

*CELO INTER MANUS PONTIFICUM TRADIDIT  
SPIRITUM.*

THE IDEOLOGY SURROUNDING ROYAL  
DEATHS IN THE LIGHT OF THE LATIN  
CASTILIAN-LEONESE CHRONICLES  
(TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES)

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Date of receipt: 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 2018

Date of acceptance: 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2019

**ABSTRACT**

The death of a king in the medieval chronicles is an incomparable historiographical locus from which to examine this phenomenon. Historiographical texts written at the Castilian-Leonese court during the twelfth century and first half of the thirteenth century, in addition to offering first hand information on royal deaths and the accompanying ceremonies and funeral rites, fully reflect the ideological conceptions and propagandistic constructs surrounding such exceptional events, as will be seen in the first section of this article. In a second section, attention will be paid to the narrative and literary treatment given to the death of a king, as on a formal plane this is also considered to be an event of notable importance.<sup>1</sup>

**KEY WORDS**

Castile and Leon, Twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Death, King, Ideology.

**CAPITALIA VERBA**

Castella et Legio, Saecula duodecim et tredecim, Mors, Rex, Ideologia.

## 1. Introduction<sup>2</sup>

*Porro illucescente nativitatís Filii Dei clara universo orbi die, ubi dominus rex se artubus deficere prospicit, missam canere petit, ac percepta corporis et sanguinis Christi participatione, ad lectum manibus...<sup>3</sup>*

With these words, the anonymous chronicler of the ill-named *Historia Silensis*<sup>4</sup> opens his description of the final moments of Fernando I of León and Castile. This well-known account, heavy with drama and symbolism, was recovered and transmitted in the Castilian-Leonese chronicling tradition, so given to re-using earlier texts, up to the time of Alfonso X and his *Estoria de España*.<sup>5</sup> The case of

1. This article is framed in the *Migravit* and *Sepultus* Research Projects financed by the Ministerio de Ciencia, Innovación y Universidades and the Casa de Velázquez [ref.: HAR2016-74846-P]. I wished to thank the doctors Fermín Miranda García and Ariel Guance for their kindly advices and their corrections. Of course, any mistake in the text is my responsibility.

2. Here are quoted all the editions of the chronicles used in this work: “*Chronica Adefonsi tertii*”, *Chronica Hispana saeculi VIII et IX*, ed. Juan Gil Fernández. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018: 383-484 (*Rotensis* and *Ad Sebastianum* versions, and *Chronica Albeldensia*) (translations in *Crónicas Asturianas*, eds. Juan Gil Fernández, José L. Moralejo, Juan Ignacio Ruiz de la Peña. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1985: 194-264); “*Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*”, *Chronica Hispana Saeculi XII, Pars 1*, eds. Emma Falque Rey, Juan Gil Fernández, Antonio Maya Sánchez. Turnhout: Brepols, 1990: 109-248 (translation in *Crónica del Emperador Alfonso VII*, ed. Maurilio Pérez Fernández. León: Universidad de León, 1997); Osma, Juan de. “*Chronica latina regum Castellae*”, *Chronica Hispana saeculi XIII*, eds. Luis Charlo Brea, Juan Antonio Estévez Sola, Ricardo Carande Herrero. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997: 7-118 (translation in *Crónica latina de los Reyes de Castilla*, ed. Luis Charlo Brea. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010: 57-165); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*, ed. Emma Falque Rey. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003; *Chronica Naiarensis*, ed. Juan Antonio Estévez Sola. Turnhout: Brepols, 1995 (translation in *Crónica Najerense*, ed. Juan Antonio Estévez Sola. Madrid: Akal, 2003); Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronica Regum Legionensium*, ed. Benito Sánchez Alonso. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1924 (translation in *Crónicas de los reinos de Asturias y León*, ed. Jesús E. Casariego. León: Everest, 1985: 159-181); Alfonso X. *Estoria de España*, ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal. Madrid: Bailly – Bailliere, 1906; Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie siue Historia Gothica*, ed. Juan Fernández Valverde. Turnhout: Brepols, 1987 (translation in Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de los Hechos de España*, ed. Juan Fernández Valverde. Madrid: Alianza, 1989); *Historia Silensis*, ed. Francisco Santos Coco. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1921 and Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica*, ed. Francisco Santos Coco. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1921 (translation in Gómez-Moreno, Manuel, ed. *Introducción a la Historia Silense*. Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1921).

3. “Finally, the splendid day of the Nativity of the Son of God dawning on the whole world, when the Lord King sensed his departure he called for mass to be sung and, having received the body and blood of Christ, was carried to his bed...”. *Historia Silensis*...: 90-91 and Gómez-Moreno, Manuel, ed. *Introducción a la Historia Silense*...: CXXXV-CXXXVI.

4. In fact it seems clear today that the HS was written in León, perhaps in San Isidoro or in Sahagún, but anyway not in Castile, so that the best qualificative for it is *Historia Legionensis* and not *Historia Silensis*. On that, see the works of Henriët, Patrick. “L’‘Historia Silensis’, chronique écrite par un moine de Sahagún. Nouveaux arguments”. *e-Spania*, 14 (2012). 11 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/21655>>, and Martin, Georges. “Ordoño Sisnández, autor de la ‘Historia legionensis’ (versión revisada y aumentada)”. *e-Spania*, 30 (2018). 11 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/21568>> along with the dossier published in *e-Spania* regarding that chronicle.

5. The story about Fernando I’s death as narrated in the *Historia Silensis* was transmitted to the *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 169-170 (book III, chap. 12); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 295-296 (book IV, chap. 60); and Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 193-194 (book VI, chap. 13), in addition to Alfonso X. *Estoria de España*...: 493-495.



Fernando I, despite being perhaps the most remarkable example and, therefore, the most hackneyed in historiography,<sup>6</sup> is always exceptional for the wealth of detail provided on the subject in the chronicling tradition that ensued: as a general rule, the death of kings did not give rise to such a vast array of narrative, rhetorical and ideological resources.

In recent decades, much progress has been made with regard to regal deaths in the middle Ages.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, as often occurs with subjects of research that present historians with such a wide array of possibilities, there still remain aspects that have not yet been studied sufficiently. This is the case, among others, of the chronicling approach to the death of a monarch, a perspective that, despite being

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6. See, for example, Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte en la Castilla medieval (siglos VII-XV)*. Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1998: 293-294.

7. The most recent work is from Miranda García, Fermín; López de Guereño, María Teresa, eds. *La muerte de los príncipes en la Edad Media. Balance y perspectivas historiográficas*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2019, forthcoming; specifically the article from Guiance, Ariel. "Veinte años de historiografía sobre la muerte: un balance y un nuevo comienzo", *La muerte de los príncipes en la Edad Media. Balance y perspectivas historiográficas*, Fermín Miranda García, María Teresa López de Guereño, eds. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2019, forthcoming. In addition, see also the following significant works: Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. *Fundamentos ideológicos del poder real en Castilla (siglos XIII-XVI)*. Madrid: Eudema, 1988; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. *Ceremonias de la realeza. Propaganda y legitimación en la Castilla Trastámara*. Madrid: Nerea, 1993; Menjot, Denis. "Un chrétien qui meurt toujours. Les funérailles royales en Castille à la fin du Moyen Âge", *La idea y el sentimiento de la muerte en la historia y en el arte de la Edad Media*, Manuel Núñez Rodríguez, Ermelindo Portela Silva, coords. Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1988: 127-138; Mitre Fernández, Emilio. "La muerte del rey: la historiografía hispánica (1200-1348) y la muerte entre las élites". *En la España Medieval*, 11 (1988): 167-183; Mitre Fernández, Emilio. "Muerte y memoria del rey en la Castilla Bajomedieval", *La idea y el sentimiento de la muerte en la historia y en el arte de la Edad Media*, Manuel Núñez Rodríguez, Ermelindo Portela Silva, coords. Santiago de Compostela: Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, 1988: 17-26; Mitre Fernández, Emilio. "La muerte y sus discursos dominantes entre los siglos XIII y XV", *Muerte, religiosidad y cultura popular: siglos XIII-XVIII*, Eliseo Serrano Martín, ed. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1994: 15-34; Martín, José Luis. "El rey ha muerto. ¡Viva el rey!". *Hispania*, 51 (1991): 5-39; Sabaté i Curull, Flocel. "La mort d'Alfons el Magnànim. Coixença, divulgació i repercussió de la notícia", *La Corona d'Aragona ai temps di Alfonso II el Magnanimo*. Naples: Paparo, 2000: 1893-1910; Sabaté i Curull, Flocel. *Lo senyor rei és mort! Actitud i cerimònies dels municipis catalans baix-medievals davant la mort del monarca*. Lleida: Universitat de Lleida, 2009; Aurell, Jaume; Pavón Benito, Julia, eds. *Ante la muerte: actitudes, espacios y formas en la España Medieval*. Pamplona: Eunsa, 2002; Pavón Benito, Julia; Rodríguez de la Borbolla, Ángel, eds. *Morir en la Edad Media: La muerte en la Navarra medieval*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 2007; Miranda García, Fermín. "Los espacios del rey muerto. Sepulturas y panteones reales navarros (ss. X-XIV)", *La construcción medieval del espacio regio*, Fernando Arias Guillen, Pascual Martínez Sopena, eds. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, 2018: 455-472. For European sphere, among many others: Aries, Philippe. *El hombre ante la muerte*, Barcelona: Taurus, 2011 (First edition 1977); Taylor, Jane, ed. *Dies Illa, Death in the Middle Ages (1<sup>st</sup> Eugene Vinaver International Colloquium. Papers)*. Manchester: University of Manchester, 1993; Erlande-Brandenburg, Alain. *Le roi est mort. Étude sur les funérailles, les sépultures et les tombeaux des rois de France jusqu'à la fin du XIII siècle*. Paris: Société Française d'Archéologie, 1975; Binski, Paul. *Medieval death: ritual and representation*. London: British Museum Press, 1996; Evans, Michael. *The death of kings: royal deaths in Medieval England*. London: Hambledon Continuum: 2006; Alexandre-Bidon, Danièle. *La mort au Moyen Âge: XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris: Hachette, 2008; Bande, Alexandre. *Le cœur du roi: les Capétiens et les sépultures multiples, XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris: Tallandier, 2009; Dectot, Xavier. *Les tombeaux des familles royales de la Péninsule Ibérique au Moyen Âge*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009 (see also next footnote).



partially addressed in several works,<sup>8</sup> has still not merited monographic interest in the geo-chronological timescale dealt with here: the Castilian-Leonese period from 1100 to 1250.<sup>9</sup>

It is true that in many studies, the chronicles and their accounts of royal deaths have been used in a positivist regard: they are of paramount importance in reconstructing the past, despite the scarce reliability of much of their content. Nevertheless, this partial nature of medieval historiographical texts provides the historian with a privileged standpoint from which to study the phenomenon of royal deaths. Precisely this factual inventiveness or distortion that is rife in these texts is enormously useful in addressing their study from an ideological perspective, seeking out the reasons for these fantasies and establishing their relationship with the context of their production. What medieval chroniclers included in their work, independently of the likelihood of their accounts, reveals a host of motivations and a cultural and ideological heritage that are of enormous interest to historians.<sup>10</sup>

In the following pages I will endeavour to show how the death of a king was articulated in ideological terms in the Castilian-Leonese chronicles at the height of the Middle Ages. The first section deals with how the model for recounting royal deaths developed in the texts studied, and what this reveals; a second section focuses on the moralising aspects of royal deaths; and lastly, an analysis of the death of kings is given from the standpoint of the narrative and literary logic of the history.

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8. See the featured works of Guance, Ariel. "Morir por la patria, morir por la fe: la ideología de la muerte en la *Historia de rebus Hispaniae*". *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 73 (1991): 75-104; Guance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*; Mattoso, José. "A morte dos reis na cronística pré-alfonsina". *Estudos medievais*, 10 (1993): 79-95 and Mattoso, José. "O poder e a morte". *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 25 (1995): 395-427; Isla Frez, Amancio. *Realezas hispánicas del año mil*. La Coruña: Seminario de Estudos Galegos, 1999; Isla Frez, Amancio. *Memoria, culto y monarquía hispánica entre los siglos X y XI*. Jaén: Universidad de Jaén, 2006: 29-64; Arizaleta, Amaia. "Imágenes de la muerte del rey: Libro de Alexandre y Chronica latina regum Castellae". *Rilce*, 23/2 (2007): 299-317; Rochwert-Zuili, Patricia. "Muerte y memoria dinástica en la 'Historia legionensis' (llamada 'silensis')", *e-Spania*, 14 (2012). 11 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/21795>>. Also, for catalano-aragonese sphere, see Orcástegui Gros, Carmen. "La preparación del largo sueño y su recuerdo en la Edad Media. El rey de Aragón ante la muerte, del testamento a la crónica", *Muerte, religiosidad y cultura popular, Siglos XIII-XVIII*, Eliseo Serrano, ed. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1994: 225-240 and Alvira Cabrer, Martín. "La cruzada albigense y la intervención de la Corona de Aragón en Occitania. El recuerdo de las crónicas hispánicas del siglo XIII". *Hispania*, 60/3 (2010): 947-976.

