



Roda da Fortuna

Revista Eletrônica sobre Antiguidade e Medievo

Electronic Journal about Antiquity and Middle Ages

Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Jóvenes Medievalistas Ciudad de Cáceres

Instrumentos y estrategias de poder en la Edad Media

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The Representation of Power in the *Crónica* of Pere *the Cerimonious*: A European Comparison

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una comparación europea

Abstract:

Starting with the analysis of the *Crònica* of Pere III and through the comparison with three European chronicles of the mid 1300s, this article establishes parallels in the representation of power and its use in these texts. We will compare Pere's *Crònica* with the *Crónica del rey don Pedro* of Pedro López de Ayala, the *Grandes Chroniques de France* and the *Chroniques* of Jean Froissart. With this objective, we analyse how power was classified, how was it used and with which objectives. We aim to expose how despite the chronicles different backgrounds and objectives Western Europe shared an understanding on what power was and how was represented in the chronicles.

Keywords:

Chronicles; Western Europe; fourteenth century.

Resumen:

Partiendo desde el análisis de la *Crónica* de Pere III y comparándola con otras tres crónicas europeas de mediados del siglo XIV, este artículo establece paralelos en la representación del poder y sus usos en estos textos. Compararemos la *Crónica* de Pere con la *Crónica del rey don Pedro* de Pedro López de Ayala, las *Grandes Chroniques de France* y las *Chroniques* de Jean Froissart. Con este objetivo analizamos como era clasificado, como era utilizado y con qué fines. Nuestro objetivo es exponer que, pese a los diferentes orígenes de las crónicas, había una forma común de entender y representar el poder en la crónica de la Europa Occidental.

Palabras-clave:

Crónicas; Europa Occidental; siglo XIV.

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1. Power and Chronicles

In the middle ages, or any other time, the rulers of society had the power. It may have come from their ascendancy, of divine origin or maybe earned from society. Any ruler from the medieval period had power to rule society, but he was not completely free to use it, nor was he the single owner of that power. An overuse of it, which does not necessarily mean its abuse, usually caused the opposition of the more powerful subjects who always sought more independence from their liege. The lack of its use could mean that someone else had the chance to step in and fill the ruler's role better than him or her.

Pere III (1319-1387) knew that the power was key and he was conscious that he would be judged by how he used it. Because of it, he surrounded himself with the pomp and ceremony that nicknamed him "The Ceremonious". Such public demonstrations were far from superfluous for its contemporaries and were destined to project an image of power and respect of the king. For this same reason, when the power of the ruler was represented in written form, especially in the chronicles, it is for more than just to satisfy the ruler's ego.

Thus, Pere had this idea very clear in the conception of his chronicle. Admiring the deeds of his great-great grandparent Jaume I, called the Conqueror, whom he knew through his chronicle *el llibre dels fets*, or book of deeds, he conceived his own autobiographical chronicle, both as a means to narrate his own reign and as a tool for his descendants. Pere was conscious that his chronicle could be used in the future as a political weapon, as he used Jaume's book as a political weapon in his endeavour to retake the Kingdom of Mallorca and the Counties of Rossellon and Cerdanya.² The text is a way to give testimony of his own power and the use he made of it. Thus, the way the text portrays power in its different facets becomes the subject of study. We can see the king make use of it through his authority, him acting as judge or proclaiming laws. If the monarch is not respected or is opposed by another power the text shows that there were limits to it, or even in instances when power is shown as a simple gesture in the narrative.

This paper, aims to understand if the ways of representation of power in the text of chronicles is exclusive from the Crown of Aragon or its part of a wider understanding of it. With this objective in mind, we have contrasted the Catalan text with three other European chronicles. This will not only allow us to compare the understanding of power

² See: (Vianna, 2012, p. 95-113).

in different geographical contexts, it will show both the similitudes and differences between several kingdoms that shared a common religion and similar cultures. The works chosen to be compared with Pere's Catalan *Crónica* have been the Castilian *Cronica del rey don Pedro* by Pedro Lopez de Ayala, the *Grand Chroniques de France*, specifically the reign of Jean II, and finally the first book of the *Chroniques* by Jean Froissart.

This choice comes from the fact that all four of them cover the central years of the fifteenth-century and that they were written in the second half of the same century. While they share a religion and, partially, a common culture, the four works come from different backgrounds, from being sponsored and even supervised by the king himself to having the purpose of legitimating a new ruling dynasty. Since this chronicles are written in three different languages and for those unfamiliar with one, or several of this works, a brief outline of them and their origins is in order:³

Following in the footsteps of Jaume I, Pere III wanted to write down the events of his long. In the introduction of the book, the monarch establishes his intention of leaving this work so future generations of his dynasty could learn of his successes and hardships. (Soldevila, 2014: 34) He started relatively early yet the hardships of government stopped him from finishing it. Although not written by the king himself, Pere supervised the progress of the text whenever he had time to spare and we have the narration of his reign up to the mid-late 1360s. What keeps interesting researchers to this day is the realistic tone adopted by Pere, who, far from hiding his darkest moments and concentrating on the glories of his reign, exposes to the reader his instances of painful impotence, of cunning intrigues and wrathful acts. This has taken many historians to see in the *Crónica* a political realism not far from what would be developed by Machiavelli in the next century.⁴

Also sponsored by royalty, the *Grand Chroniques de France* written by the monks of Saint Denis, and more specifically, the *Chronicle* of Jean II sponsored by his son Charles V partially follows in the steps of the work done by the first Valois, Philippe VI, in justifying their claim to the throne of France. Given the disastrous reign of Jean II,

³ For this article we've used the most recent edition of Pere's *Chonicle* (Soldevila, 2014). For Pedro's (Wilkins, Constance L. y Heanon M., eds. Pero Lopez de Ayala 1986). And the editions from the Societé de l'Histoire de France for the *Grandes Choniques* and Froissart's texts: (Delachenal, R. ed. 1910-1920) and (Simeon L. ed. Jean Froissart 1869-1899).

