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POLITICAL THOUGHT AND POLITICAL MYTH IN LATE MEDIEVAL  
NATIONAL HISTORIES: RODRIGO SÁNCHEZ DE ARÉVALO (†1470)

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**Abstract**

By the end of the fifteenth century, most European realms had created their national pedigrees in the form of written histories. The result often took the form of schematic pre-histories or ethno-historical origin myths, with original heroes who are as eponymous as they are historically implausible. But the last medieval century was also a time of constitutional experimentation, debate and consolidation, a process sometimes described as a development from a ‘crisis of monarchy’ to its ‘triumph’. This article explores the role of the national-historical writing in such debates of constitutional ideals and suggests that their naïve representations of political origins might be better understood in the context of learned political speculation.

The discussion departs from the example of the Castilian author, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo (†1470), a papalist and monarchist, who wrote historical works alongside his political-theoretical production. In the *Compendiosa Historia Hispanica*, Arévalo explored the origins of Castile, departing from the Gothicist tradition that was then in vogue. A parallel reading of this text with his apology for monarchy, *De origine ac differentia principatus imperialis et regalis*, illustrates how his representation of the origins of Castilian kingship related to the current legal, philosophical and theological accounts of the origins of lordship, i.e., to the authoritative political languages of his day. The historical and politological discourses of these two works in fact supported each other in Arévalo’s effort to sustain the royal prerogatives of Henry IV of Castile. The example of Arévalo recalls the importance of the world of political speculation that contextualized

the reading and writing of national-historical tales and made them politically meaningful:

Then the Prince said, ‘How does it come to be, Chancellor, that one king is able to rule his people only royally, and the same power is denied to the other king? Of equal rank, since both are kings, I cannot help wondering why they are unequal in power.’ (Fortescue, *Praise of the Laws of England*: 18)

The Prince in John Fortescue’s (†1477) dialogue had learned that the king of England could not change the law by will. This restraint did not apply to kings of certain other nations and the Prince, understandably, wondered why. Fortescue’s reply – given in his *Praise of the Laws of England* and *The Governance of England* – was historical in nature. The constitutional variety among nations was a result of the circumstances of their first institutions. Authors of national histories such as the Castilian Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo regularly narrated these events of political beginnings, often in the form of ethno-historical origin myths that disappoint our sense of historical credibility. But national histories can be appreciated in other terms than those of positivist historiography. They were political narratives, keyed to the moments at which they were compiled, and they aimed to engage with the political identities of their readers. They legitimized certain political ideals and rejected others.

By the end of the fifteenth century, most European realms had created their national pedigrees in the form of written histories (Kersken 1995). This was also a time of constitutional experimentation, debate and consolidation. J. H. Burns described the development of constitutional thought in this period as a trajectory from a ‘crisis of monarchy’ to its ‘triumph’ (1992: 1-15). The issue concerned the government of the Church as much as the secular realms and the authors discussed principles applicable to them all. But the main focus of these authors was the constitutional norms of their respective polities. What was the role of national-historical writing in such debates of constitutional ideals? Can their naïve representations of political origins be better understood in the context of learned political speculation? The example of Fortescue suggests that scholastic political speculation and historiography could complement each other. He fleshed out his English ideal – the ‘political and regal’ regime – with the narrative of Geoffrey of Monmouth: the ancient

English constitution took root with the arrival of Brutus. Some other realms had come about by subjugation under a conqueror, but the Trojan band was more virtuous and 'mansuete' than the earlier inhabitants of the land and they took Brutus for king and laws of their own by free will (Fortescue 1997: 19-22, 85-87). In Fortescue's reading, the Galfredian tradition established an account of a distinctly English constitutional identity licensed by ancient history. Based on the example of his contemporary, Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, the following pages discuss how historians engaged in debate about the constitutional identities of their polities.

Fortescue adopted a constitutionalist ideal for England. Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo appeared in the monarchist camp for Castile. Spain, united at the end of the fifteenth century, presents an iconic example of the 'triumph of monarchy' discussed by Burns (1992). But the path to this consolidation was far from straight. In 1465, for instance, the prospects of Henry IV of Castile were bleak. To top his difficulty in producing an heir he was deposed in effigy at an astonishing event in Avila and thus faced with a full scale baronial rebellion. The ritual staging of the *Farce of Avila* may have been unique. But the event addressed the constitutional issues that concerned most European polities of the century. The Castilian grandees, who kicked the royal dummy to the ground, in their manner conversed with the question raised by the many late-medieval depositions: who may legitimately dethrone a king and on what grounds (McKay 1985)?