9. Likewise, given the peculiar "compilatory" feature of some of these writings... which leads to include informations not only close in time but from the Genesis or the Visigothic time, I will focus mainly in the post-islamic conquest of the story.

10. On that, see the works of Spiegel, Gabrielle Michele. "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages". *Speculum*, 65 (1990): 59-86; and Aurell, Jaume. "El nuevo medievalismo y la interpretación de textos históricos". *Hispania*, 224 (2006): 809-832. A very good example in the classic study of Martin, Georges. *Les Juges de Castille. Mentalités et discours historique dans l'Espagne médiévale*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1992 and, more recently, Ward, Aengus. *History and Chronicles in Late Medieval Iberia: Representations of Wamba in Late Medieval Narrative Histories*, Leiden: Brill, 2009.



## 2. The evolution of a historiographical model

Medieval chronicling —the Castilian-Leonese case is no exception— is characterised by what specialists call the compilation technique, consisting in an intellectual operation far more complex than simple “scissors-and-paste”.<sup>11</sup> Compilation entailed re-using, with greater or lesser variation, earlier texts to create, with this material, new texts. Some chroniclers showed scrupulous respect for the texts they consulted and transcribed them literally, but in the majority of cases they introduced modifications causing their own works —although the sources used were traceable— to be deemed as originals. What is more, these chronicles, despite being based on previous texts, were adapted to masterfully weave a discourse ideologically suited to the time and context.

Historiography has thus established a ‘historiographical chain’ linking the chronicles most frequently revisited over the centuries, commencing with the Visigothic works of Isidore of Seville (his *Chronica universal and Historiae*), Julián of Toledo (*Historia Wambae regis*), the Asturian chronicles (Albeldense and those of Alfonso III, in their different versions), the *Historia Seminensis* (or *Silensis*, including the earlier *Chronica* by Sampiro), the *Chronicon regum Legionensium* by Pelayo de Oviedo, the *Chronica Naiarensis*, the *Chronicon mundi* by Lucas de Tuy, Jiménez de Rada’s *Historia gothica* and, finally, the *Estoria of España* by Alfonso X. In this panorama of texts that, like a Matrioshka doll, were successively embedded in each other, were others that, for reasons that are not always clear, had far less repercussion and were left by the wayside, forgotten to future generations of compilers: this was the case of the anonymous *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* or the *Chronica latina regum Castellae* by Juan de Osma which, from the viewpoint of this article, are of lesser importance. This first section aims to give a brief description of the evolution in three major stages of the model for royal deaths; its ideological meaning will be discussed later.

### 2.1. The Alphonsine substrate: royal deaths in the chronicling cycle of Alfonso III

The natural starting point for the subject dealt with here is to be found in the *Crónicas* of Alfonso III,<sup>12</sup> the historiographical substrate for subsequent chronicles.<sup>13</sup> The content of these chronicles is scanty in general, but more sparing still when

11. Martin, Georges. “Compilation (cinq procédures fondamentales)”. *Annexes des Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale*, 11 (1997): 107-121.

12. For contextualizing these chronicles and see the huge amount of bibliography on them, see Gil Fernández, Juan. “Introducción”, *Chronica Hispana saeculi VIII et IX*, ed. Juan Gil Fernández. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018: 101-305.

13. Just check with the edition the countless borrowings of the text written after these chronicles (for these feature of the Asturian and Leonese historiography between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, see Sánchez Alonso, Benito. *Historia de la historiografía española*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1947: I, 95-97).



referring to the deaths of kings. Of most kings it is only reported that they died of natural causes<sup>14</sup> or a violent death,<sup>15</sup> from which we can surmise that a royal death was not viewed as a proper time for monarchical propaganda, more inclined toward aspects of warfare.<sup>16</sup> This trend took inspiration in the Isidorian tradition, in which the deaths of Visigothic kings —many of which were violent— were mentioned only sparingly by the Bishop of Seville.<sup>17</sup>

In some instances, however, the Alphonsine texts reveal some interesting facts. Kings Alfonso I, Alfonso II and Ordoño I —and also, to some extent, Alfonso III— merited some additional remarks by the chroniclers, heralding, perhaps, an interest in exploiting the circumstances of the monarch's demise and the ideological advantage to be gained.

Of Alfonso I it was said that a miracle occurred immediately after his passing, the tale further supported by a biblical reference to the book of Isaias possibly referring to the foundational role of the deceased monarch in political and religious matters:

*subito in aera auditur a cunctis uox angelorum psallentium: Ecce quomodo tollitur iustus et nemo considerat; et uiri iusti tolluntur et nemo percipit corde. A facie iniquitatis sublatus est iustus; erit in pace sepultura eius.*<sup>18</sup>

14. So it happens with Pelayo ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 410 [*Rotensis*, chap. 11], "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 409 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 11] and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 464 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 1]), Aurelio ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 416 [*Rotensis*, chap. 17]; "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 417 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 18]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 464 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 5]), Silo ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 416 [*Rotensis*, chap. 18], "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 417 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 18]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 465 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book 15, chap. 6]), Mauregato ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 418 [*Rotensis*, chap. 19]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 419 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 19]), Vermudo I ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 418 [*Rotensis*, chap. 20]; "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 419 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 19]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 465 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 8]); and Ramiro I ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 426 [*Rotensis*, chap. 24]; "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 427 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 24]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 466 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 10]).

15. Favila ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 410 [*Rotensis*, chap. 12]; "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 411 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 12]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 464 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 2]) and Fruela I ("Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 414 [*Rotensis*, chap. 16]; "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 415 [*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 16]; and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 464 [*Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 4]).

16. Redondo Jarillo, María Cristina. "La confección de la figura del rey guerrero en las crónicas asturleonesas (siglos VIII-XII)". *Miscelánea Medieval Murciana*, 32 (2008): 131-141.

17. Sevilla, Isidoro de. *Chronica Gothorum*, ed. and trans. Cristobal Rodríguez Alonso. León: Centro de Estudios San Isidoro, 1975. Not even for the death of such remarkable kings as Recaredo or Sisebuto wrote Isidoro de Sevilla something more than a laconic *morte propria decessit* (Sevilla, Isidoro de. *Chronica Gothorum...*: 266).

18. "suddenly, the voice of angels rang out through the air, singing: 'Thus departs the just unseen to all; just men disappear while no heart feels the loss. From the presence of iniquity is the just removed; in peace shall be his grave'". "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 412-414 (*Rotensis*, chap. 15); and 413 (*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 15): 413 (Translation: *Crónicas Asturianas...*: 208-209). The biblical quotation in Is. 57, 1-2, a fragment which condemns Israel's idolatry and which could be maybe related with the foundational role in religion and politics of Alfonso I in the organisation of the Asturian kingdom and the turbulent times following at the succession level after his death. About the chronicle treatment of Alfonso I in the Asturian chronicles, see Escalona Monge, Julio. "Family memories: Inventing Alfonso I



In this fragment, reproduced in the two versions of the *Chronica* by Alfonso III—but not in the *Chronica Albeldensia*—there appears for the first time an element that through subsequent repetition became more clearly defined: divine interference in the earthly world at the moment of passing. The examples of Alfonso II and Ordoño I confirm this trend, as both cases claim not only divine intrusion but also describe the deceased's direct access to Heaven. Thus, the *sanctissimum spiritum* of Alfonso II, as told in the Albeldense, *de regno terre ad regnum transiit celi*.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Ordoño I, the chronicles state that after his death *nunc autem letatur cum sanctis angelis in celestibus regnis*,<sup>20</sup> indicating without a shadow of doubt that the chroniclers envisaged the transit of the deceased's soul into the presence of the Lord.

The *Chronica Albeldensia*, by contrast, has little to say on the death of Ordoño I, but expresses a desideratum in addressing the foreseen demise of Alfonso III. Thus, the text reads, *ut post longum principalis imperium de regno terre ad regnum transeat celi*.<sup>21</sup> These words are even more revealing owing to the fact that the next, and final, paragraph in the chronicle was added *a posteriori*; the original text, completed in 881,<sup>22</sup> ended with words quoted above. It is therefore clear that the Asturian cycle of chronicles contain the seed for a more detailed treatment of the death of a king that relates the deaths of certain monarchs to the passage of their soul to Heaven.

## 2.2. The chronicles of the twelfth century

The *Chronica* by Sampiro is not preserved in its original version, but inserted and interpolated in other sources such as the *Historia Seminensis* and the *Chronica* by Pelayo de Oviedo. Written by Sampiro of Astorga in the late tenth century or early eleventh century, this work may be considered as a link between the trends reflected in the chronicles of Alfonso III—to which it provides a continuation—and the *Seminensis*, which embeds the work in its own narrative.<sup>23</sup> Spanning the period

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of Asturias”, *Building legitimacy. Political discourses and forms of legitimation in medieval societies*, Isabel Alfonso, Hugh Kennedy, Julio Escalona Monge, eds. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004: 223-262.

19. “passed from the earthly kingdom to the kingdom of the heavens”. “*Chronica Adefonsi tertii...* ”: 466 (*Chronica Albeldensis*, book XV, chap. 9) (Translation: *Crónicas Asturianas...* : 249); “*Chronica Adefonsi tertii...* ”: 422 (*Rotensis*, chap. 22); and 423 (*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 22) (Translation: *Crónicas Asturianas...* : 214-215).

20. “he is in the blissful company of the holy angels in the heavenly kingdoms”. “*Chronica Adefonsi tertii...* ”: 432 (*Rotensis*, chap. 28); and 433 (*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 28) (Translation: *Crónicas Asturianas...* : 220-221).

21. “that, following his extended imperium as prince of the kingdom on Earth, he will enter the heavenly kingdom”. “*Chronica Adefonsi tertii...* ”: 469-470 (*Chronica Albeldensis*, book XV, chap. 12) (Translation: *Crónicas Asturianas...* : 252).

22. Gil Fernández, Juan. “Introducción”...: 210-211.

23. To contextualize the *Chronica* of Sampiro, see Pérez de Urbel, Justo. “Pelayo de Oviedo y Sampiro de Astorga”. *Hispania*, 44 (1951): 388-412; Ubieto Arteta, Antonio. “Notas sobre la historiografía leonesa del siglo X”. *Archivos Leoneses*, 20 (1966): 157-162; Carriedo Tejado, Manuel. “Claves cronológicas de la crónica de Sampiro”. *Archivos Leoneses*, 93-94 (1993): 233-276; Carvajal Castro, Álvaro. “La construcción de una sede regia: León y la identidad política de los reyes asturleonés en la crónica de Sampiro



from Alfonso III to Alfonso V (approximately one century), in this account most of the kings die of natural deaths,<sup>24</sup> apart from a few violent deaths such as that of Sancho I.<sup>25</sup>

Only one monarch stands out for the special treatment given to the time of his death, and this was Ramiro II of León, to whom the chronicler dedicated several lines describing the king's preparations on sensing his final passage was near:

*ab omnibus episcopis, abbatibus, valde exortatus confessionem accepit, et vespere Aparitionis Domini ipso se ex proprio morbo regno abstulit, et dixit: "Nudus egressus sum ex utero matris meae, nudus revertar illuc. Dominus sit adiutor meus, non timebo quid faciat mihi homo".*<sup>26</sup>

The change with regard to the Asturian cycle of narratives is remarkable: mention is no longer made of the destiny of the dying king's soul, while instead the narrative refers to a three-fold element that would become increasingly predominant in subsequent chronicles: (1) receiving penance from the ecclesiastic authorities; (2) renouncing royal power and (3) serene acceptance of imminent death.

Later chronicles that 'recycled' in their texts Sampiro's *Chronica* appear to have taken inspiration in this model of royal death to produce their own. In fact, it is interesting to note that Pelayo de Oviedo, early in the twelfth century, revisited this fragment on the death of Ramiro II in his *Chronicon regum Legionensium*, adding a significant sentence on the blessed destiny of the decedent's soul that is absent from the *seminense* version, deemed more faithful to the lost original;<sup>27</sup> he had expressed a similar desideratum in the case of Alfonso III.<sup>28</sup>

The *Historia Seminensis*, moreover, is overtly in favour of developing the model used for Ramiro II in Sampiro's work, applying it to the most renowned royal death in Hispanic chronicling in the central middle ages: that of Fernando I.<sup>29</sup> Several

y en los documentos". *e-Spania*, 18 (2014). 11 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/23714>>.

