

IB History HL

History Internal Assessment

To what extent was Enrique IV of Castile's reputation as "an enemy of Christians" rightly asserted?



Fig. 1 Sainz, Francisco. *Enrique IV de Castilla*, 1848.

Date Submitted: September 16th, 2022

Word Count: 2193



Section 1: Identification and Evaluation of Sources

This investigation explores the question: to what extent was Enrique IV of Castile's reputation as "an enemy of Christians" rightly asserted. Appropriate question. Could be slightly rephrased

The first source for evaluation is *Crónica de Enrique IV* by Alfonso de Palencia. It's **relevant** since it's a contemporary chronicle depicting the king's personality and religious policies. The source's **origin** is **valuable** because Palencia's role as a royal secretary enabled him to offer well-informed, first-hand observations of Enrique's reign. However, this **origin** is **limited** since Palencia was in the rebel band, acting as Isabella's ambassador to the court of Juan II of Aragon, during the Castilian War of Succession. The author's strong political commitment contributes to a hostile view of Enrique.

The second point contradicts the first, so only one valid idea



Relevance

Palencia states in the prologue that his chronicle's **purpose** is to reveal "the truth of the turpitude of Enrique's reign." This **primary purpose** of documenting the events during Enrique's rule is **valuable**. Records of the king's policies and actions would indicate his religious preferences. **However**, the source's **underlying purpose** of extolling Isabella's rule leads to an exaggerated portrayal of Enrique's character. By magnifying Enrique's religious laxity or even evidence of heresy, Palencia glorifies Isabella's "renewal" of the Castilian kingdom.

Again. Good on limitations but undermines the value

The **content is valuable** as it demonstrates the arguments Enrique's contemporaries made to attack Enrique's religious impiety. It includes descriptions of Enrique's meek response to the *Reconquista* and festivals with Muslim favorites. However, it's **limited** since Palencia distorts Enrique's religious policies. For example, he accuses Enrique of keeping Moorish favorites when they were converted *guardas moriscos* inherited from Juan II.

VO

LO

The second source is *Enrique IV and the Crisis of Fifteenth-Century Castile, 1425–1480*

Relevance



by William D. Phillips Jr. It's **relevant** to my investigation as it offers a retrospective analysis of Enrique's political decisions, including his religious policies. The source's **origin** is **valuable** as Phillips is the director of early modern history at the University of Minnesota. His other publications, *A Concise History of Spain* and *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus*, further indicate his specialty in Spanish history. **However**, as Rycraft points out, Phillips conducted his research (in 1978) when key studies on local politics in Enrique's reign weren't yet finished for Phillips to incorporate the findings to contextualize Enrique's religious policies.¹

VO

LO

The source's **purpose** is **valuable** because Phillip aims at revising Enrique's ill reputation. Consequently, he identifies biases in the contemporary portrayal of Enrique's religious unorthodoxy. **Nevertheless**, this revisionist **objective** leads to over-assertiveness in rejecting defamatory comments. To illustrate, Phillips outright dismisses Palencia's questioning of Enrique's religious preferences as "misinformation" without evaluating the actual content of his work.

Not Explained

LP

The **content** is **valuable** as it synthesizes archival data, unofficial primary sources like traveler's diaries, and secondary research to provide a variety of perspectives on Enrique's religious preferences. **However**, Phillips generalizes contemporary chronicles as propaganda. Thus, analysis of key texts such as chronicles by Diego del Castillo and Pulgar are omitted.

Limited VC

Idea not Finished

¹ Rycraft, Peter. "Reviewed Work(s): Enrique IV and the Crisis of Fifteenth-Century Castile, 1425 - 1480 by William B. Phillips." *Wiley*, vol. 66, no. 218, 1981, pp. 500-01.

Section 2: Investigation

In Spanish Chronicles, the reign of Enrique IV (1454-74) is almost universally considered the most disastrous, and the man himself Castile's most enigmatic ruler. Among the grievances towards the king were his embrace of Muslim culture and the question of his Christian orthodoxy. Records advanced by such contemporary key figures as Palencia and Fernando Del Pulgar point towards Enrique IV's lax Christianity, failure to prosecute the Granadian War, and excessive favor for Muslims. In *The Travel of Leo of Rozmital*, such charges accumulated into naming Enrique as "an enemy of Christians."² Most historical interpretations in the last hundred years perpetuated the judgments of contemporary chroniclers, pointing towards Enrique's unusual "maurophile tendency."³ Recently, revisionist attempts are made to view Enrique in a different light. When put in context with Iberia's long-standing cultural hybridity and the political maneuvering of his successors, Enrique's policies towards Muslims manifest minimal disparity from his predecessors. Accusations of excessive Muslim favoritism are, to a considerable extent, products of propagandistic construction.

Palencia's *Crónica de Enrique IV* is an extensively quoted primary source to support Enrique's pro-Muslim attitudes. It emphasizes Enrique's supposedly Moorish tastes: "even in his dress and in his gait, in his food and in his habit of reclining at the table, and in other secret and more indecent excesses, he had preferred the customs of the Moors to those of the Christian." Enrique's infatuation with Islam extended to his inability to conduct an effective war against Granada: He went to siege Granada "more to behold that city than to combat it." He also refused

² Tetzl, Gabriel. *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital*. Translated by Malcolm Letts, e-book ed., vol. 108, Hakluyt Society Publications.