⁴ Jaume Aurell presents the idea of the emergence of political realism in his study on the four Catalan *Chronicles* (Aurell, 2012) also; the work of Stephano Chingolani is most useful on the analysis of Pere's *Crónica* (Cingolani, 2007).

Charles ends up becoming the main character of his own father's chronicle. As Dauphin, Duke of Normandy and regent during his father captivity, Charles and his followers managed to keep France from falling apart despite the chaos that befell the kingdom. During the regency he was surrounded by the kings of England and Navarre, both pretenders to the French throne, and conflicts inside his own kingdom, such as the Breton Civil war and the opposition of the *prévôt des marchands* de Paris that. All this conflicts for which Jean II was absent, make the exaltation of Charles V start in his father chronicle to be completed in his own with his success in recovering from the losses against the English in the early stages of the Hundred Year's War.⁵

Pedro Lopez de Ayala served in both the war and the government to four kings of Castile. He was also a translator, from Livy to Boccaccio, and wrote some poetic works and a book on falconry, yet, what interests us are his writings as a chronicler. Although narrating the reigns of the four kings he served, leaving the last one incomplete, our attention turns to the first of them, that of Pedro I. Known as "the Cruel" the reign of Pedro was plagued by vicious rumours against his persona and rebels who rallied behind his bastard brothers, Ayala amongst them. Enrique, count of Trástmara eventually murdered his half-brother and took the crown in 1369. In addition, from the moment Enrique was crowned for the first time on Easter Sunday of 1366 the chronicle's chapters establish the years based on the reigns of both brothers. The *Cronica del rey don Pedro*, ends up being a work dedicated to the exaltation of the bastard dynasty, which shows the two brothers in rather opposite lights, favouring Enrique's, in order to justify the change of dynasty.

Born in Valenciennes, in the county of Hainault, Jean Froissart pledge his services to neither the Empire nor France, instead, he sought the patronage of Phillipa of Hainault, Queen of England. Through his service to the Queen and other patrons, he travelled through most of Western Europe, including Scotland, the Iberian Peninsula and even Italy, where he met Petrarch. His most famous work, and our object of study, are his *Chroniques*. Written in French, the text follows the events in France and England, yet he spends a considerable amount of time recording events in southern Europe and the Scottish kingdom. Focusing his first book in the exploits of the English king Edward III and his first-born Edward, known as the Black Prince, the author puts them at the centre of his narration as paragons of the ideals of chivalry. Froissart's ideas transpire

⁵ For a study of this period of the Hundred Year's War see the second volume of Jonathan Sumption study on the Hundred Year's War (Sumption, 2009).

through his writings, specially his deep infatuation for the ideals of knighthood and chivalry, already waning in the reality of the mid-late fourteenth century.⁶

2. Identification of Power

Our first step should be the identification of “power” in the text. Despite distinctive baggage’s, the four texts understand it in similar ways. We see it most commonly in the form of the one that comes with authority and position. The kings at the front of the chronicles have power because of who they are, the dynasty in which they are born and of course how they make use of it.

In the texts power ends up equaling nobility, the nobler someone was the more power that person was supposed to have. Kings, the highest of nobles and clergymen are the ones who periodically exercise that power to rule over their land and subjects. An ideal situation to identify power with nobility or position is precisely the discourse of ordination. Weddings, funerals, coronations military campaigns etc. present a clearly defined order, which is far from arbitrary, it responds to one’s position. The nobles, the clergy, knights and finally burghers follow the king. In the funeral of Jean II the coffin was carried by members of Parliament, his family comes next:

Charles, duc de Normandie, qui estoit ainsné, Loys, duc d'Anjou, qui estoit le secont, et Phelippe, duc de Touraine, qui estoit le plus jeune de tous ses filz, et ausi y fu le roy de Chipre, et Jehan, duc de Berry, qui estoit le tiers en aage, estoit encore en Angleterre. (Delachenal, 1910: 343)

The author of the *Grandes Chroniques* names those of French royal blood, who held some of the greatest duchies in France, therefore the power of the kingdom. After acknowledging the absence of Jean’s third-born son and the presence of the King Peter I of Cyprus placing him below the French royal house.

⁶ Froissart himself explains this in the prologue of his *Chroniques* (Simeon L. ed. Jean Froissart 1888: 1). For a study on Froissart’s discourse (Nichols, B. Y. S. G. 2016. *Medieval Academy of America*, 39(2), 279–287).