24. So it happens with Alfonso III (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 45); García I (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 46); Ordoño II (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 49); Fruela II (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 49); Ramiro II (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 53); Ordoño III (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 54); Ramiro III (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 57); Vermudo II (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 58).

25. Sancho I (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 56).

26. "he received from the bishops and abbots penance, greatly exhorted by them, and on the eve of the Epiphany of our Lord he shed his own kingdom, exclaiming: "Bare I came from my mother's womb, bare shall I return to it. Lord, with you to help me, I shall not fear men's deeds towards me". Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 53.

27. *Regnum obtinuit feliciter in terra; et ut erat amator omnium, regnum obtinet in celo, amator angelorum*. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Sampiro. Su crónica y la monarquía leonesa en el siglo X*, ed. Justo Pérez de Urbel. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1952: 331-332 (chap. 24).

28. *Pro quo exorandus est clementissimus pater, ut cui tale regnum tribuit terrenum etiam celeste accipere mereatur*. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Sampiro. Su crónica y la monarquía leonesa...*: 308 (chap. 15); possibly inspired in "Chronica Adefonsi tertii...": 469-470 (*Chronica Albeldensis*, book XV, chap. 12).

29. On the narrative of Fernando I's death according to the *Historia Silensis*, see Bishko, Charles J. "The liturgical context of Fernando I's last days according to the so-called 'Historia Silense'", *Spanish and Portuguese monastic history 600-1300*, Charles J. Bishko. London: Aldershot, 1984: 47-59; Isla Frez,





notable elements stand out in this fragment: (1) penance<sup>30</sup> and (2) renouncement to temporal power represented by regal insignia;<sup>31</sup> (3) resignation unto death and submission to the will of God;<sup>32</sup> and, as a new feature, (4) the premonition of death.<sup>33</sup> In none of these cases is any reference made to the ensuing ascent of the deceased's soul to Heaven.

Pelayo de Oviedo, in addition to his two interpolations in Sampiro, included in his *Chronicon regum Legionensium* a mortuary episode that is likewise of great interest (especially in view of his extremely succinct treatment of the death of Fernando I)<sup>34</sup> dedicated to Alfonso VI. This is the closing episode in his chronicle, which may have been the reason for choosing to display a broader narrative and ideological repertory.<sup>35</sup> This episode again features (4) the premonition of death, but in this case it is both personal (due to illness) and supernatural, with Saint Isidore of León's miracle of the spring,<sup>36</sup> but none of the remaining aspects (1 - 3). The Bishop of Oviedo, indeed, showed greater interest in narrating the event in full detail—after all, he claims to have been present—than at the death Alfonso VI, mentioned only succinctly.<sup>37</sup> He also introduced a novel aspect (5): the sorrow and consternation throughout the kingdom at the loss of who was metaphorically known as their shepherd:

*flentibus cunctis ciuibus et dicentibus: Cur pastor oues deseris? Nam commendatum tibi gregem et regnum inuadent enim cum Sarraceni et maliuoli homines. Tunc comites et milites, nobiles et immobiles, siue et ciues, decaluatis capitibus, scissis uestibus, rupte facies mulierum, asperso cinere magno gemitu et dolore cordis dabant uoces usque ad celos.*<sup>38</sup>

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Amanacio. *Realizas hispánicas...*: 190-193; Henriët, Patrick. "Hagiographie et historiographie en Péninsule Ibérique (XI-XIIIe siècles)". *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale*, 23 (2000): 75-79 and Rochwert-Zuili, Patricia. "Muerte y memoria dinástica...".

30. [...] *cum lacrimis ecclesie solo prostratus, pro delictorum uenia Dominum attentius exorabat. Tunc ab episcopis accepta penitentia, induitur cilicio pro regali indumento, et aspergitur cinere pro aureo diademate; cui in tali permanenti penitentia duobus diebus vivere a Deo datur. Historia Silensis...*: 90-91.

31. [...] *exiit regalem clamidem qua induebatur corpus, et deposuit gemmatam coronam qua ambiebatur caput. Historia Silensis...*: 90.

32. [...] *clara uoce ad Dominum dixit: "Tua est potentia, tuum regnum, Domine; tu es super omnes reges, tuo imperio omnia regna caelestia, terrestria subduntur; ideoque regnum quod re donante accepi, acceptumque quandiu tue libere uoluntati placuit rexi, ecce reddo tibi: tantum animam meam de voragine istius mundi ereptam, ut in pace suscipias deprecor". Historia Silensis...*: 90.

33. [...] *iam hora terribilis mortis sibi imminere uideretur. Historia Silensis...*: 89.

34. [...] *et mortuus est et sepultus in legionensem urbem una cum predicta uxore sua Sancia Regina era MCIII. Oviedo, Pelayo de. Chronicon regum Legionensium...*: 74-75.

35. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronicon regum Legionensium...*: 84-88.

36. *Hoc signum nichil aliud protendit nisi luctus et tribulaciones que post mortem predicti Regis euenerunt Hispanie; ideo plorauerunt lapides et manauerunt aquam. Oviedo, Pelayo de. Chronicon regum Legionensium...*: 85-86.

37. *Obiit Kalendas Julii in Tholetto Era MCXLVII quinta feria illucescente. Oviedo, Pelayo de. Chronicon regum Legionensium...*: 87.

38. "All Christians lamented his death and said: 'Shepherd, why are you leaving your sheep? Now, the Saracens and evil men will invade the kingdom [and attack] the flock entrusted to you'. And the counts and knights, noblemen and commoners, all the people, their heads uncovered, the women horror-struck



This lament for the death of Alfonso VI is notably echoed in the *Historia Compostellana*, drafted very close in time to the work of Pelayo de Oviedo.<sup>39</sup> Pelayo's version of the death of the emperor —as of that of Fernando I— was crystallised less than half a century later in the *Chronica Naiarensis* which, literally, presented a sequel to the narration.<sup>40</sup> This chronicle, written in the Castilian sphere in the 1170s,<sup>41</sup> incorporated some new features such as the death of Sancho II, possibly inspired on troubadours' performances<sup>42</sup> and including the reference (5) to the grief, in this case felt by the Cid and his knights, at the unexpected death at the gates of Zamora.<sup>43</sup> This aspect also appears, albeit not referring to a king but to a noble, in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, following the death of the Governor of Toledo, Munio Alfonso.<sup>44</sup>

In the twelfth century, therefore, the death of kings gradually shed its supernatural aspects. Royal deaths that had already been given an ideological interpretation (Alfonso I, Alfonso II and Ordoño I) are maintained in these texts;<sup>45</sup> but new narratives vary from the initial trend and no longer include new references to the passage of the soul up to Heaven,<sup>46</sup> focusing instead on aspects of regal power, penance, acceptance of death and the latter's repercussion on the kingdom.

### 2.3. The chronicles of the thirteenth century

Lucas de Tuy's *Chronicon mundi* and the *Historia gothica* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada mark the end —aside from the Alphonsine *Estoria de España*— of the chronicling tradition that began with the Mozarab cycle;<sup>47</sup> the *Chronica latina regum Castellae*

and disconsolate, covered in ashes, raised their laments to the heavens with heavy hearts". Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronicon regum Legionensium...*: 87-88.

39. *Historia Compostellana*, ed. Emma Falque Rey. Turnhout: Brepols, 1988: 85-86 (book I, chap. 47). See also Fernández Vallina, Emiliano. "Interconexiones historiográficas del noroeste peninsular en el siglo XII y numen episcopal: Diego Gelmírez y Pelayo de Oviedo", *Actas del II Congreso nacional de latín medieval (León, 1997)*, Maurilio Pérez González, ed. León: Universidad de León, 1998: I, 463-470.

40. *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 180-181 (Alfonso VI; book III, chap. 23); and 169-170 (Fernando I; book III, chap. 12).

41. On the *Chronica Naiarensis* and its context, see the recent colloquium published in *e-Spania*, 7 (2009). 6 December 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/17958>>.

42. Entwistle, William J. "On the *Carmen de morte Sanctii Regis*", *Bulletin Hispanique*, 30 (1928): 204-219; Fracker, Charles T. "Sancho II: epic and chronicle", *Romania*, 380 (1974): 467-507; Bautista Pérez, Francisco. "Sancho II y Rodrigo Campeador en la *Chronica naiarensis*", *e-Spania*, 7 (2009). 6 December 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/18101>>.

43. *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 174-175 (book III, chap. 16).

44. "Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris": 236-237 (book II, chap. 89).

45. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronica Adefonsi tertii*, ed. Jan Prelog. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1980: 86 (Alfonso I; chap. 8); 100 (Alfonso II; chap. 14); and 108 (Ordoño I; chap. 16); *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 103 (Alfonso I; book II, chap. 8); 108 (Alfonso II; book II, chap. 15) and 113 (Ordoño I; book II, chap. 17).

46. The divine miracle following Alfonso VI's death could be considered as an exception.

47. About these authors and their chronicles rivers of ink have been written; the essential works are Martín, Georges. *Les Juges de Castille...*: 197-316; Linehan, Peter. *Historia e historiadores de la España medieval*.



presents numerous particularisms among which we may mention the attention paid to recent and current events, thus renouncing to Gothic and Asturleonese history.<sup>48</sup>

With regard to deaths told in earlier chronicles (up to and including Alfonso VI) the chronicles do not add substantial modifications and the narratives are maintained almost unchanged. However, they do present some noteworthy aspects. The *Chronicon mundi* tells us nothing about the spirit of Alfonso II after his death,<sup>49</sup> whereas the *Historia gothica* uses the expression *inmaculatum spiritum ad celos emisit*<sup>50</sup> in referring to his demise, indicating the spiritual passage to Heaven. Moreover, Lucas de Tuy maintains Ordoño I governing jointly with the Creator, *sicut credimus*,<sup>51</sup> while the archbishop makes no mention of this at all.<sup>52</sup> Neither the chronicler of Tuy nor the Toledan chronicler are clear in their descriptions of the transit of Alfonso III, regarding whom the ambiguous expressions *Domini feliciter migravit*<sup>53</sup> and *felicem spiritum Creatori restituens*<sup>54</sup> are used. Significantly, Lucas —and, later, Rodrigo— takes literary licence in making slight alterations to the episode of the death of Fernando I, for which he follows the *Seminense*, adding at the beginning a miraculous apparition by Saint Isidore to the king in which *diem sui exitus imminere innotuit*.<sup>55</sup>

As for contemporary monarchs (from Alfonso VII onwards), the texts are very meagre in details of their deaths. Even such a pro-Leonese author as Lucas de Tuy is surprisingly sparing with words when recounting the deaths of kings such as Fernando II or Alfonso IX.<sup>56</sup> The only case —curiously— in which the *Chronicon*

Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2012: 337-438 (original ed. 1993); the articles on the monographic “Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (Castille, première moitié du XIIIe siècle): histoire, historiographie” published by *Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales*, 26 (2003); the numerous works of Patrick Henriot and Emma Falque Rey on Lucas de Tuy and, more recently, three doctoral thesis with a renewed focus on the subject: Jerez Cabrero, Enrique. *El Chronicon Mundi de Lucas de Tuy (c. 1238): técnicas compositivas y motivaciones ideológicas*. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma, 2006; Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. *L’Historia gothica de Rodrigo Jimenez de Rada (1243). Écriture et discours*. Toulouse: Université Toulouse le Mirail-HAL Archives Ouvertes, 2007 and Le Morvan, Gaël. *Le mythe néo-wisigothique dans la culture historique de l’Espagne médiévale (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)*. Paris: SEMH-Sorbonne, 2013.

48. Monographic in *e-Spania*, 2 (2006). 6 December 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/31>>, about this chronicle; see also de considerations of Le Morvan, Gaël. *Le mythe néo-wisigothique...*: 123-132.

49. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 237 (book IV, chap. 16).

50. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*:131 (book IV, chap. 12).

51. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 244 (book IV, chap. 19).

52. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 136 (book IV, chap. 14).

53. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 249 (book IV, chap. 23).

54. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 144 (book IV, chap. 20); also Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica*: 36 and *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 126 (book II, chap. 24).

