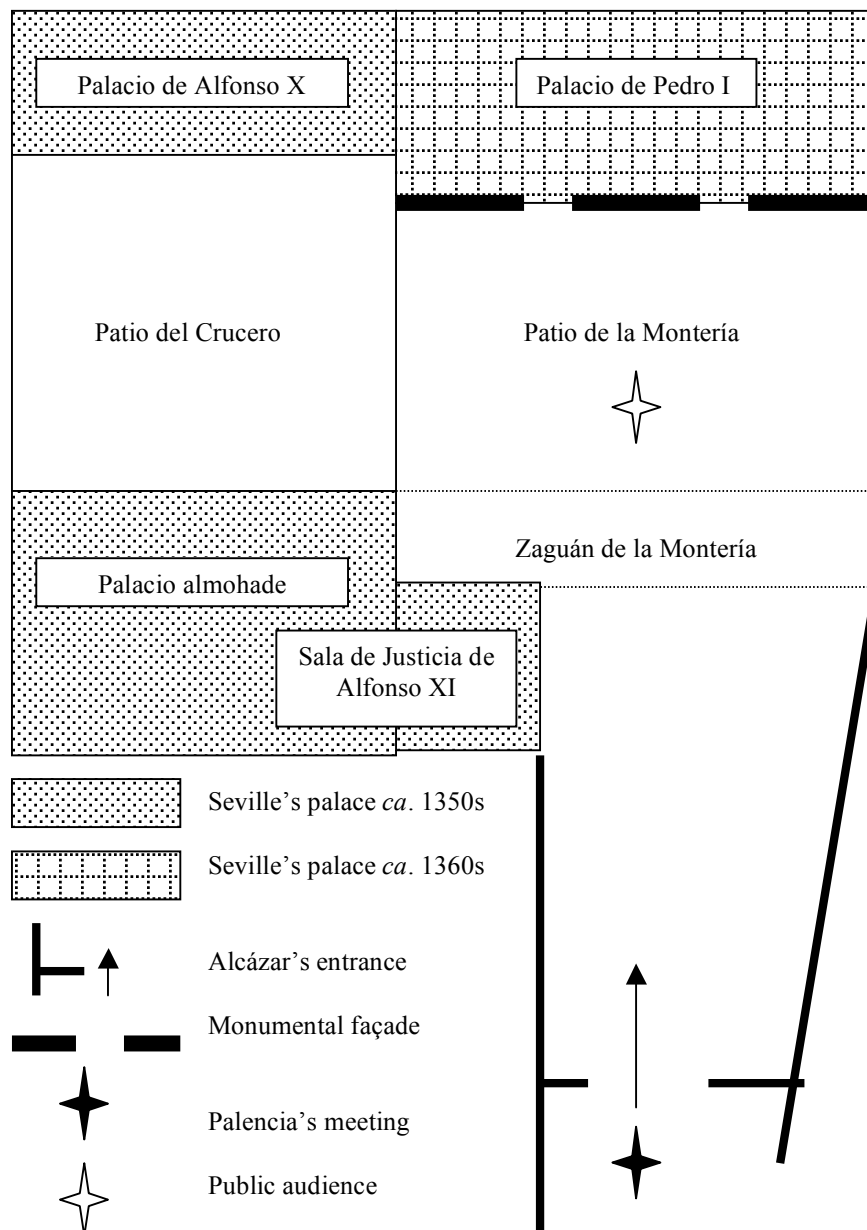
leaving ; parents screaming and crying for compensation ; a growing crowd outside the palace's gates attending the justice of a king that they are only just discovering. The other historians confirm with different degrees the deliberate strategy of a king to avoid the city, but not the fortuitous access to the king described by Palencia.

In the other versions (B, C, D) the parents and the crowd go to palace and ask the king for justice who listens to the argument — *querella* — that the victims explain with gravity — *gravemente* (B, D) — or bitterly — *agramente* (C). Thus the meeting is not improvised: the king holds a speech assisted by those who will later get the parents to leave (A, B, C, D), but who at the moment, are here to help him do his hearing duty. The arrival of the counts (A, B, C, D), only mentioned in the different versions at the time of the sentence, is of consequence hardly believable. The noblemen surround the king from the start, as do those auxiliaries of justice whom Enrique asks to call an executionner to carry out his sentence in front of an open and solemn audience. From then on, the infamous charge of the Palencia version comes out reinforced. In this version the unexpected appearance of the king establishes how Enrique IV does away with the laws surrounding public audiences. By depicting this supposedly casual encounter with an angry public waiting to accost him Palencia manages to create the image of a bad king, a tyrant hidden in his *alcazar*, surrounded by palace cronies. In doing this Palencia counters the contradictory account of Diego Enríquez del Castillo, who depicts a just king, and the Enrique's letters sends out from Seville to his officers in other cities to ensure that his justice is done⁵.