Nobility can equal power, but the other identification of power in the chronicles is precisely the military power. Froissart proclaims in this fragment what the defeat at Crecy and the death of many French nobles meant for the Kingdom:

Vous devés savoir que la desconfiture et la perte pour les François fu moult grandee r moult horrible, et que trop y demorèrent sus les camps de nobles et vaillans hommes, dus, contes, barons et chevaliers, par lesquelz li royaumes de France fu moult depuis afoiblis d'onneur, de poissance et de conseil.
(Froissart, 1910: 1872)

There is two ways to read this: the loss of power in the death of people of noble origin, and the loss of military power in the death of the elite warriors of the time. We have seen who nobility can equal power, but the other identification of power in the chronicles is precisely the military power.

Pere III has to be careful when dealing with any French problems. He and his council feared a French intervention during the war with Jaume III of Mallorca, so he moved to isolate politically his brother in law to avoid it. That was not unprecedented; Jaume had previously asked to help him deal with the tension that his French lordship of Montpellier caused with Philippe VI, especially when he sided with Edward III in the early stages of the Hundred Year's War. According to the chronicle, Pere and his council concluded that a war with France would be dangerous (Soldevila, 2014: 132). This being a clear reference as to the military power the French King could summon against the much smaller kingdoms of Pere.

On a similar note, Ayala narrates a certain fear for the war between Pedro and his stepbrothers even at the beginning of his work. This is because of the power Enrique and his brothers held, thanks to the lands and titles given to them by Alfonso XI. Vast possessions, like the counties of Vizcaya or Trastámara, usually a title given to the kingdoms heir were given to Leonor's sons Tello and Enrique. He also named Fabrique Grand Master of the Order of Santiago. Ayala describes it this way: "tenian que se començaua Guerra porque tantos e tan grandes sennores commo estos se apartaran del rey e tenian muchas e grandes fortalezas." (Ayala, 1986: 17) This is not the only time Ayala presents this fear to a possible civil war. This is presented to us later in the chronicle, when Maria of Portugal, Pedro's mother, ordered the death of his husband's mistress and mother of Enrique and his brothers Leonor de Guzman:

E desto peso mucho a algunos del regno ca entendian que port al cosa commo esta vernian grandes guerras e escandalos en el regno segunnd fueron, por quanto la dicha [B, 10c] donna Leonor auia grandes fijos e muchos parientes. E en estos fechos tales por poca vengança recreçen después muchos males e dannos que serian mior de escusar, ca mucho mal e mucha guerra nasçio en Castilla por esta razon (Ayala, 1986: 22).

Therefore, because of their vast possessions, and possibly military power, Ayala portrays them as powerful lords, the likes of who the king should fear facing. In 1352, the chronicle points out that the reason of Alfonso Fernandez for not opening to the king the village of Aguilar is because of “veya alli a don Iohan Alfonso de Albuquerque, que traya grand poder e grand priuança con el rey, de quien el se temia e que non lo osaua acoger”(Ayala, 1986: 33). Again, power is military power, no the simple authority one could held or the origin of the person. After all a good relationship between the most powerful lords of a kingdom secured the stability of the land against any enemies, local or foreign.

When Enrique of Trástmara faces the choice to fight a pitched battle against the Anglo-Castilian forces or flea and conduct a kind of guerrilla warfare to weaken Edward's army as suggested by Du Guesclin, he is forced to confront his stepbrother immediately. The difficult choice that we see in both Froissart and Ayala was ultimately inexistent, for a retreat would show a weakness that he could not afford because of the volatile loyalty of the Castilian lords. If he did not use his power immediately he would lose it, for the ones who sustained his claim may stop supporting him, but the choice was ultimately his. At that moment, Enrique had at the same time the political and military power and none of it.

3. The exercise of Power

After seeing how is identified the power, the next step is to analyze how and by whom it was used. For this, the image of the king-judge is a perfect way to exemplify the holding and use of power. In all four chronicles, we see the kings pass judgment, dealing with dishonest lords, rebels and traitors. The way of dealing with this can be either extremely similar or completely different depending on which texts we observe.

Pere's text indulges in the specifics of legal procedures when narrating the alienation of the Kingdom of Mallorca and the counties of Rossellon and Cerdanya and

the process against his former right-hand Bernat of Cabrera. Known for occasionally being driven by rage, Pere was wise enough to use the law in his favor to justify his most questionable actions. He did not have the power to take Jaume's lands, but making the case that he had betrayed his liege, gave himself that power. (Willemsen, C.A. 1930) After taking the counties, he decided to introduce the *Costums d'Espanya* to give himself more power in his new territories (Ensenyat Pujol, G. 1997).

After defeating the Unions of Valencia and Aragon Pere had an opportunity to reinforce his power in both kingdoms. The chronicle describes with detail how the King punished those who had rebelled against him, executing most of the leaders and literally destroying the rights of the Unions personally. Nonetheless, Pere could restrain himself. Once the heads of the rebellion had been detained and executed, he proceeded to pardon the rest. On a similar note, he thought of destroying Valencia itself but ends up not carrying it through, give the loss it would suppose for his Crown.

La terça, si aital Ciutat se destróvis, nós minvariém molt nostra corona, com no ha rei de cristians que haja millors tres ciutats que nós haviém, ço és, Saragossa, València e Barcelona. E, per totes aquestes raons, nós tempram l'ira que haviém sobre el sit poble; emperó no volguem que passàs sens algún càstig (Soldevila, 2014: 285).