55. “he reveals the day of his death”. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 294 (book IV, chap. 59); also Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 193-194 (book VI, chap. 13). The Tudense would add this detail basing himself on a *Vita Sancti Isidori* composed in León at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Henriot, Patrick. “Hagiographie et historiographie...”: 76).

56. For Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 332 (Alfonso VII; book IV, chap. 91); 320 (Fernando II; book IV, chap. 81); 332 (Alfonso VIII; book IV, chap. 91); 338 (Alfonso IX; book IV, chap. 98); for Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 232 (Alfonso VII; book VII, chap. 11); 246 (Fernando II; book VII, chap. 23).



*mundi* seems to include any link between death and divine action is that of Sancho III of Castile, who reigned so briefly, reads the chronicle, on account of the *peccata populi*.<sup>57</sup> Jiménez de Rada is barely more forthcoming in mortuary details, but nevertheless includes an innovation in recounting the demise of Sancho III: taking the words of the chronicler of Tuy he goes further to affirm that *ideo festinauit eum Dominus educere de medio iniquitatis et dare ei imperium non diuisum*.<sup>58</sup> Beyond this veiled allusion to the fateful division of the kingdom by Alfonso VII, that would bring such hardship to his grandson Alfonso VIII,<sup>59</sup> this quote would be a subliminal indication that the spirit of this Castilian reached Heaven, further supported with the use of a biblical passage from the wisdom books (Sap. 4, 13-14). The most striking aspect here is that the chronicler of Toledo should reserve such a high destiny to Sancho III when, by contrast, the death of his son, Alfonso VIII, his true and most highly praised hero,<sup>60</sup> is not recorded as a singular death.

Jiménez de Rada does, indeed, insist that Alfonso VIII took confession (with himself) and received the extreme unction before passing away, and paints a vivid image of those present at the time of his final transit. However, he only states that *beatum spiritum suo, qui dederat, restituit Creatori*, without further concessions on the matter.<sup>61</sup> In turn, Juan de Osma likewise gives no supernatural meaning to the death of the Castilian king, but nevertheless conveys a moving scene in describing the grief of those present, including several quotations from the Bible that raise the elegiac tone and add substance to the chronicler's fateful forebodings:

*Concurrunt undique populi ciuitatum et nobiles audita morte tanti domini et uidentes se desolatos tanto rege uersi sunt in stuporem intra se pre angustia spiritus gementes. Omnes mulieres sumpssere lamenta uiri consperxerunt puluere capita accinti ciliciis induti saccis.*<sup>62</sup>

In the Latin texts of the thirteenth century the death of the king —the contemporary king— is shown free from any supernatural aspect it may have had

57. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 316 (book IV, chap. 78).

58. "the Lord made haste to remove him from the midst of evil and grant him an undivided empire". Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 236 (book VII, chap. 14); biblical quote Sap. 4, 13-14.

59. Arizaleta, Amaia; Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. "En el umbral de santidad: Alfonso VIII de Castilla", *Pratiques hagiographiques dans l'Espagne du Moyen Âge et du Siècle d'Or*, Amaia Arizaleta, Stéphanie Jean-Marie, coords. Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-le-Mirail, 2005: II, 573-583.

60. Amaia Arizaleta (Arizaleta Amaia. "Ut lector agnosceret": discurso y recepción en la obra de Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada [primera mitad del siglo XIII]". *Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales*, 23 [2006]: 163-186) speaks of a *Libro de Alfonso el Noble* referring to the part of the *Historia gothica* which narrates the life of the Castilian king.

61. "he returned his blissful soul to his Maker". Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispaniae*...: 280 (book VIII, chap. 15).

62. "from all parts are come men of the cities and noblemen, who, finding themselves deprived of so great a king, fall in a stupor and weep within themselves from the anguish in their souls. The women voiced their lament, the men threw ashes on their heads, girded and robed in sackcloth". Osma, Juan de. "Chronica latina" ...: 69 (chap. 28); biblical quotations belong to Lam. 2, 10; Jon. 3, 5-6 and I Cor. 15, 52. See Arizaleta, Amaia. "Imágenes de la muerte del rey...": 301-306.



theretofore. It is undeniable that the chronicling tradition referring to the blissful destiny in the netherworld of the above mentioned Alfonso I, Alfonso II (Alfonso III) and Ordoño I is maintained; it is likewise true that the Pelagian miracle of the miraculous spring on the occasion of the imminent death of Alfonso VI is kept, and that Lucas de Tuy adds his own miraculous apparition of Isidore of Seville to Fernando I heralding his final passage, and that the chronicler of Toledo suggests that Sancho III, prematurely deceased, reached the heavens. But, aside from this last item, these are all examples from earlier chronicles that had become textually crystallised. Narrations of the demise of monarchs contemporary to thirteenth century chroniclers are devoid of all supernatural elements and tend toward far more secular patterns. This does not detract from regal deaths being privileged occasions for chroniclers to insert moralising or political messages of an elegiac nature and clear propagandistic intent; these messages would carry great power, given that they referred to royal obsequies, with which the kingdom's elites were probably familiar.<sup>63</sup>

### 3. 'Good' and 'bad' deaths: the moralising content of royal deaths

Having completed a brief review of the development through the chronicles of the narration of royal deaths, a more detailed examination is given in this second section on the ideological implications of each model.

Medieval chronicles, in addition to being accounts of the past, were compendiums of moralising discourse, more or less explicitly aiming to illustrate the sovereign in whose circles they were composed, setting the kings of the past as examples to follow in order to become a successful ruler.<sup>64</sup> The death of the king as it is recounted in the chronicles is a privileged moment to exemplify through narrative the just recompense due to rulers who were considered ideal and the well-deserved end of those who were not. In this logic, both E. Mitre and A. Guance have developed the theory of the existence, in the medieval mentality, of "good" deaths

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63. Arizaleta, Amaia. "Imágenes de la muerte del rey...": 301-306 and Mattoso, José. "O poder e a morte"...: 413-416.

64. Martin, Georges. *Les Juges de Castille...*: 205-206 and Martin, Georges. "Le pouvoir historiographique (L'historien, le roi, le royaume. Le tournant alphonsin)". *Annexes des Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale*, 11 (1997): 126-127; Rucquoi, Adeline. "El rey Sabio: cultura y poder en la monarquía medieval castellana". *Seminario Repoblación y reconquista: actas del III Curso de Cultura Medieval (Aguilar de Campoo, 1991)*, José Luis Hernando Garrido, Miguel Ángel García Guinea, coords. Aguilar de Campoo: Fundación Santa María La Real, 1993: 83; Rodríguez de la Peña, M. Alejandro. "El paradigma de los reyes sabios en el 'De rebus Hispaniae' de Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada", *Sevilla 1248. Congreso Internacional Conmemorativo del 750 aniversario de la conquista de la ciudad de Sevilla por Fernando III, Rey de Castilla y León*, Manuel González Jiménez, coord. Sevilla: Centro de Estudios Ramón Areces, 2000: 757-760; Jerez Cabrero, Enrique. *El Chronicon Mundi...*: 171, among others.



and “exemplary” and “bad” deaths, or yet “abominable” deaths, that were a natural consequence of the exemplary —or otherwise— life of the monarch.<sup>65</sup>

As shown in the first section of this work, only very few kings were the subject, at the time of their demise, of a more detailed narrative, whereas the great majority were hardly dedicated a few words. Generalisation is thus difficult to establish, as these are but exceptions to the relative paucity in the mention of royal deaths.

### 3.1. ‘Exemplary’ deaths: Regal deaths as a mechanism for the exaltation of monarchical power?

The death of Fernando I<sup>66</sup> is the most studied example<sup>67</sup> in establishing a “good death” paradigm ideologically construed to glorify the sovereign, but in fact this case is an exception to the rule; therefore, taking the narration of his passing as a paradigm is an error. Taking the account given in the *Seminense* (and the subsequent tradition) as an example of the “good” death of the Castilian-Leonese king is liable to lead to an erroneous generalisation: despite being an enticing example for analysis, on the chronicling scenario it is a *rara avis*. In this sense, any statement beyond associating a peaceful death from natural causes with a positive image of the reign is unwise.

In fact, the lexicon used in most instances of kings being portrayed “in a positive light” does not suggest that their death was considered as a moment of particular ideological exaltation. The vocabulary<sup>68</sup> for the obituary refers in generic terms to disease (*egritudo o morbus/morbus proprius*)<sup>69</sup> or is directly reduced to a selection of metaphors to translate the monarch’s final passage. Thus, it is customary for the text to note the death through the use of expressions such as *mortuus*,<sup>70</sup> *defunctus*<sup>71</sup> or

65. Mitre Fernández, Emilio. “La muerte del rey...” and Mitre Fernández, Emilio. “Muerte y memoria...”: 22-25; also Guance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*: 289-308.

66. Original narration is from the *Historia Silensis*: 90-91; the story is transmitted to most subsequent chronicles: *Chronica Naiarensis*: 169-170; Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 295-296; Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 193-194, with some interesting alterations which will be commented later.

67. The reference work still is Bishko, Charles J. “The liturgical context...”: 47-59; see also Guance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*: 293-294; Isla Frez, Amancio. *Realezas hispánicas...*: 190-193; Isla Frez, Amancio. *Memoria, culto y monarquía...*: 29-64; Henriot, Patrick. “Hagiographie et historiographie...”: 75-79.

68. I used as reference Pérez González, Maurilio. *Lexicon Latinitatis Medii Aevi Regni Legionis (s. VIII-1230) imperfectum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2010.

69. *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 104 (book II, chap. 10), 109 (book II, chap. 16), 151 (book III, chap. 3); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 249 (book IV, chap. 23), 250 (book IV, chap. 24), 255 (book IV, chap. 27), 266 (book IV, chap. 35), 315-316 (book IV, chap. 77); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 144 (book IV, chap. 20), 160 (book V, chap. 12).

70. “Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris”...: 177 (book I, chap. 58); Osma, Juan de. “Chronica latina...”: 38-39 (chap. 4), 41 (chap. 7) and 76 (chap. 32); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 249 (book IV, chap. 22), 258 (book IV, chap. 30), 261 (book IV, chap. 32), 274 (book IV, chap. 42), 276-277 (book IV, chap. 43-44), 304-305 (book IV, chap. 70) and 331 (book IV, chap. 91); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 172 (book V, chap. 23).

71. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi...*: 244 (book IV, chap. 19) and 254 (book IV, chap. 26); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 136 (book IV, chap. 14).



*obiit*.<sup>72</sup> This terminology is enriched sometimes with formulas such as *morte propria* accompanied by the verbs *mortuus*, *defunctus*, *obiit*, *discessit*<sup>73</sup> and the verbal phrases *uitam finiuit* and *seculo migravit*.<sup>74</sup> On rare occasions more poetic expressions are used to refer to death as the end of existence: *uite sue terminum dedit*, *uite termino consumato* or *cui regni et uite anni circulus finem dedit*.<sup>75</sup>

As we have seen, only in the case of two kings can we speak without a shadow of doubt of their access to Heaven after death: Alfonso II and Ordoño II, of whom the blessed destiny of their respective souls is explicitly stated.<sup>76</sup> However, in precisely these two cases, the sources (original and subsequent reiterations) mention nothing further regarding the deaths of these monarchs. A special mention should be made of Alfonso III, of whom the texts initially seem to indicate that he crossed the gates of Heaven<sup>77</sup> only to throw some doubt on this expression and create some ambiguity,<sup>78</sup> and of Sancho III in the Toledan chronicler's account, who is apparently described as successful in his destiny post mortem.<sup>79</sup>

However, both in the case of Alfonso I, the first monarch for whom a miracle at the hour of his death is attested,<sup>80</sup> and in more developed examples, such as Ramiro II or Fernando I,<sup>81</sup> and considered in historiography as the basis for drawing a parallel with the death of the saint, no mention whatsoever is made of the salvation of the royal soul. To the contrary: the kings themselves express aloud their fears and wishes for salvation, which points to the absence of certainty in this respect.

72. *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 149-150 (book III, chap. 1), 171 (book III, chap. 13), 178 (book III, chap. 21) and 180-181 (book III, chap. 23); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 305 (book IV, chap. 70), 308-309 (book IV, chap. 72), 320 (book IV, chap. 81), 338 (book IV, chap. 98) and 340 (book IV, chap. 101); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 150-151 (book V, chap. 2), 184-185 (book VI, chap. 6), 194 (book VI, chap. 13), 214 (book VI, chap. 29), 236 (book VII, chap. 14), 246 (book VII, chap. 23), 258 (book VII, chap. 36), 297 (book IX, chap. 15).

73. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 265 (book IV, chap. 35); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 150-151 (book V, chap. 2); *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 103 (book II, chap. 8), 106 (book II, chap. 13).

74. *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 102 (book II, chap. 6) and 106 (book II, chap. 14); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 123 (book IV, chap. 7).

75. Osma, Juan de. "Chronica latina...": 55-56 (chap. 20); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 332 (book IV, chap. 91); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 236 (book VII, chap. 14), respectively.

76. "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 466 (Alfonso II; *Chronica Albeldensia*, book XV, chap. 9); "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 422 (Alfonso II; *Rotensis*, chap. 22) and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 423 (Alfonso II; *Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 28); "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 432 (Ordoño I; *Rotensis*, chap. 28) and "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 433 (Ordoño I; *Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 28).

77. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Sampiro. Su crónica y la monarquía leonesa*...: 308 (chap. 15).

78. Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica*...: 36; *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 126 (book II, chap. 24); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 249 (book IV, chap. 23); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 144 (book IV, chap. 20).

79. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 236 (book VII, chap. 14).

80. "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 412-414 (*Rotensis*, chap. 15); "Chronica Adefonsi tertii"...: 413 (*Ad Sebastianum*, chap. 15).

81. *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 169-170 (book III, chap. 12); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 295-296 (book IV, chap. 60); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 193-194 (Fernando I; book VI, chap. 13); Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica*...: 53; Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Sampiro. Su crónica y la monarquía leonesa*...: 331-332 (chap. 53).



It is reductionist, therefore, to consider the ‘format’ used in the chronicles for the few exemplary deaths described therein as paradigmatic, despite the many parallels found in hagiography with regard to the death of saints.<sup>82</sup> This format comprises several elements (that do not always appear together), which as we have seen, are: (1) the death occurs in impeccable liturgical circumstances, in the presence of ecclesiastics and the imposition of a penance; (2) the “exaltation of the dispossession of the temporal”,<sup>83</sup> the renouncement of all things earthly; (3) the dying king serenely accepts his imminent death, implying his submission to the divine power; (4) a premonition of death is announced generally through some form of supernatural sign. Additionally, the death of a king incorporates a new element that would later become more commonplace in the narrations written in the twelfth century and, especially, in the thirteenth century: (5) the royal death causes unrest in the kingdom and sometimes in the natural environment.

Without intending to join the historiographical debate in this respect,<sup>84</sup> it seems sufficiently clear that, on the subject of death, the chroniclers, on attributing saintly traits to certain kings, contributed to strengthening the image we might call of monarchical ‘sacralization’.<sup>85</sup> They did not, however, advocate an explicit sacralization of kings that would lead to their involvement in the affairs of the kingdom after their death, but rather an “extension of certain divine prerogatives” that would be passed on to other royal members; this was, perhaps, a symptom of the stability and ideological soundness of the Castilian and Leonese monarchy.<sup>86</sup>

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82. Bishko, Charles J. “The liturgical context...”: 51-52; Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*: 79-130 and 301-309; Isla Frez, Amanacio. *Realezas hispánicas...*: 193. About medieval hagiography in the Iberian Peninsula, see Baños Vallejo, Fernando. *La hagiografía como género literario en la Edad Media. Tipología de doce vidas individuales castellanas*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1989; García de la Borbolla, Ángeles. *La “praesentia” y la “virtus”. La imagen y la función del santo a partir de la hagiografía castellano-leonesa del siglo XIII*. Burgos: Abadía de Silos, 2002; Velázquez, Isabel. *Hagiografía y culto a los santos en la Hispania visigoda. Aproximación a sus manifestaciones literarias*. Mérida: Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, 2007; Valcárcel Martínez, Vitalino. “Literatura hagiográfica hispano-latina de los reinos de León y Castilla en el s. XIII”, *Estudios de Latín Medieval Hispánico. Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Latín Medieval Hispánico (Barcelona, 2009)*, José Martínez Gázquez, Óscar De la Cruz Palma, Cándida Ferrero Hernández, eds. Florence: SISMELE – Galluzzo, 2011: 351-366; for the particular case of the *Chronicon mundi*, the *Historia gothica* and Saint Isidore’s figure, Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. “Formas y funciones de lo maravilloso hagiográfico en la ‘Historia de rebus Hispaniae’: el caso de san Isidoro”, *Pratiques hagiographiques dans l’Espagne du Moyen Âge et du Siècle d’Or*, Amaia Arizaleta, Stéphanie Jean-Marie, coords. Toulouse: Université de Toulouse-Mirail, 2005: II, 15-32.

83. Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*: 290-292.

84. Ruiz, Teófilo F. “Une royauté sans sacre: la monarchie castillane du bas Moyen-Âge”. *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 3 (1984): 429-453; Rucquoi, Adeline. “De los reyes que no son taumaturgos: los fundamentos de la realeza en España”. *Relaciones. Estudios de Historia y Sociedad*, 51 (1992): 55-80; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. *Fundamentos ideológicos...*: 60-78; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. *Fundamentos ideológicos...*; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. “La monarquía bajomedieval castellana ¿Una realeza sagrada?”, *Homenaje al profesor Juan Torres Fontes*. Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1987: II, 1225-1237; Nieto Soria, José Manuel. “Origen divino, espíritu laico y poder real en la Castilla del siglo XIII”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 27 (1997): 43-101; and Linehan, Peter. *Historia e historiadores...*: 413-429, among others, to have a global idea about the extent of the debate.

85. This term was coined by Nieto Soria, José Manuel. *Fundamentos ideológicos...*: 60-78.

86. Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*: 298; Isla Frez, Amanacio. *Realezas hispánicas...*: 191.





In the case of the few kings whose death is given a more detailed description, the expressions used are ambiguous and do not allow us to draw supernatural similarities between monarchs and saints. It is more appropriate to speak of similar discursive models that employ common propagandistic resources, but to claim sovereigns' sanctification after their death may be overstepping the line.

Charles J. Bishko pointed out the extant similarities between the death of Fernando I as recounted in the *Seminense* and the death of San Isidore of Seville according to his biographer, Redempto.<sup>87</sup> This account was further elaborated on by Lucas de Tuy, who inserted a miraculous apparition of the saint of Seville announcing to the monarch his imminent departure; this narration is in keeping with Lucas' fervent "partisanship" for his mother house<sup>88</sup> and by the Neogothicist will—especially in the case of the *Historia Seminense*—to link the (new) reigning house to the Gothic past.<sup>89</sup>

A further parallel is notable for its chronological proximity: the narration of Suger de Saint-Denis, at more or less the same date, of the death of Louis VI of France.<sup>90</sup> In this account, Louis VI, aware of his failing health, summoned the Bishop of Paris and the Abbot of Saint-Victor to hear his confession and to receive the viaticum;<sup>91</sup> he then knelt on the floor next to a cross drawn with ashes and, finally, *spiritum emisit*.<sup>92</sup> Most importantly, after his narration of the burial of the defunct king at Saint-Denis, the Abbot and chronicler states that *resurrectionis future consortium expectat, tanto sanctorum spirituum collegio spiritu propinquior, quanto corpore sanctis Martyribus ad suffragandum proxime sepultus assistit*.<sup>93</sup> As in the case of Fernando I (as well as Ramiro II), in the French case a desideratum was also expressed for the salvation of the royal soul after death; it would seem far-fetched to suggest a link between these two texts, although it is evident that, in León and in France during the first half of the twelfth century, similar narrative styles were in use.

At all events, the monarchs honoured with these characteristics—hagiographical parallels, ascent of the soul to Heaven—are clearly a minority and originate in ideological trends of the past that were continued while other forms were being developed for royal deaths. The Hispanic chronicles in the twelfth and thirteenth

87. Bishko, Charles J. "The liturgical context...": 51-52; Redempto's text edited in Redemptus Hispalensis. "Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi", *Scripta Renotatio librorum Isidori; Redempti clerici Hispalensis Obitus Isidori; a Isidori ab anonymo auctore exarata*, ed. José Carlos Martín. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006: 379-388.

88. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 294. Rivers of ink have been written about the Tudense's pro-leonese inclinations; see Linehan, Peter. *Historia e historiadores...*: 335-437 and Linehan, Peter. "Reflexiones sobre historiografía e historia en el siglo alfonsino". *Cahiers de linguistique hispanique médiévale*, 23 (2000): 101-104.

89. Isla Frez, Amancio. *Realezas hispánicas...*: 169-185, 190-193.

90. Suger. *Vita Ludovici Grossi regis*, ed. and trans. Louis Waquet. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1929: 274-287; Isla Frez, Amancio. *Realezas hispánicas...*: 180-183. About the French kings' death during the Middle Ages, see the reference work of Erlande-Brandenburg, Alain. *Le roi est mort...*: esp. 14-26.

91. [...] *confessionem repetit et exitum suum viatico Dominici corporis muniri deuotissime satagit*. Suger. *Vita Ludovici Grossi regis...*: 284.

92. Suger. *Vita Ludovici Grossi regis...*: 284.

93. "there he awaits the time to participate in his future resurrection, close to the spirits of all the saints, since his body is buried next to the martyred saints to benefit from their assistance". Suger. *Vita Ludovici Grossi regis...*: 287.



centuries tell us nothing of the possible destiny in the afterworld of the king's soul upon his death: the timid trend in the chronicling cycle of Alfonso III led to less sacralizing descriptions of death,<sup>94</sup> in strong contrast with neighbouring France where chroniclers at the turn of the thirteenth century affirmed that their sovereigns ascended after death *ad latitudinem celestis paradisi*<sup>95</sup> to rule together with the Almighty.<sup>96</sup>

By contrast, Castilian-Leonese kings appear to have died like good Christians and, no doubt, having received the sacraments; but that is all. The chronicles, including those decidedly partial to one or another monarch, mention nothing in this regard; the only information insistently repeated is the place of burial.<sup>97</sup> In this light, the texts seem to favour representing monarchs, at least at the time of their demise, in terms that are more in tune with secular references (grief of his entourage, the uncertain heading of the kingdom...) than with sacralization.

### 3.2. After death: the destiny of the kingdom

The chronicles did, however, continue to relate, with increased vigour on reaching the thirteenth century, what José Mattoso refers to as “cosmic perturbation”.<sup>98</sup> The king's death causes, according to the chronicles, severe uncertainty and despair across the kingdom. This is highly revealing of the chroniclers' political mindset, to which the monarchy and the stability it provided were essential to ensuring prosperity in the kingdom.<sup>99</sup> Indicators of a delicate, to say the least, political situation are the many passages in these chronicles recounting the lamentations among the people.

94. Without denying a sacralising residuum, I am inclined towards the opinion of those who do not identify any sanctifier elements in the Castilian-Leonese royal deaths; in that way is very fortunate the expression of the title of Menjot, Denis. “Un chrétien qui meurt toujours... ”.

95. Rigord. *Gesta Philippi Augusti*, eds. and trans. Élisabeth Carpentier, Georges Pon, Yves Chauvin. Paris: CNRS, 2006: 142 (about Luis VII).

96. [...] *spiritus aula / Fulget in angelica, ductore receptus eodem. / Idque patri patrum Dionysius ipse sequenti / Nocte revelavit, ne quis regnare Philippum [II Augustus] / Cum Christo dubitet, re tanto teste probata*. Guillaume Breton. “Philippidos”, *Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. Henri-F. Délaborde. Paris: Renouard, 1885: 371 (vv. 622-626). See Baldwin, John. *Philippe Auguste*. Paris: Fayard, 1991: 491-495 (original ed. 1986). Le Goff, Jacques. *Saint Louis*. Paris: Gallimard, 1996: 706-707.

97. About the Castilian-Leonese kings' burials and their ideological signifiacnce —subject which is not considered here—, see Arias Guillén, Fernando. “Enterramientos regios en Castilla y León (c. 842-1504). La dispersión de los espacios funerarios y el fracaso de la memoria dinástica”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 45/2 (2015): 643-675; Boto Varela, Gerardo. “Aposentos de la memoria dinástica. Mudanza y estabilidad en los panteones regios leoneses (1157-1230)”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 42/2 (2012): 535-565 and Boto Varela, Gerardo. “Panteones regios leoneses (924-1109). Concatenaciones dinásticas y discontinuidades topográficas”. *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 45/2 (2015): 677-713.

98. Mattoso, José. “O poder e a morte... ”: 415.

99. Rodríguez López, Ana. “Sucesión regia y legitimidad política en Castilla en los siglos XII y XIII. Algunas consideraciones sobre el relato de las crónicas latinas castellano-leonesas”. *Annexes des Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales*, 16 (2004): 34-40.