The war after Avila was not fought exclusively with military means. Arévalo was a tenacious and academically able defender of Henry. An absentee holder of various Iberian bishoprics, a diplomat and publicist who pursued most of his career at the papal court, Arévalo engaged with the problem of monarchy in both its secular and ecclesiastical guise and in historical works as well as politological (Trame 1958; Marino 2003). In his papalist writing, he refuted the constitutionalist threat of conciliarism. But it is two results of his defence of Castilian kingship that will be discussed below. Arévalo is noted for his treatise on the origins of kingship and empire (*De origine ac differentia principatus imperialis et regalis*, written c.1467 and printed 1521), a work that Burns considered a stepping stone in the development of absolutist ideas in Spain (1992: 78-85). But Arévalo's Spanish history, the *Compendiosa Historia Hispanica* (printed 1470), was also essentially a royalist effort. While *De origine* refuted the

constitutionalist view of Henry's opponents in general and abstract terms derived from theology, law and philosophy, the *Compendiosa Historia* depicted the origins, and continuity of Castilian kingship. The two works constitute parallel discourses, one historical and the other politological, applied to the same monarchist end. They present a convenient material for exploring the politological contexts of national-historical writing and its function at the heart of constitutional debate. The following pages discuss how Arévalo represented the origins and continuity of kingship – essential aspects of the national-historical genre – starting with the *Historia* and continuing with *De origine*.

#### **Majesty from Athanaric to Henry IV**

Arévalo turned to historical writing late in his career. But obviously his conception of the new field owed much to his interests in law and his previous concerns with pedagogy and politics. His aim, as stated in the preface of the *Historia*, was to teach by historical example, and Tate (1960) suggested that his tendency to explode the narrative with interpretative comments was a result of his canonist training. For writing Castilian history, there were clear-cut patterns to follow. The national histories of fifteenth-century Castile combined Gothicist ethno-history with a focus on the Castilian monarchy and its role on the Peninsula. The authors drew on a tradition of 'Spanish' history that developed long before the political unification and from the understanding that kingship in Castile represented a continued legacy from the illustrious Goths (Kersken 2003). Arévalo's *Compendiosa historia* epitomized this historiographical tradition by adding a fourth book to the thirteenth-century *Historia Gotica* of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada. 'What one Bishop Rodrigo so usefully began', Arévalo mused in his preface, 'another of the same name and profession will complete' (Arévalo 1470: 3r). The project involved bringing the royal genealogy from the Goths up to date with Henry IV; the narrative ends with the year 1469.

In the preface of the *Historia*, Arévalo explicitly addressed the king in order to explain the immediate relevance of the early Gothic history of the realm. The matter was of fundamental importance, Arévalo insisted, because: 'it is from them that your majesty and ancestry derive' (gothice gentis originem qui in Hispania regnarunt. Ex quibus tua magestas tuique progenitores ortum trahitis; Arévalo 1470: 2r).

Henry's *magestas* – the Roman-law term for his sovereign dignity – originated with the Goths who had settled in Spain to rule. In other words: an historical scrutiny of the Gothic origins of Castilian kingship would elucidate Henry's contemporary prerogatives.

Arévalo's notion that an historical examination was useful for a constitutional inquiry was current among late-medieval political thinkers. Medieval writers often considered the problem of political obligation – why some should govern and others obey – as a problem of the origins of government. They asked how it all began and, like Fortescue, quite often considered the possibility of some kind of original pact to explain the present political condition (Tierney 1982: 34-39). The Knight of the fourteenth-century *Songe du Vergier* presents a more concrete manifestation of this attitude: 'He who wishes to know what power a king has in temporal matters and how he receives it', the Knight suggested, 'should first consider and examine, if this is possible, how the kingdom was from the beginning ordered and established. And if this first ordinance and institution can be found it should be preserved'.<sup>1</sup> The first constitution, in this view, provided an unalterable gold standard for the present polity. But how did royal majesty begin in Castile? How was it handed down to Henry IV?