Pere clarifies that the loss of such a city wouldn't be on his benefit but would end up taking power away from his kingdom. He definitely wanted to punish the city, for the *Union* had defied his power and authority, yet destroying the capital of one of his kingdoms was an empty threat. Pere did punish Valencia, and other cities in his war with Pedro, but he never destroyed them for that would weaken his kingdoms.

A different case can be made for Pedro, who, on several occasions did not doubt to destroy the walls of a city to make its inhabitants pay for their disloyalty. We have talked about Alfonso Fernandez refusing to open the gates to the King. At the beginning of 1353, and after waging war against his stepbrothers, Pedro took Aguilar and ordered the killing of most of its defenders and for the walls to be teared down. (Ayala, 1986: 33-36)

Yet, Pedro was not the only one that did not care if weakening a city could weaken his whole kingdom. This is the case of Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine, when having to deal with the bishop of Limoges. Despite having increasing difficulties to deal

with the French in 1370, Edward took this chance to prove that he was the man in charge of Aquitaine, and that no one was to challenge his power:

On ne se cessa mies à tant; mès fu toute laciés de Limoges courue, pillie et robée sans deport, et toute arse et mise à destruction; et puis s'en partirent fi Englés qui enmenèrent leur conquès et leurs prisonniers et se retraisent vers Congnach où madamela princesse estoit... Si fu enfourmés li rois de France de la destruction et dou reconquès de Limoges, et comment li princes et ses gents l'avoient laissiet toute vaghe, ensi comme une ville deserte (Froissart, 1869: 252-253).

Despite the events he narrates in the siege of Limoges, Froissart has also given us instances of a king having to rely on more legal procedures to punish his subjects. We see it in the proceedings against the Despensers in 1326 and Roger Mortimer in 1330. Hugh Despenser, both the father and the son, became the strong men of the reign of Edward II. They accumulated offices and dignities becoming the most powerful men in the kingdom; to the point that the rest of the English nobility had to intervene to stop them climb to power. However, to Froissart their worst crime is the fact that they seem to take control of the king. They managed to ostracize Queen Isabela from court and through their influence on Edward II they took most of their political rivals:

Tant fist, par son enhort et par son subtil pourcabc, que li rois fist à un jour prendre tous ces signeurs à un parlement là où il estoient assamblé, et en fist decoler sans delay et sans cognissance de raison jusques à vingt et deus des plus grans barons d'Engleterre, et tout premiers le conte Thumas de Lancastre, qui estoit ses oncles, preudons et sains homs, et fist puis moult de biaux miracles ou lieu où il fu decolés. Pour le quel fait, li dis messires Hues acquist grant hayne de tout le pays, et par especial de la royne d'Engleterre et dou conte de Kent, qui estoit frères au dit roy (Froissart, 1869: 13).

Nonetheless, the king was not innocent, he had let them influence his decisions and given them a power that was no theirs to wield. The crime for which they would be punished was taking power from the kings for themselves and becoming a bad influence for him:

Encores ne se cessa pas li dis messires Hues deenhorter le roi mal à faire. Car, quant il perchut qu'il estoit mal de le royne et dou conte de Kent, il mist si

grant descort entre le roy et le royne, par son malisce, que li rois ne voloit point venir en lieu où elle fust, et dura cilz descors assés longement. (Froissart, 1869: 14).

Once Edward II had been deposed, it was Edward III's duty to judge his father's advisors. The young king was too inexperienced to judge them and, according to Froissart, delegated that power into more experienced hands. In the case of Hugh the Elder the rebels sought the wisdom of a supposed old knight, and for Hugh the Younger, Edward delegated into his barons. In both cases, the Despensers were executed through public, and some may say brutal, ceremonies to be made an example for all those who seek to take the power from the king for their own benefit:

Et avoit on fait en le ditte place un grant feu. Quant il fut ensi loiiés, on li coppa tout premiers le vit et les coulles, par tant qu'il estoit herites et sodomites, ensi que on disoit meismement del roy. Et pour ce avoit decaciet li rois la royne ensus de lui et par son enhort. Quant li vis et les coulles li furent coppées, on les getta ou feu, et furent arses. Apriès, on li fendi le ventre, et li osta on tout le coer et le coraille, et le getta on ou feu pour ardoir, par tant qu'il estoit faulz de coer et traittes, et que, par son traitte conseil et enhort, li roia, avoit honni son royaume et mis à meschief, et avoit fait decoler les plus grans barons d'Engleterre, par les quels li royaumes devoit estre soustenus et deffendus. Et avoech ce il avoit si enhortet le roy qu'il ne pooit ou ne voloit veoir la royne sa femme, ne son ains-net fil, qui devoit estre leurs sires; ains les avoit decaciés, par doubance de leurs corps, hors dou royaume. Apriès, quant li dis messires Hues fu ensi atournés, comme dit est, on li coppa le teste, et fu envoië en le chité de Londres; et puis fu il decopés en quatre quartiers. Et furent tantost envoiët as quatre milleurs cités d'Engleterre apriès Londres. (Froissart, 1869: 34-35).