At the death of Alfonso VI, the people lamented the loss of their “shepherd” who led the kingdom: *flentibus cunctis ciuibus et dicentibus: “Cur pastor oues deseris? Nam commendatum tibi gregem et regnum inuadent enim cum Sarraceni et maliuoli homines”*.<sup>100</sup> Christians bewailed in a similar manner the loss of Alfonso I of Aragón: *Optime defensor, quos nobis dedisti defensuros? Nam regnum, quod tu eripuisti regia potestate de manibus Sarracenorum modo inuadent Moabites et nos sine defensore captiuabimur*.<sup>101</sup>

It is perhaps Jiménez de Rada who most effectively expressed this sense of loss at the king’s death when he relates the reactions provoked by the passing of Alfonso VIII:

*Et factus est luctus omnium et desolatio magnatorum, necnon et omnium populorum. [...] Omnes enim non tantum in suis, set in aliis Hispanie finibus efrenatis studiis et laxatis abenis licencie, quo libuit, abierunt et nil sibi retinerunt, cum tesaurus uerecundie amiserunt*.<sup>102</sup>

In short, the king’s death is shown as the disappearance of social order and of the stability and prosperity of the kingdom, a veritable catastrophe.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, it is likewise true that, despite the uncertainty caused by the royal death, no chronicler has conveyed signs of real chaos having broken out in the kingdom following these dramatic episodes. This may reflect a measure of robustness in the royal dynastic structure in León and Castile that was absent in other locations such as France, where the Capetian monarchy needed to set up a ceremonial apparatus to ensure the continuity of its monarchs.<sup>104</sup>

100. “All Christians lamented his death and said: ‘Shepherd, why are you leaving your sheep? Now, the Saracens and evil men will invade the kingdom [and attack] the flock entrusted to you’”. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronicon regum Legionensium*: 87-88; trans.: 181; also Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 308-309 (book IV, chap. 72) and Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 219 (book VI, chap. 34).

101. “Optimal protector, in whose hands have you left our protection? The kingdom that with your royal power you wrested from the Muslim grasp, will be immediately overrun by the Moabites and we shall be seized with nobody to defend us”. “Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris”: 177-178 (book I, chap. 60) (Translation: *Crónica del Emperador Alfonso VII...*: 82).

102. “And the people were disconsolate and the noblemen were orphaned, as were all the people. [...] It came about that, passions unrestrained and dissolute behaviour rife, everyone, not only on their lands but over all the lands of Hispania, set off in any direction they chose respecting nothing having lost the treasure of shame”. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia gothica*: 280; trans.: 329-330). Similarly, speaking of Alfonso VI’s death the Toledano adds: *In eius obitu exiuit latro, presumpsit predo, latuit pauper, conticuit clerus, luit incola, seuit hostis, fugit uictoria, creuit fuga, gladius in domesticos efferatur et patria exterminio preparatur, quolibet quod bonum erat in suis oculis faciente*. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 280 (book VIII, chap. 15) (Translation: Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de los Hechos de España...*: 329-330).

103. Mattoso, José. “O poder e a morte...”: 415; Guance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte...*: 301.

104. About the subject of dynastic stability in the kingdom of France, see Lewis, Andrew W. *Le sang royal. La famille capétienne et l’Etat, France Xe -XIVe siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1986; Pastoureau, Michel. *Le roi tué par un cochon*. Paris: Seuil, 2015.



### 3.3. 'Abominable' deaths: royal death as a critique

The chronicles studied in this article were produced mainly in the sphere of the court, and despite their more or less veiled defence of other issues of particular interest to the authors, they all coincide in considering the monarchy as the best possible form of government and, consequently, praise the majority of the kings populating their pages.<sup>105</sup> The reader, however, will find in the texts some examples of bad kings who for their deplorable rule, their vices and their sins eventually suffer a “bad” or “abominable” death.<sup>106</sup> In this way, true to their specular vocation, chronicling narratives showed the example that should not be followed. Deaths of this type were generally related to ‘impure’ diseases, violence or ignominy, and were sudden, putting an abrupt end to the life of those who did wrong during their reign. These deaths, in turn, were a “prologue to a poor memory”.<sup>107</sup>

Thus, Fruela II, *nichil memorabile iessit propter paucitatem dierum and Iusto Dei iudicio Festinus regno caruit*, so that *quia uiri impii non dimidiant dies suos, percussus lepra, unius anni et duorum mensium expleto circulo*.<sup>108</sup> The historiographical tradition in dealing with the death of Fruela II is not unanimous, and the cause of his death—though always viewed as divine punishment—shifted from *morbo proprio* (Sampiro, in the *Historia Silensis*)<sup>109</sup> to leprosy under the pen of Pelayo de Oviedo,<sup>110</sup> a tradition that was upheld in the *Naiarensis*, Lucas de Tuy and Jiménez de Rada.<sup>111</sup> After all, this disease was feared and generally considered to be a punishment of God.<sup>112</sup> Another

105. Without going further, the *Historia Silensis* appears to be a creation of a Leonese cleric which intention was to praise Alfonso VI (*Historia Silensis*...: 7); the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* does the same with Alfonso VII (“*Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*”...: 149); the *Chronica Naiarensis* pleads for a defense of Castile—probably sponsored by Alfonso VIII—(see Arizaleta, Amaia. *Les clercs au palais. Chancellerie et écriture du pouvoir royal (Castille, 1157-1230)*. Paris: SEMH-Sorbonne-CLEA, 2010: 110-126 and Le Morvan, Gaël. *Le mythe néo-wisigothique*...: 123-132); the *Chronica latina* was the work of Fernando III’s chancellor (again Arizaleta, Amaia. *Les clercs au palais*...: 134-139); Lucas of Tuy indicates in its prologue that its composition is due to a request from queen Berenguela (Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 4); and Jiménez de Rada dedicated his work to Fernando III (Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 3). It will be to long to enter in a so complicated issue; for an overview, see Martin, Georges. *Les Juges de Castille*... and Linehan, Peter. *Historia e historiadores*...

106. Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte*...: 289, and Guiance, Ariel. “Ir contra el fecho de Dios’: regicidios y regicidas en la crónica castellana medieval”. *História: Questões e Debates*, 41 (2004): 96-105.

107. Mitre Fernández, Emilio. “Muerte y memoria...”: 22.

108. “achieved nothing memorable in the emptiness of his days [...] by God’s fair judgement was denied a blissful reign”. Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon Mundi*...: 255-256 (book IV, chap. 28); “as wicked men do not reach half their time, smitten by leprosy he died after reigning for one year and two months and was buried unceremoniously”. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 148 (book V, chap. 1) (Translation: 191).

109. Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica*...: 49.

110. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Sampiro. Su crónica y la monarquía leonesa*...: 319.

111. *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 129 (book II, chap. 27); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 255-256 (book IV, chap. 28) and Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 148 (book V, chap. 1).

112. Mitre Fernández, Emilio. “La muerte del rey...”: 172 and Mitre Fernández, Emilio. “Muerte y memoria...”: 23; Guiance, Ariel. *Los discursos sobre la muerte*...: 82 and Guiance, Ariel. “«Ir contra el fecho de Dios»...”: 98-99. On the social and religious consideration of the leprosy in medieval times, see



monarch, Vermudo II, according to the original version by Pelayo de Oviedo, also died of gout as a divine punishment for his sins and *pro tantis sceleribus que gessit*.<sup>113</sup>

On other occasions the king died as the result of assassination, as was the fate of Fruela I, whose regicide was attributed in the chronicles to his responsibility for the death of his brother Vímara.<sup>114</sup> Sancho II of Castile was also murdered, although his case was more controversial as chroniclers have passed down an ambiguous portrait, describing him as easily influenced by hearsay, jealous of his siblings, spiteful, irate and responsible for several instances of bloodshed.<sup>115</sup> Other monarchs, however, such as Sancho I of León,<sup>116</sup> were also —according to the chronicles— murdered, but their deaths were not related to their generally positive political reputations.

Lastly, the king could encounter a violent death on the field of battle, viewed as the scenario *par excellence* for testing God's will, where the defeated merely confirmed to mortal eyes his fall from God's favour. Very few royal deaths in battle are narrated in the chronicles, indicating that kings seldom participated in the front line of combat;<sup>117</sup> but some are described as a “deserved” end for a monarch held to be a bad king in the chronicling tradition. Thus, García III of Pamplona died at the battle of Atapuerca fighting against his brother Fernando I, after an earlier attempt to kill him and starting a fratricidal war:

*Michi tamen uidetur magis pro mitigando frustrato facinore quam ut fratrem de infirmitate consolaretur Garsiam ad uenisse; quippe ut solus regno potiretur, non solum infirmitate fuisse detentum, uerum de hoc mundo funditus illium exisse desiderabat: ita habent sese regnum*

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Goudsblom, Johan. “Les grandes épidémies et la civilisation des mœurs”. *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 68 (1987): 5-6.

113. “the great crimes he committed”. Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronicon regum Legionensium*: 68-69 (Translation: Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Crónicas de los reinos de Asturias y León...*: 147-148). The *Chronica Naiarensis* also includes this episode but does not link it directly to Vermudo II's death (*Chronica Naiarensis...*: 142 [book II, chap. 34]). It is striking that the *Chronica* of Sampiro, the closest document to the narrated facts, doesn't mention at all this episode (Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 58); the rest of texts neither mention this detail but do include the impossibility of moving the coffin after his death and interpret that as a sign of God's will (Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 267 [book IV, chap. 36]; Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 161 [book V, chap. 13]).

114. The original story comes from the “*Chronica Adefonsi tertii*”...: 414; (*Rotensis*, chap. 16) it is omitted in the *Historia Silensis* and included in the *Chronica Naiarensis* (*Chronica Naiarensis...*: 104 [book II, chap. 9]). Other narratives, ad the *Chronicon mundi* or the *Historia Gothica*, do not link the murder with a divine punishment and instead point out the political logic of the death (Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 231 [book IV, chap. 9]; Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 122-123 [book IV, chap. 6]).

115. Even the “castilianist” *Chronica Naiarensis* gives that ambiguous image of Sancho II: *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 170-171 (book III, chap. 13), 171 (book III, chap. 14), 171-174 (book III, chap. 15), 174 (book III, chap. 16). The same happens with the chronicle of the Toledano: Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 194-195 (book VI, chap. 14), 195-196 (book VI, chap. 15), 198-199 (book VI, chap. 18). See Guiance, Ariel. “«Ir contra el fecho de Dios»...”: 101-103.

116. Astorga, Sampiro de. *Chronica...*: 56; *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 136 (book II, chap. 31); Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 264 (book IV, chap. 34); Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 158 (book V, chap. 10).

117. Baloup, Daniel. “Le roi et la guerre. À propos des idéologies royales en Léon en Castille (1140-1250)”. *Minorités juives, pouvoir, littérature politique en Péninsule Ibérique, France et Italie au Moyen Age: Etudes offertes à Béatrice Leroy*, Jean-Pierre Barraque, Véronique Lamazou-Duplan, eds. Biarritz: Atlantica, 2006.



*auide mentes. [...] Garsias deinceps acer et furibundus cepit occasiones belli aperte querere atque fraternum sanguinem sciens eiusdem fines quos attingere poterat hostiliter deuastare. [...] Porro Garsias rex ferox et animosus audita legatione nuncios e castris despecta fratris pietate exire imperat, hac statim sub inferendo minas eos cum sociis, qui pugne subierint, triumphato domino more pecundum se rapere in patriam dicit.*<sup>118</sup>

Alfonso I of Aragon is perhaps the other paradigm of a bad king killed in combat, in this case during the siege of Fraga and as punishment for the sacrilegious acts committed during his raids of Castile, although the texts differ over the exact circumstances of his death.<sup>119</sup> Monarchs such as Alfonso V, Vermudo III or the Infante Sancho (the son of Alfonso VI) are less obvious examples, since despite having died in battle they were not deemed bad rulers, and the chroniclers did not make use of the circumstances of their death as a moralising argument.<sup>120</sup> This is a clear example of the ambiguity that often appeared in the ideological discourse

118. "It seems to me, however, that García came to smooth over his frustrated criminal attempt rather than to console his brother in his sickness, as he not only wished him to be crippled by disease but that he should leave this world for ever, freeing him to take possession of the kingdom alone. Such is the meanness of in the minds of kings. [...] Ever since, García, cruel and full of wrath, openly sought opportunities to wage war on him and, thirsting for his brother's blood, devastated every frontier of his within reach. [...] King García then, furious and emboldened, after hearing the delegation, orders the messengers off his camp, thus scorning his brother's mercy and with threatening words tells them he will drag them to his homeland like lambs, along with their allies come to the battle, once he has vanquished their lord". *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 154 (book III, chap. 4), 154-155 (book III, chap. 5) (Translation: *Crónica Najerense*...: 161-162); see also Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 283-284 (book IV, chap. 50) and Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 187-189 (book VI, chap. 10). García has been also responsible for his mother, the queen, to be slandered, as tells the *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 151 (book III, chap. 2) and the Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 176-177 (book V, chap. 26).