Arévalo clearly had the ambition of setting the ancient constitutional example on record. But beyond his introductory remark about the origins of the king's *magestas* this goal had no consequence for the formal aspects of the text. It was enough to conform to established historiographical practice. In medieval national-historical writing, two narrative grids in particular embodied a sense of unity and continuity between the present polity and its past: royal genealogies and ethno-historical origin myths. The blood line of kings constituted living links that explained how various rights devolved historically through the instrument of succession (Spiegel 1983). And the origin myths provided political communities with the unifying idea of a common past, linked to a specific territory (Reynolds 1983). Since Arévalo continued the *Historia Gothica*, he inherited the genealogical and Gothicist project from his forerunners. Gothicism, however, was a different matter in the fifteenth century from what it had been to earlier Iberian historians. It had become a cultural capital, exploited in Castilian diplomacy. Alfonso de Cartagena, who as Tate (1960) argues was a great influence on Arévalo, had explored the political utility of Gothicism at the Council of Basle. On the occasion

of a quarrel of rank at this assembly, he claimed that the antiquity of the Castilian crown established precedence over the English. But Cartagena also applied Gothicism against the Portuguese, in the race for North African and Canarian domains. In this case the argument hinged on the idea that the full territorial extent of Visigoth power had devolved to the crown of Castile (Tate 1959). Specifically new, of course, were the additional domestic challenges to Henry IV and his need of support. Arévalo maintained that his Spanish history was politically useful: the *Compendiosa Historia* could impress the papal curia or the imperial court (Arévalo 1470: 3r).

Henry IV, to no surprise, comes out well from the pages of the *Compendiosa Historia*. Not least, the martial valour of the king is lauded. But Arévalo's most important service to the king was not this display of royal adulation but rather that he applied the constitutive elements of the national-historical genre, the origin myth and the royal genealogy in support of Castilian kingship. Gothicism gripped Arévalo's historical imagination. But the *Historia* is concerned primarily with royal genealogy, not with the descent of the people of Spain. It was, however, a challenge to create an uninterrupted genealogy from the Goths for the Castilian crown. The Muslim conquest and the demise of the Gothic kingdom, which made Roderick the 'last king of the Goths', posed a significant obstacle to the construction of a Spanish royal line of such longevity. The predicament was not unique to Castilian chroniclers. Arévalo overcame it with a Spanish cast of the so-called 'reditus regni ad stirpem Caroli Magni'. The author of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* had argued that Hugh Capet's usurpation did not permanently sever the French royal line from its Carolingian and Trojan origins, because Louis VIII could boast descent from Carolingians through his mother (Spiegel 1971). Arévalo chose a different strategy to fix the broken line. He explained that Pelayo, 'king of Asturias' and the first king after the collapse of the Visigoth kingdom, was in fact a brother of Roderick. What changed after the 'last king of the Goths', then, was the use of this title, not the royal stock. After Roderick, Spanish kings were no longer 'kings of the Goths', but of Asturias, Leon or Castile. Nevertheless Castile could boast of a succession 'within the same line, house and race', from Athanaric to Henry IV, a dynastic endurance that Arévalo considered difficult for other nations to beat (Arévalo 1470: 45r).

Arévalo's *reditus regni* aimed to secure the continuity of rule from the Goths to the present Castilian kingship. The continuity of independent royal rule was a concern for all national historians. The clash of national-historical narratives at Basle, where Alfonso de Cartagena took part, in fact confirms that such claims of dynastic longevity actually mattered as a political currency. But the foundation of this ancient Castilian kingship was also an important concern to Arévalo. The Castilians were not alone in claiming descent from the Goths. At Basle the representative of the Scandinavian monarchy, Nils Ragvaldsson, had argued that the Goths had their origins in the North (Losman 1968). Arévalo in fact agreed with this view (Arévalo 1470: 17r). The Castilian Gothicism was more historical in nature than the Swedish vagaries and hence also a more problematic material for a political origin myth meant to represent the very beginnings of the realm. The Goths were rather late arrivals to the Peninsula. Arévalo acknowledged that there were kings in Spain before them, even before Hercules fought Geryon. There were the ancient Spaniards, the *prisci Hispanici*, whom Arévalo praised in the first part of the *Historia*, but also other migratory peoples, not to mention the Romans. The Romans – usurping tyrants, in the view of Arévalo – were expelled by the Goths. But Arévalo explains that also the Vandals and Suevi eventually relinquished their lands. Why did he not adopt these peoples as Castilian forebears and thus project the national pedigree even further into the past? Arévalo excludes these peoples from the continuous history of Spain for political-philosophical reasons rather than historical. Their rule, he stated, was based on oppression rather than voluntary submission. Previous tyrants, *ipso facto*, were not legitimate rulers and could not serve as the basis for a succession of legitimate government. Where Arévalo gave information about the antecedents and multiplicity of realms on the Peninsula he also reminded his readers that ‘even though different [rulers] ruled in the different Spanish provinces before the realm of the Goths ... their rule was violent and not voluntary. The creation of realms was not legitimate at this time.’<sup>2</sup>