The one who did not learn the lesson was Roger Mortimer. Queen Isabela's lover help her to take the throne from her husband and since her son was still too young to take the reins of government, she ruled with Mortimer at her side. Again, we find a single individual having too much power in the kingdom and influencing the king:

Au daarrain, envie commença à uastre entre le conte de Kent dessus dit, et le signeur de Mortemer. Et monta puis li envie si haut que li sires de Mortemer enfourma et enhorta tant le jone se mère le royne, et li fisent entendant que li dis contes de Kent le voloit empuisonner, et le feroit morir temprenement, s'il ne s'en gardoit, pour avoir sen royaume, so comme li plus proçains apriès lui,

par succession; car li jones frères le roy, que on clamoit messire Jehan d'Eltem, estoit nouvellement trespasés. Li jones rois, qui creoit legierement che dont on l'enfourmoit, ensi que jone seigneur, telz a on souvent veus, croient legierement çou dont cil qui les doient consillier les enfourment, et plus tost en mal qu'en bien, fist, assés tost après chou, son dit oncle le conte de Kent prendre, et le fist deoier publikement, que onques il n'en peut venir à escusance. De quoi tout cil dou pays, grans et petis, nobles et non nobles, en furent durement tourblet et couroucié, et eurent puissedi durement contre coer le seigneur de Mortemer. (Froissart, 1869: 87-89).

This and other events, like an unsuccessful campaign against the Scots, made the English nobility unite again under Edward to take down Mortimer who would end up suffering the same fate as Hugh Despenser the Young.

The case of a family accumulating all the power of a kingdom is relatable to Ayala's description on the ascension of the Padilla family in Castile. Pedro's relationship with Maria Padilla reached a point that the nobility could no longer ignore. His husband humiliated Blanca of Bourbon, Queen of Castile since 1353, several times. In 1354, he nullified their marriage and married Juana de Castro. Later he would want to imprison her in the Alcazar of Toledo, and always kept her under check despite being a descendant of Louis IX and the possibility of retaliation from the King of France. Yet, the greatest opposition came from the Castilian lords and knights who, according to Ayala, opposed the treatment of the French princess numerous times and asked for the exile of Maria Padilla. The French princess, as many others we have talked about, was murdered by Pedro's command in 1361 and of course, that was a cause of mourning to the whole kingdom.

What actually scared the nobility more than an invasion from the King of France, who had his hands full with the English *chevauches*, was the Padilla Family. Maria managed to get from the king positions for his extended family, an example being his brother Diego García de Padilla, Grand Master of the Order of Calatrava from 1355 to 1365. The whole kingdom eventually despised the Padilla, since, according to Ayala, they were taking the king's power and made prisoner the previous Grand Master of Alcántara. In addition, the king's fierce temperament had started to surface. As many other kings of Castile, he tried to control the military orders of Santiago, Calatrava and Alcántara, as we have said, by naming their Grand Masters. To them, Pedro was the only one who should rule over the kingdom and with advisers and more worthy of the job:

Otrossi que el perdia las voluntades de todos los suyos, por quanto los priuados que el entonces auia non les fizieran honrra en la su corte e eran dellos mal tratados, e que le pidian por merçed, lo primero, que el quisiesse tornar a la dicha su mujer e traerla conssigo commo deuia, otrossi a Iohan Fernandez de Henestrosa, su tio de donna Maria de Padilla, e a Diego Garçia su hermano los fiziesse merçed en al, mas que el regno non se regiesse nin se gouernasse por aqueelos que entonce tenia por priuados, pues non honrauan a los grandes sennores e caualleros que uenian a la su corte... (Ayala, 1986: 61).

After this, the nobility trapped Pedro and forced him to fire his council and form a new one. This had a heavy presence of the sons of the late Leonor of Guzman, and had the king prisoner for a while until he managed to escape. Ayala shows the reader again that the King was not the sole owner of power in Castile, and his stepbrothers hold enough power to hold him hostage and even taking control of the kingdom from his hands.

[E] luego que los sennores que auemos ya nombrado fueron a Toro e touieron al rey en su poder, dexaron de hordenar quales quier otras cosas que fuesen su seruicio del rey nin pro de los regnos. E tomaron acuerdo de partir entressi todos los oficios, assi de la casa del rey commo del regno, lo qual les touo grandd danno adelante (Ayala, 1986: 65-66).

As narrated by Ayala Pedro I avoided the legal procedures to execute all those who opposed him, a clear differences to Pere or Edward who procured to make a case for the execution of any opposition. It is not as if the others didn't have anyone killed, Pere himself order the death of one of his own stepbrothers and gladly would have done the same with the other one. The difference was that, unlike Pedro, they were not constantly issuing the capital punishment to any glimpse of opposition. They knew what that misuse of power could bring, especially Edward III, who had seen that attitude punished with the cases of Mortimer and the Despensers.

From this point onward Pedro would not limit his punishments to the individuals, instead he also pursued the families of this. Ayala describes this prosecutions as an overreach for Pedro, given that the families were necessary guilty for the acts of one of its members. The opposite is found in Froissart when he describes the death penalty for Roger Mortimer and the forfeiture of his lands. Later the chronicle shows us that his grandson recovered his title of Earl of March, he even became peer of England and one of the founding members of Edward's Order of the Garter.

The chronicle exposes how the ones holding the power used it to rule their kingdoms but it also shows us how they exercised this power. The use, lack of use and misuse of power define the reigns of kings and princes. Too much or too little of one of those aspects could provoke an adverse reaction from the subjects, who at the end could see fit to retire that power from its possessor through any means necessary. Constantly exhorting ones subjects or trying to control every aspect of government and using it at ones advantage could be as bad or worse than ignoring government and indulging in procrastination instead of ruling ones land.