119. The *Historia Gothica* (Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 224 [book VII, chap. 3]) claims that there died the Aragonese king, even though *si occisus inuentus fuerit, dubitatur*; the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, curiously although the iniquity that oozes against this king, does not kill him in the battle but after having fled, completely defeated and abandoned ("Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris"....: 176 [book I, chap. 56], 176-177 [book I, chap. 57]). See also Osmá, Juan de. "Chronica latina...": 38 (chap. 38), and Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 310 (book IV, chap. 73). See the hypothesis of a *chanson de geste* about this character in Salvador Martínez, H. *El Poema de Almería y la épica románica*. Madrid: Gredos, 1975: 62-63.

120. Alfonso V dies because of his imprudence exposing himself to the enemies' arrows during the siege of Viseo (Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronicon regum Legionensium*...: 71; *Chronica Naiarensis*...: 148 [book II, chap. 40]; Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*: 276 [book IV, chap. 43]; Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 168-169 [book V, chap. 19]). Vermudo II only appears under a slightly negative light in the *Chronica Naiarensis* (*Chronica Naiarensis*...: 152-153 [book III, chap. 3]) and the *Historia gothica*, both very pro-Castilian (see Martín, Georges. *Les Juges de Castille*...: 261-262; Bautista Pérez, Francisco. "Sancho II y Rodrigo Campeador en la 'Chronica naiarensis'". *e-Spania*, 9 (2009). 7 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/18101>>; Linehan, Peter. *Historia e historiadores*...: 340-342; Le Morvan, Gaël. "L'Historia de rebus Hispaniae de Rodrigue de Tolède: construction d'un pouvoir royal hispanique et total à travers le mythe néowisigothique", *La construction des images: persuasion et rhétorique, création des mythes, Actes du colloque de l'École doctorale IV de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), juin 2009*. Paris: Sorbonne, 2009; and Le Morvan, Gaël. *Le mythe néo-wisigothique*...: 101-132 and 294-303; Ayala Martínez, Carlos. "La realeza en la cronística castellano-leonesa del siglo XIII: la imagen de Fernando III", *Monarquía, crónicas, archivos y cancellerías en los reinos hispano-castellanos*, Esteban Sarasa Sánchez, ed. Saragossa: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2014: 269-272; on the contrary, in the Tuy, Lucas de. *Chronicon mundi*...: 281 (book IV, chap. 48) and the *Historia Silensis*...: 67 the death in combat of the Leonese is not related with any reprehensible action of his rule. The infant Sancho dies in the defeat of Uclés at the hands of the



of these authors, always quick to adapt historical circumstances to their moralising purposes but equally ready to pass up the opportunity when deemed inconvenient.

#### 4. The king's death: a moment of narrative and literary expression

The second section of this work seeks to analyse the death of kings through the chronicles from a perspective as yet little studied but which is of vital importance: the narration.<sup>121</sup> It is not without reason that, despite being considered historiographical in nature, the chronicles are above all literary texts with an internal textual logic, style and rhetoric of their own. These are an indispensable medium for conveying the narration and its underlying ideological messages.<sup>122</sup>

##### 4.1. Narrative logic: royal deaths as a time for recapitulation

*La mort était habituellement le moment où l'on cherchait les indices et les miracles par lesquels Dieu témoignait qu'il approuvait la vie du défunt;*<sup>123</sup> and, in the same spirit, was the moment seized by the chronicler to draft a brief portrait of the deceased monarch, extolling his past in a eulogy. This biographical review is perceived above all as the colophon to reigns described in some detail, but is also found in cases more

almoravids despite the attempts of his tutor to save his life (Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 216 [book VI, chap. 32]).

121. On that, see the interesting considerations of Spiegel, Gabrielle M. "History, Historicism...".

122. In this regard the works from the school of French hispanists are indispensable, among others: Martin, Georges. *Les Juges de Castille...*; Arizaleta, Amaia. "Imágenes de la muerte del rey..." and Arizaleta, Amaia. "Diffusion et réception des chroniques: 'Chronica Naiarensis, Liber regum, Chronica regum Castellae'", *Poétique de la chronique. L'écriture des textes historiographiques au Moyen Âge (Péninsule Ibérique et France)*, Amaia Arizaleta, ed. Toulouse: CNRS-Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, 2008: 107-134; Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. *L'Historia gothica...*; Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. "El prólogo de la 'Historia de rebus Hispaniae' de Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. Estructura y discurso", *Actas del XI Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval (Universidad de León, 2005)*, Armando López Castro, María Luzdivina Cuesta Torre, eds. León: Universidad de León, 2007: 713-720; Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. "L'Historia de rebus Hispaniae' de Rodrigue Jiménez de Rada: éléments d'une poétique". *Poétique de la chronique. L'écriture des textes historiographiques au Moyen Âge (Péninsule Ibérique et France)*, Amaia Arizaleta, ed. Toulouse: CNRS-Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, 2008: 135-152; Le Morvan, Gaël. *Le mythe néo-wisigothique...*; as well as Charlo Brea, Luis. "El latín del obispo de Osma", *Actas del II Congreso Hispánico de Latín Medieval (León, 1997)*, Maurilio Pérez González, coord. León: Universidad de León, 1999: 351-362; see also Gómez Redondo, Fernando. *Historia de la prosa medieval castellana. I. La creación del discurso prosístico: el entramado cortesano*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1998: 9-10 and 37-43 and Salvador Martínez, H. *El Poema de Almería...* It is true that the introductory chapter to most critical editions of the chronicles include a paragraph about the language and style of the chronicler, but for the most part the approach is merely philological and a deeper literary analysis is missing.

123. "Death was usually the time to seek for signs and the working of miracles through which God witnessed His approval of the life of the deceased". Baldwin, John. *Philippe Auguste...*: 491. On the connection between the moment of the death and the remembrance of the former life, see Aries, Philippe. *El hombre ante la muerte*: 111-159.



succinctly described: its purpose in all cases is to refresh the reader's memory and praise the deceased's most prominent virtues.<sup>124</sup> These reviews are nearly always positive, even when the chronicler held little esteem for the monarch in question.

A very well-known example is that of Alfonso I the Warrior, criticised throughout the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* but who, at his death, surprisingly receives a eulogy from the anonymous chronicler who states that *Post ipsum autem uel ante non fuit similis ei in preteritis regibus Aragonensium neque fortis neque prudens seu bellicosus sicut ipse*.<sup>125</sup> At all events, a royal death is a unique moment to determine the overall impression the chronicler holds of the king, independently of his earlier opinions.

An excellent example of this is found in the image given in the chronicles of the Castilian count Fernán González, the Infante Fernando or of Alfonso VIII, as well as of Queen Leonor of Castile. The first is described in the pro-Castilian *Historia Gothica* as *uir strenuus Fernandus Gunsalui comes Castelle moritur, qui in acquisitione et tuitione et dilatatione patrie utiliter et strenue et fideliter laborarat*.<sup>126</sup> The son of Alfonso VIII, for his part, mirrored his father's virtues and was *expectatio populorum; sic enim eum Dominus honestauerat ut etiam ab omnibus amaretur, et quod etas in adolescentibus non permitit, iam in ipso gracia dispensabat*.<sup>127</sup> The wife of the victor at Las Navas, in turn, merited a brief tribute to her virtues, being described as *pudica, nobilis et discreta*.<sup>128</sup> Alfonso VIII also received words of praise, for the manner in which *Sic enim strenuitas, largitas, curialitas, sapientia et modestia eum sibi ab infancia uendicarant*.<sup>129</sup>

However, there is no doubt that the chronicling paradigm for the funeral eulogy was written by Pelayo de Oviedo (and later imitated in the *Chronica Naiarensis*) for Alfonso VI, conqueror of Toledo. The Bishop of Oviedo, just before describing the miraculous announcement of the king's death, dedicates a paragraph to praising the many virtues and the excellent rule of Alfonso VI, who is portrayed as an ideal monarch, Catholic and capable of maintaining the justice and the peace:

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124. This happens, for example, with the reigns of Alfonso VI and Alfonso VIII and also with count Fernán González.

125. "After him or before, he was unequalled by any of the kings of Aragon, neither in courage, prudence or battling spirit". *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*....: 177 (book I, chap. 58) (Translation: *Crónica del Emperador Alfonso VII*...: 81).

126. "a valiant man, the count of Castile Fernán González, whose skill, courage and dedication had contributed to the emancipation, consolidation and enlargement of his *patria*". Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 160 (book V, chap. 12) (Translation: Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de los Hechos de España*...: 203).

127. "the hope of the people; for the Lord had honoured him to be loved by all, and that which is not yet bestowed on the adolescent by age, is already manifest through His grace". Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 258 (book VII, chap. 36) (Translation: Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de los Hechos de España*...: 305-306).

128. "modest, noble and discreet". Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 281 (book IX, chap. 1) (Translation: Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de los Hechos de España*...: 331).

129. "from childhood he had been known to possess courage, generosity, charm, wisdom and modesty". Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie*...: 280 (book VIII, chap. 15) (Translation: Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de los Hechos de España*...: 329-330).





*Iste Adefonsus fuit pater et defensor omnium ecclesiarum hispanensium, ideo hec fecit quia per omnia catholicus fuit. Tanto terribilis fuit ut omnibus maleagentibus que nunquam auderent parere in conspectu eius; omnes potestates nobiles et inobiles, diuites et pauperes, qui erant in suo regno, non auderent unus in alterum litem mouere, neque aliquid mali facere. Tanta pace fuit in diebus quibus ipse regnauit, ut una sola mulier, portans aurum uel argentum in manu sua per omnem terram Hyspanie, tam habitabilem quam inhabitabilem, in montibus uel in campis, non inueniret qui eam tangeret, uel aliquid mali ei faceret. Negociatores et peregrini transeuntes per regnum eius nichil uerebantur; non enim esset ausus quislibet, qui eis de rebus suis ualens etiam obulum auferret.*<sup>130</sup>

#### 4.2. Narrative structure: royal deaths as a textual caesura

The chronicles recovered an alleged past that was linked to the present thanks to the existence, historical or invented, of the legitimating tie of royal lineage. The genealogy of the reigning monarch reached back in the historiographical record, in a more or less eventful line that was lost in the mists of time and legend, ensuring continuity to the historical narration in which flowed a succession of rulers from a single family.<sup>131</sup>

In this constant sequence of kings and queens through time, the caesure caused by the death of a monarch and subsequent rise to power of another was a crucial moment in the narrative. Indeed, the event of a monarch's death was the cue to drawing a halt in the narration, giving it structural coherence by separating it into discrete textual units. Despite such explicit division into chapters being a relatively late invention,<sup>132</sup> it is a fact that previous historiographical compositions undeniably possess internal narrative coherence articulating the account according to the successive reigns.

This is notably appreciated in the *Historia Gothica*, as pointed out by Inés Fernández-Ordóñez, who states that, unlike the *Chronicon mundi* or the *Estoria of*

130. "This Alfonso was the fatherly defender of all the churches of Spain and so was above all a Catholic and the agents of evil dared not show themselves to him; the powerful, noblemen or not, rich or poor, never ventured to promote evil. Such orderly peace flourished in his reign that an unaccompanied woman, though she may be carrying gold and silver [could travel] across Spain finding in the valleys or mountains, in populated or empty lands, nobody to touch or harm her. Merchants and pilgrims travelling through the kingdom feared not from anyone attempting to rob them of their possessions, even for the value of an obolus". Oviedo, Pelayo de. *Chronicon regum Legionensium...*: 83-84 (Translation: *Crónicas de los reinos de Asturias y León...*: 179-180); also *Chronica Naiarensis...*: 179-180 (book III, chap. 23).

131. On the role played by genealogy in medieval historiography, see Duby, Georges. "Remarques sur la littérature généalogique en France aux XIe et XIIe siècles". Duby, Georges. *La société chevaleresque. Hommes et structures du Moyen Âge*, Paris: Flammarion, 1988: I, 167-180; Martin, Georges. "Linaje y legitimidad en la historiografía regia hispana de los siglos XI al XIII". *e-Spania*, 11 (2011): 3-26. 11 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/20335>>; and Aurell, Jaume. *La historiografía medieval. Entre la historia y la literatura*. Valencia: Universitat de València, 2016: 15-31.