The idea that tyranny disqualified rulers from legitimacy was conventional. But the notion takes on an important function in Arévalo's historical narrative. The identity of Gothic history with Castilian/Spanish was not just recognition on Arévalo's part of a royal succession from the Goths to the modern kings of Castile. Henry IV

derived his *magestas* from the Goths not because they were the first arrivals or conquered the land, but because their coming to power in Spain was just. The Castilian political origins that Arévalo presented in the *Historia* are not primarily historically defined but the result of political-philosophical considerations or norms, crucial to his construction of a continuous Spanish history evolving from the Goths.

### **The origins of monarchy**

The *magestas* that Arévalo traced up to Henry IV derived from the justice of the rule of the Goths. This much is made clear in the *Historia*. But Arévalo does not linger on the details of how this rule began. Nor does he present a theoretical account of its constitutional qualities, at least nothing of the kind Fortescue's political treatise offered for the British Trojans. But the *Compendiosa Historia* fits into a broader historical-political vision of Castilian monarchy. *De origine ac differentia principatus imperialis et regalis*, Arévalo's treatise on the origins of kingship and empire, in fact provides a theoretical context for his historiographical support of Castilian monarchy. The origin of kingship, as the title makes clear, is a central concern of this work.

*De origine* was probably written in 1466–1467 to gain Henry sympathies at the papal curia. Paul II would have had every reason to be pleased with the work, since Arévalo avowed that only the pope had the right to discipline a king. But papal supremacy is not a central theme in *De origine*. The full title of the work – ‘On the origins and difference between imperial and royal rule and of the antiquity and justice of each of them and by what the one exceeds over the other and by who and for what causes kings may be corrected and deposed’ – defines Arévalo's method of defining royal authority by contrast to that of the emperor. To refute old-fashioned notions of imperial supremacy may seem like a roundabout way to confront the aristocratic challengers of Henry after Avila. But this was a traditional route among jurists for discussing royal prerogatives (Canning 2005: 464–469). It also appeared in the second of the *Siete partidas*, a central text for royal ideology in Castile.

Arévalo's explicit ambition with *De origine* was to prove that the rule of hereditary kings is ‘more ancient, more just, and more commendable’ than that of emperors, who rule by virtue of election, and he set out to prove this point with philosophical, juridical and Scrip-

tural authorities (Arévalo 1521: 7r). Some princes, Arévalo explained, are given to their realms through election, while others receive their realms through heredity. To Arévalo the essential distinction (first made at 13r-15v) between these two types of lordship was legal-philosophical: the authority of the elected type was founded on positive, civil law, while hereditary lords rule by the sanction of natural law. Kings or princes of the first type are not real lords ('*veri domini*'), but administrators or governors. These domains do not belong to their princes ('*tales principatus non sunt in bonis principum*') and cannot be transferred by them. Arévalo later explains that this type of lordship comes about when a sovereign community ('*comunitas non recognoscens aliquem in superiorem*') transfers its power to a particular incumbent. In this manner they create a lord by civil law. But to explain how these two types came about Arévalo reverted to historical or meta-historical example. His paradigmatic historical example of the lesser type of lordship was that of the appointed emperors of the Romans.

Arévalo's real interest however lay in the exposition of the case of natural lords ('*naturales domini*'), where rule has been conferred exclusively to a particular lineage and through legitimate succession, and the realms and their rights belong to the princes who may transfer them to their heirs.<sup>3</sup> The epithet 'natural' was applied to favour hereditary rulers in contemporary political discourse as when the French in 1403, after the death of mad King Charles VI, were called to declare loyalty to Dauphin Louis, their '*droit souverain et naturel seigneur*' (Krynen 1982). But natural lordship was also part of an older Castilian tradition. Georges Martin (2006) has discussed the use of the concept by the Castilian historians of the mid thirteenth century. Among these authors natural lordship had feudal connotations; the term appears to be used in these narratives to negotiate issues of interpersonal faith between king and vassals. But Arévalo adapted this concept to a political ideal that had surpassed such feudal restraints and to a theoretical context that had been partly inaccessible to his mid-thirteenth forerunners: Aristotelian politics.