As we have said, a king who does not rule could end up losing his crown, not unlike Childéric III being deposed by Pépin le Bref, so when leaving government in the hands of a third party they had to be careful. A king may delegate part of his responsibilities, therefore, give power, to a lesser noble in order to free himself from the burdens of government, or just some specifics for which he was not prepared to deal with. Bernat de Cabrera was a powerful influence in Pere's life dealing with many external and internal problems. When an individual, or a small group of people, assumed that power or manipulated it to their benefits the kingdom would not stay silent. The nobility was already resilient to the kings power over them, but when this was used by a third party that could undermine their own power they moved to displace them from government and make them pay for overreaching in their service to the king.

Nonetheless, the power was the king's and no one else's. Too much or too little of one of those aspects could provoke an adverse reaction from the subjects, who at the end could see fit to retire that power from its possessor through any means necessary. Constantly exhorting ones subjects or trying to control every aspect of government and using it at ones advantage could be as bad or worse than ignoring government and indulging in procrastination instead of ruling ones land. At the end, even the highest king depends on his subjects to stay in power, for little can he do if all the nobility turns on him because of his actions.

4. The limits of Power

Even in a work aiming to glorify the king we end up seeing the limitations of their own position. Pere III had several kingdoms and counties under different sets of law, or *Usatges*, and depended a lot on the *Corts* and the *Unions*, at least during his early reign. Edward III had the Parliament of England and eventually the House of Commons.

Pere found himself often limited by his kingdoms laws, or *Usatges*. The Crónica e narrates how the king finds himself in a dead end when prosecuting Pere d'Eixerica. Using the laws of Aragon, his homeland, and with the support of the aragonese nobility, they try to limit the king's punishment. Far from being the only instance in the chronicle of a noble using the laws of Pere's different kingdoms to avoid punishment, this sets two precedents for the rest of the chronicle. First, the nobles used the kingdoms laws to their advantage to limit the king's power to the point that Pere would seek its destruction when the Unions of Aragón and Valencia turn against him; and second, He is shown respecting the laws, to a lesser extent, even when used against him. That would make him from trying to find an alternative method to punish his subjects when needed, as the chronicle explains how the legal case against Bernat de Cabrera became one of the biggest challenges for the king.

Pere's relationship with his subjects became extremely tense from the 1340s onwards. The chronicle portraits the attempt of naming his daughter Constança, due to the lack of a male heir, as heir of his kingdoms:

Per la qual raó lo dit infant, agrujat, parti's de nós e anà-se'n a la posada e puis tractà e parlà secretament ab algunes persones de la Ciutat de València induint-les singularment, e, puis aquells singulars, tot lo poble, a indignació contra nos. 6 E, après açò, nós sentim les induccions moltes que el dit infant faïa fer, faïemlo venir davant nós e dixem-li per què faïa aitals coses, car ço que nós faïem, en disputar lo dret de primogenitura de nostra filla, enteníem a fer justament, e que així ho trobàvm clarament de dret (Soldevila, 2014: 254).

This antagonisms that gave birth to the War of the Union becomes absent in the latest part of the chronicle. Pere wanted his success against the Unions to be seen as the victory of the crown against any internal opposition. The book does not completely ignore it, especially when the *Corts* did not solve the king's lack of funds but it treats them more as minor problems in the grand scheme of the War of the Two Pedros.⁷

In the chronicles, we see Pere ask help to his *Corts* for help in several instances but they are not represented as a great obstacle for the king, although reality was much

⁷ The truth was much more complex, given the constant difficulties Pere faced when dealing with economic issues. Kagay has published articles on Pere's relationship with the *Corts* and the process against Bernat de Cabrera in (Kagay, 2006).

different. Froissart portrays the relationship of Edward III and his parliaments in a similar manner, mostly peaceful yet not without some disagreements. Ayala shows that Pedro does not care about his *cortes* he rules with an iron fist, which would eventually doom him. Yet, the *Grandes Chroniques de France* during the captivity of Jean II the *trois états* turned Charles regency into a living nightmare, demanding too much from the young Dauphin who could barely manage to keep the kingdom from falling into foreign hands.

The other chronicle that shows on a similar way the relationship between the king and his subjects is the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. We see on several occasions the negotiations between Jean II and the Duke of Normandy with the Parliament, which ranges from cooperation to open confrontation. After the French defeats in the 1340's and the reigniting of hostilities with success of Prince Edward's *chevauche* through the Languedoc in 1355 the parliament was eager to help their king. The agreement between the King and the *trois états* reached an agreement easily, according to the chronicle. They would give him 30.000 men and 5 million Pounds what ended up being difficult was for the Parliament to fulfil the agreement.

After Poitiers, everything felt down. The Dauphin's first decision is to judge the king's council as if the defeat and capture of Jean II was their fault. Charles uses this to remake the council with his own men and to negotiate with the *trois états* the defence of the Languedoc. For this, he needed to mint coin in order to fund the reinforcement of his south border, an action that put the *trois états* against him. They demanded that some members of Charles council to be forbidden from office and for him to stop minting coins for he had not that right. Charles considered minting in his power "Et avec ce leur dist que, jasoit ce que le droit defaire monnoie et de la muer appartenoit au Roy pour cause de l'eritage de la couronne de France." (Delachenal, 1910: 150-151)

From this moment, the chronicle draws a clear division in the Kingdom of France between the Dauphin and Charles II of Navarre. Then, the chronicle narrates Charles lowest point when a group of citizens storm his castle.