132. In the Hispanic case it is possible to see it for the first time in the chronicle of Jiménez de Rada, as points out Fernández-Ordóñez, Inés. "La técnica historiográfica del Toledano. Procedimientos de organización del relato". *Cahiers de linguistique et de civilisation hispaniques médiévales*, 26 (2003): 187-216; see also Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. "L'Historia de rebus Hispaniae...": 149-152.



*España*, chronology does not feature in Jiménez de Rada's work as *un procedimiento fundamental de articular formalmente el relato*. In the *Chronicon mundi*, by contrast, the purpose of mentioning the Hispanic era is *resaltar la unidad narrativa que compone cada reinado*, treating these as if they were annals in which the date is always the header at the beginning of each reign and never elsewhere, and further serving as a narrative and formal division within the text.<sup>133</sup>

In any case, on considering the texts of the chronicles studied on a narrative level, a more or less explicit structural pattern is visible based on the rhythm of regal succession. Whereas historiographical texts of an older or more primitive nature, such as the annals or the chronicons, were articulated exclusively on the passage of years and the information they contained was presented in the form of ephemerides, the genealogical format soon took precedence and conditioned, to a large extent, other higher historiographical forms such as the chronicle or the history.

Finally, it should not be overlooked that many royal deaths not only caused a caesure but put a "full stop" to the chronicle in question: this is the case in the Asturian chronicles, the *Chronica* by Sampiro, the *Historia Seminensis*,<sup>134</sup> the *Chronica* by Pelayo de Oviedo, and in the *Naiarensis*.

### 4.3. *The death of the king as a moment for rhetorical and literary exhibition*

Despite the fact that a majority of twelfth and thirteenth century chroniclers did not stand out for their skill in producing literary or florid Latin, and that their works were often dry and repetitive accounts,<sup>135</sup> the death of a king always encouraged a wider array of rhetorical and literary resources, however modest these may be, within the overall narrative.<sup>136</sup> In fact, A. Arizaleta has shown that, despite its propagandistic intentions and historical claims, historiographical literature in the period under study "was bordering on fiction, for a number of reasons: one of these, perhaps the most obvious, being the presence of wondrous elements in recounting the death of kings. Another, among others, was the quest for an impossible suspense". Thus, in the *Chronica latina regum Castellae*, Juan de Osma "seems comfortable composing elegies" in recounting the death of the Infante Fernando of Castile; and

133. "a fundamental procedure for the formal articulation of the narration"; "to highlight the narrative unit created by each reign". Fernández-Ordóñez, Inés. "La técnica historiográfica...": 217.

134. In fact the text is unfinished but Fernando I's death certainly seems to be conceived to close, if not the chronicle, at least one of its great narrative sections.

135. A good example of that is the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, which has not a great literary value with its style *fluido y preciso, aunque sin garra* ("fluid and precise, but without punch") and is *aburrida y pertenece a una categoría inferior en el arte de escribir* ("boring and belongs to a lower category in the art of writing"). Pérez González, Maurilio. "Introducción". *Crónica del emperador Alfonso VII*, ed. Pérez González, Maurilio. León: Universidad de León, 1997: 13-19.

136. In this sense, one may wonder if the authors inspired themselves in other texts (liturgical or classical) in order to show off a more flourished Latin in these very occasions. An issue remains pending for a future work.



“alternates moral considerations and an abundance of quotes from the Bible with a major stylistic work” in his account of the death of his father, Alfonso VIII.<sup>137</sup>

*Post hoc elapsis uix XVcim diebus predictus Ferrandus, filius regis, flos iuuenum, decus regni, patris dextera, uite sue, correptus acuta febre, in Matrit terminum dedit. Emarcuit cor regis, obstupuerunt principes eius et nobiles terre, populi ciuitatum extabuerunt, sapientes exterriti sunt animaduertentes quod ira Dei et indignatio decreuerat terram ponere desolatam. Nusquam luctus aberat, seniores consperserunt capita sua cinere, induiti sunt omnes saccis et cilicio, uirgines omnes squalide, facies terre penitus inmutata est.*

*Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat, non illustrent eam sidera celi, que ausa fuit tanto sole mundum priuare. Flos regni fuit, decus mundi, omni morum probitate conspicuus, iustus, prudens, strenuus, largus, ex nulla parte maculam in gloria sua posuit. [...] Causam doloris perpetui, quamdiu mundus iste durauerit, habet Castella, uno et eodem tempore tanto domino et rege tantoque uiro et tam famoso uasallo ipsius orbata.<sup>138</sup>*

The two pairs of epithets *flos iuuenum* / *decus regni* and *flos regni* / *decus mundi* appear as concise formulas that might easily be confused with those found in the lament for the king sung at Las Huelgas during his burial.<sup>139</sup> Both texts also enumerate the virtues of these two personages, in a predominantly elegiac tone: a stark contrast is established that, at the same time, serves as the logical link between the plethora of positive traits that distinguish Alfonso VIII and his son, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the lamentations, grief and uncertainty gripping the kingdom after their death.<sup>140</sup>

At the same time, writing of the death of the heir to the throne was, as it is today,

137. Arizaleta, Amaia. “Imágenes de la muerte del rey...”: 301-306. See also Arizaleta, Amaia. “La ‘Chronica regum Castellae’: aledaños de la ficción”. *e-Spania*, 2 (2006). 7 September 2018 <<https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/517>>; on the “flirting” of Juan de Osma with fiction in various episodes of his chronicle.

138. “Barely a fortnight hence, Fernando, the king's son, flower of youth, glory of the realm and the right hand of his father, consumed by a burning fever, died in Madrid. The king's heart was dismayed, the princes and nobles of the land were stricken, the people in the cities fell silent and wise men were in terror, believing that God's wrath and indignation would raze the earth. Lamentations did not cease, the elders covered their heads in ashes, robed and girded in sackcloth, young maids fasted and the face of the Earth was deeply altered”. Osma, Juan de. “Chronica latina...”: 55-56 (chap. 20) (Traducción: *Crónica latina de los Reyes de Castilla...*: 86-87); and “May the darkness take possession of that night! May the stars light not the sky, that dared to deprive the world of a Sun so great! Flower of the kingdom, pride of the world, famed for his goodness and his customs, just, prudent, courageous, splendid; never did he soil his glory. He departed on the eight day of the feast of Saint Michael; don Diego had died at the time of feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Castile, deprived at once of so great a ruler and king, and of so great a man and vassal of the king, has reason to mourn this perpetual loss for as long as this world endures”. Osma, Juan de. “Chronica latina...”: 68-69 (chap. 28) (Translation: *Crónica latina de los Reyes de Castilla...*: 103).

139. *Rex obiit et labitur/ Castellae gloria./ Allefonsus rapitur/ ad celi gloriam./ Fons aret et moritur/ donandi copia./ Petit celestia/ a cuius manibus/ fluxerunt omnibus/ largitatis maria*; it is also similar with the *Poema de Benevivere*, composed at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and in which Alfonso VIII is greatly praised. Arizaleta, Amaia. “Imágenes de la muerte del rey...”: 306 and Arizaleta, Amaia. *Les clercs au palais...*: 248-249.

140. Arizaleta, Amaia. “Imágenes de la muerte del rey...”: 305-306.



*garantía de éxito público. Sabía Juan que era éste un episodio que iba a gustar a sus oyentes; puso pues en práctica su savoir-faire para componer párrafos en los que predomina no ya la ficción, sino el puro placer de escribir y de crear imágenes dramáticas. La función informativa ha sido disimulada bajo los ropajes de las funciones conativa y poética.*<sup>141</sup>

In a nutshell, as pointed out by Amaia Arizaleta, chroniclers, as the men of letters and learning that they were, were veritable “goldsmiths” of history<sup>142</sup> who, as well as recounting the past in their texts, did not waste an opportunity to display their literary skills.

Moreover, the *Historia Gothica* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada is a clear exception to this rule. In addition to being a historiographical work, the chronicle written by the Archbishop of Toledo is a true work of literary narrative<sup>143</sup> rich in clearly fictional episodes in which style takes precedence over content. Some royal deaths are the most propitious occasions for historians to indulge in their literary talents and novelist skills, recounting the sad episode in a narration seasoned lavishly with emotion. In the case of Alfonso VIII the contrast found in Juan de Osma is repeated: on the one hand, the enumeration of the deceased’s virtues; on the other hand, the grief, despair and chaos and the gloom cast over Castile.<sup>144</sup>

A final example may help to underscore how death—in this case, not of a king, but that of Munio Alonso, Governor of Toledo under Alfonso VII— provides an occasion for greater literary creativity and expressiveness in a text as drily written as the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*.<sup>145</sup> The anonymous chronicler bitterly laments the death in combat of the Castilian nobleman and, having described the pain and mourning of his family and friends, puts these words of grief in the mouths of the Toledan people:

*O Munio Adefonsi, nos dolemus super te. Sicut mulier unicum amat maritum, ita Toletana ciuitas te diligebat. Clipeus tuus nunquam declinauit in bello et hasta tua nunquam rediit retrorsum; ensis tuus non est reuersus in anis. Nolite annuntiare mortem Munionis Adefonsi in Corduba et in Sibia neque anuntietis in domo regis Texufini, ne forte letentur filie Moabitarum et exultent filie Agarenorum et contristentur filie Toletanorum.*<sup>146</sup>

141. “guarantee of public success. Juan knew that this episode would please his audience; he therefore put into practice his *savoir-faire* to compose paragraphs in which prevailed not only fiction, but also the sheer pleasure of writing and creating dramatic images. The informative function was concealed under the trappings of conative and poetic functions”. Arizaleta, Amaia. “La ‘Chronica regum Castellae’...”: 22.

142. Arizaleta, Amaia. *Les clercs au palais...*: 235.

143. Jean-Marie, Stéphanie. “El prólogo de la *Historia...*”: 189-268 makes a magnificent literary study of the prologue of the *Historia gothica*.

144. Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 280 (book VIII, chap. 15). Something similar—but less developed— happens with the death of the infant Fernando of Castile (Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo. *Historia de Rebus Hispanie...*: 258 [book VII, chap. 36]).

145. Pérez González, Maurilio. “Introducción”: 13-19.

146. “Oh, Munio Alfonso, we suffer for you. Just as a wife loves her husband, so did the people of Toledo love you. Your shield never hesitated in battle and your spear never turned back; your sword always achieved victory. Do not announce the death of Munio Alfonso in Córdoba or in Seville, nor in the palace of King Texufin, lest the daughters of the Moabites rejoice, the daughters of the Hagrenes be overjoyed



Prominent in these words is the comparison between a widow's love and the love of the city of Toledo while the personification of his arms serves to exalt his valour in battle. The contrast between the assumed exultation among his Muslim enemies and the sadness and desolation he leaves in the Castilian city affords great literary dramatism to this episode, the colophon to the tragic end of a genuinely *romanesque* hero.<sup>147</sup>

To sum up, and although many of the chroniclers were not especially skilful in Latin, and lacked literary aspirations, an occasion such as the death of a king always gave rise to a display —however small— of style. The importance of the royal figure and many-faceted consequences of its loss were excellent opportunities for dramatism and lamentations, and the greater the literary capacity of the chronicler, the more forceful the impact on his audience.<sup>148</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Throughout these pages I have endeavoured to provide an overview of the image passed down in the chronicles of royal deaths while, at the same time, seeking out the discursive and ideological threads that are repeated over time. The evolution of chronicling narrations of the deaths of sovereigns in the Castilian-Leonese environment during the period spanning the twelfth and thirteenth centuries appears characterised by a growing de-sacralization of the moment of passing in favour of a more 'secular' approach, with greater emphasis on the political future of the kingdom. Nevertheless, for the majority of monarchs the texts provide details only sparingly, rendering any attempt at generalization or defending the existence of a chronicling model for royal deaths unwise. It is, however, certain that individual authors had their own motivations for their writings, generally relating to their ecclesiastical see, which in some cases undoubtedly influenced emphasis being placed on the death of one or another monarch, and in particular, on the monarch's place of burial. One aspect that is beyond any doubt whatsoever is the narrative and literary function of the death of kings in the texts of the chronicles. A most propitious opportunity, therefore, for narrative-building and the creative use of expressive and conative resources, the death of a monarch is key to the literary analysis of the chronicles.

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and the daughters of Toledo be saddened". "Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris"....: 236-237 (book II, chap. 89) (Translation *Crónica del Emperador Alfonso VII...*: 122).

147. "Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris"....: 235-236 (book II, chap. 87-88).

148. Again see Arizaleta, Amaia. "La 'Chronica regum Castellae'...": 22.