The natural lordship of Arévalo's monarch is passed down by heredity. Heredity assumes that there exists an established lordship that can be transferred. How did it all begin? The Aristotelian notion of the polity as natural to man obviously gave no historical guidelines. But Aristotle gave more concrete historical pointers when he dis-

cussed the origins and continuity of different constitutions. Arévalo assumed an historical process where authority was first conferred to a certain royal stock. He pressed his philosophical, juridical and Scriptural sources to supply narratives of this kind. His first example of the origins of natural lordship refers to Aristotle's account of how kingly rule might appear where there is a man who has benefited the people with his particular skills and under whom they agree to be ruled.

According to the Philosopher in *Politics* Book V kingship begins by natural law in the following manners. First, by way of some benefit rendered by a capable man to a certain country. For he bestowed some benefits to that country, either while he invented some art, as Saturn who invented agriculture, or while through his talents, virtues and riches or power he guarded and defended them from enemies, or otherwise because of it gained victory, then those of that province accepted him as king and because of the aforementioned benefits accepted his son and descendants and thus, bit by bit, by custom they became inclined to voluntarily subject themselves to those of his race, as the Philosopher says in Book III of the *Politics* that what is according to inclination is voluntary and natural ...<sup>4</sup>

In the fifth book of *Politics*, which Arévalo referred to, Aristotle mentioned historical chiefs (for instance Codrus and Cyrus) who had saved their peoples from being enslaved or gained new territories for their people. These men were made kings because they had benefited the people. But Arévalo also had Book III of *Politics* in mind. There Aristotle accounted for the five different types of kingship. One of these types originated in heroic times, an age when the original rulers afforded such benefits to their people. They had served the people through arts and arms, gathered them into a first community or procured land for them. The people voluntarily subjected themselves to these men and their rule was made hereditary. Arévalo talked about the subjection under the heirs of these heroes as a natural inclination of the people, acquired by habit. This monarchist interpolation of Aristotle's account and other details of Arévalo's discussion, such as the reference to Saturn, derive from Peter of Auvergne's enthusiastic commentary on *Politics* (In *Politic. Continuatio*, lib. 3. 13-16). The monarchic slant of Peter's commentary has been discussed by Thomas Renna (1978).

Arévalo made the point that this heroic origin of kingship was founded on natural law. He shared the idea that hereditary rule was

based on some more fundamental law (if not natural at least the derived form of *ius gentium*) with other late medieval royalist authors, for instance Marinus of Caramanico (Canning 2005: 464-69). Arévalo's second example of how kingship could begin by natural law fused the speculations on heroic origins with discourse on the natural origins of property rights, originally derived from Roman law (Tierney 1997: 143):

There is also another way that royal rule originates or begins naturally or by way of natural law. It is clear that natural law advances the edict that things that are previously the property of no one, are granted to the occupant. By this precept, someone seizes a certain part of land or province and distributes boundaries as territory markers. Then some other dwellers arrive who inhabit that place, and in this manner they become subjects of him who first seized it. Now, these dwellers have to recognize him as lord and superior and in this manner royal rule originates by natural law and the law of peoples...<sup>5</sup>

These natural manners of foundation of kingship, Arévalo explained, conformed to Aristotelian notion that it is natural for man to live in society to ensure he has the necessities in life. There is a similar impetus, he concludes, to constitute royal lordship in order to be defended by this prince from enemies and live in the king's peace.<sup>6</sup>

Arévalo's apology for monarchy harmonized the legal-philosophical and moral-philosophical authorities he brought to bear on the problem. But scriptural sources could also be summoned to account for the royal character of the first political societies. Originally Arévalo here referred to Genesis: God himself carried out the roles of king and judge over human subjects. But then He gave the earth to the human community. However, since the communal ownership that first was at hand engendered discord, God wished that things 'should cede to the occupant' (*occupanti concederentur*) and that therefore 'what the foot of man trod should be his'. With this, people began to set up distinct lordships and establish realms ('*inceperunt dominia distinguere et regna constitui*'), from which Arévalo concluded that 'it is clear that kings were obtained by the precepts of God and divine law' (Arévalo 1521: 19r).