Et tantost après le dit prevost et pluseurs en sa compaignie monterent en la chambre de monseigneur le duc ou Palais, sur les merceries, et là trouverent le dit duc au quel le dit prevost dist teles paroles en substance : « Sire, ne vous esbahissiez de choses que vous veez, car il est ordené et convient que il soit fait. » [...] Et quant le dit prevost fu en la dicte chambre, et pluseurs armez de sa compaignie avecques lui, il dist à monseigneur le duc que il ne se meist point à mesaise de ce qui estoit avenü, car ce avoit esté fait de la volenté du peuple, et pour pis eschever, et que ceulz qui estoient mors avoient esté faulx, mauvais

et traistres. Et requist le dit prevost à monseigneur le duc, de par le dit peuple, que il vousist ratifier le dit fait et estre tout un avecques eulz. Et que, se mestier avoient d'aucun pardon pour cause du dit fait, que le dit duc leur vousist tout pardonner. Le quel duc octroia au dit prevost toutes les choses dessus dites, et pria au dit prevost que ceuls de Paris vousissent estre ses bons amis, et il seroit le leur. (Delachenal, 1910: 150-151).

Pedro had found himself prisoner of his stepbrother and the Unions in Saragossa or Valencia held Pere hostage for a time. Three cases not that different, and all of them ended up with the king fleeing captivity to seek revenge against those who had tried to take the power from his hands.

5. Gestures of Power

On a subtler way, we see instances and gestures than transpire a power relation. Be it a instances when an unequal, yet co-dependent, relationship is portrayed; like the one between a king and its most powerful subjects; or when two apparently equal powers clash with each other.

A gesture we see in the texts is the act of graving the reins of the king's horse. The king is on horse, above everyone else, but his subjects rightfully guide him. At the end, they are the ones who maintain peace and order in the kingdom. When Pere is crowned, he has to resolve a little dispute over who should carry them between the aragones nobility and the brothers of the Judge of Arborea. Pedro has his horse also carried by the reign in Ayala's *Crónica* on a scene charged with symbolism. During the wedding with Blanca of Bourbon, Pedro had his horse guided by his stepbrothers Enrique and Tello, the men who had rebelled against the King and will eventually overthrow him are shown in this co-dependent relationship.⁸

Froissart portrays two instances when someone is handling the kings reigns, both during the battle of Crecy. John the Blind, King of Bohemia, answered the call of Phillippe VI, yet when the confrontation with the English takes a bad turn he decides to charge in battle despite his blindness. In order to do that, his knights tie the reins of their horses to John's and charge with him to their deaths. The other instances is when the battle is

⁸ For the whole narration of Pere's coronation (Soldevila, 2014: 93-98) and for an analysis of its significance: (Aurell, 2012: 199-219) For Pedro's wedding (Pero Lopez de Ayala, Wilkins, Constance L. y Heanon M., eds. 1986: 41).

irrevocably lost and Jehan of Hainault has to grab Philippe's reins, for he was not reacting, in order to flee from the battlefield. The chronicle is showing two opposite instances yet they significance is similar. Both cases portray the king dependant on his knights to act, for himself alone would not be capable of managing everything.

In the *Chroniques* of Froissart and Pere III, we find an uncommon, and usually uncomfortable, situation, kings paying homage to other kings. This contradiction of being a ruler and owing loyalty to an equal was something that kept hunting the kings of England since 1066 and the branch of the House of Barcelona ruling Mallorca since their separation after Jaume I's death. Both texts describe the homage ceremonies, not only because of the importance of such events, but so the facts are clear to the reader who would judge the action taken by the characters in the future.

The Mallorca conundrum was unpleasant for both parties. Jaume III had the insular kingdom, two of the Catalan counties and the French lordship of Montpelier, which had been separated from the rest of the Crown after the death of Jaume I. This brought turbulent times, since the Mallorca branch joined France in the failed Crusade against Pere the Great and had their kingdom conquered by his son Alfons II and later restored by the former's brother and heir James II.

The complicated history of both sides of the dynasty came down to Pere III and Jaume III who wished to get rid of each other. The chronicle puts the reader immediately against Jaume, making him reluctant to pay homage:

E, après alguns dies, estants nós en la ciutat de València e pensants que el dit rei de Mallorques havia poc temps pel citament que fet li haviem per lo dit homenatge e que no lleixaria encórrer lo dit temps, concordam d'anar a Barcelona per lo dit fer. E lo dit rei de Mallorques, qui era en la vila de Perpenyà, veent que ell son fet de fer lo dit homenatge pus enan perlongar no podia, féu-nos pregar que li féssem anar a Perpenyà lo dit infant En Pere, e nós atorgar no ho volíem, pensant-nos que seria minva nostra e, encara, del dit infant. E lo dit infant dix-nos:

—Vós, senyor, no estigats vós de mi, que, ab que sua fet a vós ço q'és honor de la vostra corona reial, jo no em cur d'àls.

E lladoncs lo dit infant en Pere anà a Perpenyà, e lo dit rei s'acordà ab ell e promès-li que vendria a nós per l'homenatge, e lo dit infant En Pere tornà-se'n. E, après pocs diez lo rei de Mallorques venc-se'n a Barcelona (Soldevila, 2014: 114-115).