We should therefore not underestimate the strength of his standing in legal matters. Evidence taken from the other accounts suggest a formal public audience, probably the Friday one at which the king, surrounded by his council sits in direct judgement of his subjects. Other clues, such as those relating to trial location, would tend to confirm this hypothesis. But according to Palencia the

⁵ « Andava por su rreyno muy poderoso, todos los suyos ricos, contentos y ganosos de su serviçio ; la justicia bien ministrada en su Consejo, donde se oya las cabsas de la corte y en la Chançellería, donde prendía los pleitos, tenía perlados presy dentes, letrados famosos de conçiencia, donde se descurría la verdad yor ninguna cosa se torçía la justiçia ; para la puniçión de los malhechores avya prudentes alcaldes que executavan sus delitos », *Crónica de Enrique IV de Diego Enríquez del Castillo*, A. Sánchez Martín éd., Valladolid, 1994, p. 164 ; and see the letters sends to the king's officers in Murcia between july and august 1455, in *Colección de Documentos para la Historia del Reino de Murcia*, t. XVII, *Documentos de Enrique IV*, M. C. Molina Grande ed., Murcia, 1988, doc. n° 26 and 28, p. 44-45 and 48-57.

audience occurs spontaneously, as the king is leaving his palace, presumably near to one of the doors. The other versions confirm that the encounter took place outdoors, but that the King returns to his palace on the advice of his courtiers. However, in these versions the balance between « indoor » and « outdoor » remains contradictory to the account of Palencia. Diego de Valera mentions that the parents reach the king —*y llegados al rey* (D). Quite possibly they are admitted into the Seville's *alcazar*, a space situated with the palace walls but outside the palace itself, a transitional space that can be considered as being either exterior and public or interior and private.



Of course the architecture of the Sevillian *alcazar* is probably rather more complicated than these accounts would suggest, but the chronicles do seem to indicate that it wasn't until the middle of the fourteenth century that the works started by Pedro the Cruel led to the use of such a space for formal audiences was becoming commonplace. The spatial function of the court of Montería is to give access inside the palatial structure to the king's chamber — his private apartments. But it is not until the time of the Catholic Kings that public audiences take place upon this patio, which by now serves as an open-air justice court and which dominates the monumental façade of the Mudéjar palace built by Pedro I. It is thus very unlikely that the formal audience to which the victim's parents are headed towards could have happened in such a space, which was after designed to sublimate the image of a just king.

It is almost certain, therefore that the monumental door that leads to the king's private apartments is the place where the king is standing as the crying parents arrive to complain about the abduction of their daughter by a member of his Muslim guard. The gestures, screams and cries of the plaintiffs (A, B, C, D) are included in all four accounts not only express their pain, but also serve to demand justice, as would be expected of a judicial process that is usually initiated by oral means. In such a context the presentation of the argument — *querrela* (B, C, D) — whose aim is to obtain compensation for a crime committed by a member of the king's staff is conducted by means of a gracious protocol. Palencia appears to indicate this when he stresses that the parents of the victim have come to see the king to implore him for his favour — *subventionis* (A). The circumstances surrounding the abduction in Seville and its judicial consequences have therefore to be considered within the larger context of the gracious manner in which such appeals had come to be conducted since the beginning of the thirteenth century.

But the gestures and screams should be considered within the terms of rules governing the recourse of mercy. Such rules are designed to impose humility, reverence and parsimony, all of which serve to reduce the running length of the audience and convey the need for a measured and considered argument. Furthermore the laws of the kingdom demand that in cases where the demand for compensation concerns a wrong that falls within royal responsibility such a call is made gradually. So as not to undermine the honour of the king mercy should first be sought in secret, then in front of two or three members of the court, and finally, if previous calls are rejected, by full judicial means. Thus the irruption of the victim's parents in the court of Montería can be seen as doubly out of place. If their screams and cries are enough to

alert a large number of people then their call for mercy from the king is compromised. By this infraction of the rules the parents broadcast their pain and thereby dishonour the king.

Far from calming things down the irritation shown by the king inflames the situation and provokes only louder screams and cries, and direct demands for justice (A) or cries to God (B, C, D). At this point the judicial process collapses and the king's wrath — *furibundus* (A), or *tan grande enojo* (B, C, D) — leads him to call for his auxiliaries and demand that they whip the parents publicly. The first stage of the ceremonial process having collapsed, the people of Seville are now treated to a display in which the regulated dispensation of orderly justice is transformed into a spectacle of screaming, crying and anger. The wrath of the king and the punishment he orders seem unintelligible. By barracking the king in such a manner, and by not giving him a chance to pass judgement the victim's parents not only inconvenience and infract his order, they offend him. To interrupt the king while he is speaking is a dishonour that demands appropriate punishment.

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

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The story of the abduction in Seville not only demonstrates the mechanism of defamation, it also indicates the culture and dialogue that takes place between a government and its subjects, the attainder and the disappointment, and depicts those rare occasions when the people can get close to their King, see him and talk to him. The public audience is primarily a publicity device, which, when it all goes wrong, turns against its creator and forces

him to lock himself away from public sight. Thanks to Palencia, the court of Montería in Seville, designed by Pedro the Cruel to amplify the image of a just king, now represents the refuge of an incarcerated tyrant, railing uselessly against his nobility, who are just now beginning to realise the power they can wield. The collapse of order in Seville is essentially due to failure of the king to silence his critics, not only the plaintiffs but also the chroniclers, those masters of public opinion and propaganda, of exhibition and dissimulation. Ultimately, the various accounts of these events stress how much of written history comes down to stragecraft.

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