Aristotle and his commentators, the learned law and Scripture provided authoritative accounts of the origins of lordship. They offered generally applicable theoretical considerations of what constituted the foundation of just rule, but also stories compatible with historical

narration. How did Arévalo's history of the Castilian realm conform to these stories? He referred, in fact, to his historical work and supplied *De Origine* with a 'brief but truthful account' about the liberation of Spain by the Goths and their continued rule up to the present:

Then the Spaniards who could not suffer the recklessness of the Romans seized the opportune moment and, with auxiliary forces from the Vandals, Alans and Sueves, recuperated most of Spain. Thus parts of Spain were Roman, part Alan and part Sueve and occupied under the tyrannical and violent rule of each of them until the famous and noble forces of the Gothic people – who knew that it was a precept of the most high to liberate those who suffer injury and violence – expelled the said Alans and Sueves and finally Romans with force and arms from Spain and happily liberated it from their yoke. ... After the kings of the Goths had wandered the whole world they became Spaniards by residence and ruled there and rule today, not by the title of Goths but of Spaniards ...<sup>7</sup>

The heroic past of kingship, theorized in Aristotle's *Politics*, was an historical reality in Spain, where the Goths had benefited the people by liberating them from the Roman yoke. The heirs of these heroes, whom Arévalo suggested that the inhabitants of the Peninsula should feel naturally inclined to obey, had in fact continued in heroic style. Leading the *reconquista*, the Spanish kings had procured new land for their people: 'The kings of Spain, who without the help of the emperors, with their own blood and sweat, and many dangers, labours and expenses acquired realms and provinces occupied by enemies and infidels'.<sup>8</sup>

### **Conclusion**

John Fortescue informed his readers that the constitutional variety at hand among the nations was the result of the historical circumstances of their first institutions. It was the task of the authors and compilers of national histories, like Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, to narrate these events of political beginnings. The result often took the form of schematic pre-histories or ethno-historical origin myths, with original heroes who are as eponymous as they are historically implausible. But national histories can be seen in a broader context of political literature and constitutional debate. The example of Arévalo recalls the importance of the world of political speculation that contextualized

the reading and writing of these tales and made them politically meaningful. Arévalo explored the origins of Castile, departing from the Gothicist tradition that was then in vogue. Far from a naïve representation of the origins of Castilian kingship, however, his narrative arguably related to the current legal, philosophical and theological accounts of the origins of lordship, i.e., the authoritative political languages of his day.

A scrutiny of the works of Arévalo is a convenient way of clarifying the presence of this political context of national-historical writing, since he wrote both historical and political-theoretical works that addressed the same topic of monarchy. The parallel reading above of two of them – the *Compendiosa Historia Hispanica* and *De origine ac differentia principatus imperialis et regalis* – suggests that the historical and political discourses of these two works supported each other in Arévalo's effort to sustain the royal prerogatives of Henry IV of Castile. In *De origine*, Arévalo discussed the origins of monarchy in general. But he used the philosophical, legal and scriptural traditions showcased in this work to define and defend the particular *magestas* of the king of Castile. Arévalo achieved this transfer from the general to the particular by applying his political languages to create historical discourse. To be of use for the kings of Castile, the Aristotelian notion of original voluntary submission or the Roman-law theory of original natural acquisition had to be supplemented by an historical vision that confirmed the antiquity of the realm, the legitimacy of its foundation and its uninterrupted royal succession. Arévalo fleshed out this vision in the *Historia Compendiosa*. He also referred to this historical account in *De origine* and made sure to repeat the gist of it in the form of a 'brief but truthful account' of how the Goths liberated Spain from the tyrannical yoke of Alans, Sueves and Romans, to become Spaniards and 'happily rule there today'. Arévalo's king is a natural king in the sense of one who governs with the title of natural law. The origin of the king's authority was based on the precepts of this law and the mode of its transfer, heredity, was in accordance with it. National history was a fitting medium for this apology of monarchy, charting the royal genealogy from the just origins of the realm until the present king.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Songe du Vergier*: I, LXXVIII, 3. English translations in this article are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Arévalo 1470: 20r: ‘Sed iam libet ut redeamus ad res hispanias & brevi deducamus ortum & initium regnorum et regum Hispanie post miseram eius cladem. Illud tamen presupponendam est quia licet diversi ante regnum Gothorum in diversiis Hispanie provinciis regnerunt ut supra dictum est quia tamen illorum principatus violentus fuit & non voluntarius, erectio regnorum pro eo tempore non fuit legitima, cepit enim ab eventu feliciore nam potentior regnabat. Secus autem post cladem Hispanie quo tempore per legitimas successiones & iustos titulos erectio facta est ut statim dicemus.’