Pere managed to make Jaume perform the homage and even conceded to do so in more private space than usual. Nonetheless, Pere's temper moved him to humiliate his brother in law during the ceremony making him stand during the whole affair and procuring cushions of a lesser quality for his seat.

On the other side of the Channel, Edward III faced the never-ending problem of the Plantagenet's. He was Duke of Guyenne and had claims to the rest of Aquitaine, Normandy, Anjou, because of his ancestry and even the French crown thanks to his mother and the disappearance of the Capet dynasty. Because of that, the king of France was anxious for the homage the king of England owed him:

Or avint que, environ un an après que li rois Phelippes de Valois eut esté couronnés à roy de France, et que tout li baron et li tenant dou dit royaume li eurent fait feaulté et hommage, excepte li jones rois Edowars d'Engleterre, qui encores n'estoit trais avant, et ossi il n'avoit point esté mandés; se fu li rois de France consilliés et enfourmés que il mandast le dit roy d'Engleterre et venist faire hommage et feaulté, ensi comme il apertenoit. (Froissart, 1888: 90).

On top of that, the legal situation of the ownership of Guyenne was complex and the oath the king of France was a matter of debate. Yet, Edward was still very young and when confronted with Philippe VI petition of homage he abided following the advice of his mother and council.

Là en dedens eut ça mainte parolle et ordenance faite et devisée. Et me samble que li rois Edouwars d'Engleterre fist adonc hommage, de bouce et de parolle tant seulement, sans les mains mettre entre les mains dou roy de France, ou prinèe ou prelat député de par lui. Et n'en volt adonc li dis rois d'Engleterre, par le conseil qu'il eut, dou dit hommage proceder plus avant, si seroit retournés en Engleterre et aroit veus, leus et examinés les privilèges de jadis, qui devoient esclarir le dit hommage, et moustrer comment et de quoi li rois d'Engleterre devoit estre homs au roy de France. Li rois de France, qui veoit le roy d'Engleterre son cousin jone, ao entendit bien toutes ces parolles, et ne le volt adonc de riens presser, car bien savoit assés que bien y reoeuveroit, quant il vorroit, et li dist « Mon cousin, nous ne vous volons pas decevoir, et nous plaist bien ce que vous en avés fait à présent, jusques à tant que vous serés en vostre pays et enfourmés, par les seelés de vestres predicesseurs, quel cose vous en devés faire.» Li rois d'Engleterre respondi «Chiers sires, grans merchis». (Froissart, 1888: 95-96).

The specifics Froissart takes in the narration of the whole affair are far from meaningless. In fact, the omission of part of the ceremony was all Edward needed to recuse himself later and nullify the whole oath. Therefore, the gesture, or lack of it, ends up being a powerful political weapon that he would later use to excuse himself and wage war against Philippe for the Plantagenet inheritance.

6. The Chronicles as elements of Power

Despite coming from very different backgrounds, we have shown how the four chronicles share a common understanding of Power. In the end, the writers share a certain social position and education. Of course, a Flemish like Froissart was not a Catalan ruler or a French monk of Saint Denis. However, beneath national differences lies a specific understanding of reality influenced by a common religion and their way of life. Froissart talks about the deeds of Knights and kings, yet Jehan II lived by those ideals and Pere was certainly not an ignorant on the subject. After all, Edward III founded the Order of the Garter, soon followed by Jehan II Order of the Star and Pere's Order of Saint George. Therefore, when Pere talks about power, he has in mind the same ideas as Froissart or Ayala of authority and military prowess.

When the limits of power were tested, the kingdom's integrity became into question, for all parties wanted to increase their power and diminishing the others at the same time. When the Castilian nobility refused to obey the Padilla family and demanding their exile we see echoes of the English barons making a move against the Despencers and Roger Mortimer. The Prevost des merchands du Paris and the *trois états* refusing to obey the Dauphin, trying to push their own interests, is not that different from the Union of Aragon wanting to put limits to the king's power. Consequently and in all the cases, rebellions followed the complaints. The co-dependent relationship between the king and his subjects was fragile and an unbalance of power between them would be answered swiftly, and often violently, in order to return to the *status quo* that kept their society intact.

However, the objective of the chronicles is not simply a memoir of certain events of the fourteenth century. These writings show transmit certain ideas about power. What it was, who held it and how did they make a use of it. Because of it, the chronicle becomes a transmitter and object of power by itself. Pere constructs himself through the narrative to create a certain image of himself, not perfect, yet unequivocally powerful. He makes mistakes, yet he depicts himself coming on top despite the harsh events of his reign, the

same way Froissart portrays the English royal house in all his glory with their victories against the French. The monks of Saint Denis make a good job portraying the Valois as rightful and just kings of France, the same way Ayala keeps pushing Pedro in favour of Enrique through all his text. At the end, the chronicles show the power of their respective patrons so it could outlive them and be remembered.

Pere used Jaume's *book of deeds* as a legal argument to recover the Kingdom of Mallorca, so he understood the importance and the usefulness of such a text. The conflictive homage that Edward III did to Philippe VI is a great example of how a version of an event can be later used as a political weapon to justify the Hundred Year's War, or in the case of Ayala how the constant dissatisfaction and misuse of power brought Pedro's reign to an end. Therefore, the texts if correctly structured can be used later to justify or excuse any acts, and with that, the chronicles became objects of power.

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