<sup>3</sup> Arévalo 1521: 13r-v: ‘Contingit autem quod regna conferuntur regibus ut in illis regnis ubi non nisi de certo genere personarum & de certo stirpe & per legitimam successionem talia regna eisdem regibus dantur & non aliis quia ita a principio subditi voluerunt et consenserunt aut quia aliqui de illo genere primo illam patriam occuparunt ac ab hostibus defenderunt & in illa habitantibus alia beneficia contulerunt ... taliter quod reges effecti sunt naturales domini et reges de iure naturali, quo casu talia regna & ius illorum certo modo sunt in bonis talium regum. Nam transferunt & transmitterent talia regna ad illos de stirpe sua. Cum sive de iure naturali & gentium ... quia dilatio hereditatum & successiones sunt de predicto iure naturali, quod quis habet ex successione habet a natura ...’

<sup>4</sup> Arévalo 1521: 14v: ‘Iure autem naturali secundum philosophum in V Politicorum regnum habuit originem modis sequentibus. Primo propter beneficium impensum ab aliquo potenti et ipso viro alicui regioni, nam quia talis potens contulit aliqua beneficia illi regioni aut quia invenit sibi aliquam artem sicut Saturnus qui invenit agriculturam aut quia suo ingenio, virtute ac divitiis vel potentia tutavit et defendit illam ab hostibus vel alias pro illa habuit victoriam tunc illi de provincia receperunt eum in regem et propter beneficia predicta receperunt filium et descendentes et sic paulatim per consuetudinem inclinati sunt voluntarie subditi illis de genere suo ... nam ut ait philosophus tertio politicorum illud quod est secundum inclinationem est voluntarium et naturale ...’

<sup>5</sup> Arévalo 1521: 15r: ‘Item alio modo regnum habuit originem et exordium naturaliter sive iure naturali. Manifestum est enim quod iure naturali edictum processit quod res quae in nullius bonis erant occupanti concederetur. Quo precepto aliquis occupavit aliquam partem terre aut provincie assignavit confines in signum territorii deinde venerunt aliqui incole qui locum illum inhabitaverunt et sic facti sunt subditi ei qui primo occupavit, isti ergo sic inhabitantes habent recognoscere istum in dominum et superiorem et sic iure naturali et gentium principatus regalis habuit originem ...’

<sup>6</sup> Arévalo 1521: 15v: ‘... sic etiam habet naturalem impetum ad constituendum principatum regale ut per talem principum possint deffendi ab hostibus et impugnantibus ut pacifice in unitate vivant quod per regem fit.’

<sup>7</sup> Arévalo 1521: 54v: ‘Hispani igitur proterviam Romanorum non ferentes captata temporum opportunitate per auxilia Vandalorum et Alanorum ac Svevorum magnam Hispanie partem recuperarent. Itaque Hispaniam partim Romani, partim Alani, partim Svevi iuxta cuiuslibet potentiam tyrannice et violenter occuparunt donec inclita et nobilis militie Gothorum gens non ignorans summi dei esse preceptum libera eum qui iniuriam et violentiam patitur predictus Alanos, Svevos et demum ipsos Romanos vi et armis ab Hispania expulit et de iugo eorum foeliciter liberavit. ... Gothorum reges

postquam pene totum orbem peragrarunt habitatione et incolatu Hispani effecti in ea regnarunt et hodie feliciter regnant non sub Gothoum sed Hispaniorum titulis ...'

<sup>8</sup> Arévalo 1521: 55r: 'Reges Hispaniarum qui sine imperatorum presidiis et auxiliis proprio sanguine et sudore et multis periculis laboribus et expensis regna et provincias ab hostibus et infidelibus occupata acquisierunt ...'

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