³ MacKay, Angus. "The Converso Predicament." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 35, 1985, pp. 159-79.

to conduct the war by destroying Granadan crops and orchards.⁴ However, Palencia's pronounced anathema for Enrique hints at the source's hyperbolic nature. He associated the king with the plague in the opening pages and perpetrated the record with dramatic commentaries and mockeries (referring to the king as "monkey"). It should also be noted that much of Palencia's records are part of a political campaign to legitimize Isabella's rule. As Elizabeth Fehfeldt contends, Isabella painted "an image of her reign that frequently capitalized on the presumed shortcomings of the preceding rule of her half-brother."⁵ The Palencia's "heretic" portrayal of Enrique is an antithesis to Isabel's self-presentation as a pious Catholic monarch. Therefore, while Palencia's chronicle offers evidence for Enrique's excessive embrace of Muslims, those evidence suited a defamatory purpose. Perspectives

Limited evaluation

Beyond Isabel's chroniclers, the evidence of travelers' accounts helped solidify Enrique's reputation as a maurophile king. Gabriel Tetzl, traveling in the retinue of the Bohemian nobleman Leo of Rozmital, passed through Castile in 1466 or 1467. He left a marked impression of the king's "heathenness": "The old King has many at his court and has driven out many Christians and given their land to the heathen. He eats and drinks and is clothed in the heathen manner and is an enemy of Christians."⁶ However, Phillips usefully contextualizes Tetzl's account to show how the Castilian succession conflict influenced him. Tetzl's lengthy and generally accurate account for the dethronement at Avila offers strong indications that he was convinced and sided with the rebel polemics. The account also contradicts other travelers' views Issues around integration

⁴ Palencia, Alfonso De. *Crónica de Enrique IV*. Edited by Antonio Paz y Meliá, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles 257. Madrid: Kivademeira, 1913.

⁵ Fehfeldt, Elizabeth A. "Ruling Sexuality: The Political Legitimacy of Isabel of Castile." *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 53, 2000, pp. 31-56.

⁶ Tetzl, Gabriel. *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital*. Translated by Malcolm Letts, e-book ed., vol. 108, Hakluyt Society Publications.

Historians who relied heavily on the chronicles repeated the concerns of the contemporary authors. Townsend Miller's *Henry IV of Castile*, dealing almost exclusively with the political history and scandals of the Castilian court, contends that Enrique "lay ... painfully open ... to a charge of heresy." He "chose essentially not to conquer Muslim territory."⁷

Description of perspectives

However, to revisionist Barbara Fuchs, Townsend's work "implies long-standing, inexorable Christian-Muslim hostility, which in reality was not yet fully developed."

No Evaluation

First, the influence of Muslim customs is evident in Enrique's predecessors and successors. To illustrate, Carmen Bernis's study of Isabel's wardrobe shows that many of her clothes and accessories, entirely acceptable and fashionable in Castile, were in Muslim style. Some were even decorated with Arabic script.⁸ The new emphasis on hybridity in the work of art historians such as Cynthia Robinson and Leyla Rouhi takes the question of the *Mudejar* or "hispano-Moorish" style from architectural history to analyze Castilian costume, language, and furnishings. They argued that all these evince the lasting, if varied, effects of al-Andalus on the new Christian polity.⁹ Enrique's widely criticized Muslim favorites - *Guarda Morisca* (who were, in fact, converts to Christianity) – were also a tradition inherited from Enrique's father.¹⁰ Thus, Enrique's was not unique in his adoption of Muslim cultures.

Idea

Evidence

Some evaluation

Second, Enrique's indecisive Granadian campaigns also mirror his predecessors. Phillips argues that the extensive evidence for peaceful interactions compels us to reexamine the perilous borderlands featured in official and literary accounts. While chronicles and legends composed

⁷ Townsend, Miller. *Henry IV of Castile: 1425-1474*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972.

⁸ Carmen, Bernis Madrazo. *Indumentaria española en tiempos de Carlos V*. Madrid: CSIC, 1962.

⁹ Robinson, Cynthia and Leyla Rouhi, eds. *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile*. Boston: Brill, 2005.

¹⁰ Echevarría, Ana. *Knights on the Frontier: The Moorish Guard of the Kings of Castile (1410-1467)*. Translated by Martin Beagles, e-book ed., Medieval and Early Modern Iberian World.

for noble audiences were ideological tools to present a hostile image of Islam, the hallmark of Christian-Muslim relations was healthy competition, not inevitable hostility. From El Cid onward, the Castilian kings had never felt the need for an all-out onslaught against the Muslims. Muslims were men whose lands could be conquered when convenient but could serve equally as sources of tribute or trading partners. Adhering to this belief served as the basis for the “unspectacular” policy Enrique followed toward Granada. Swift military actions were only taken when mutual agreements fell apart, such as Enrique’s campaign against Malaga when the Granadian leader Sa’d reneged on his tribute agreements.

Evidence
but no
evaluation

Furthermore, Barbara Fuchs contends that Enrique's tolerance for Muslims cannot be used to brand him as a bad Christian. “He was conventionally pious, and his distaste for bloodshed indicates that he was much closer to the tenets of Christianity than some of the leading churchmen of his day.”¹¹ Enrique’s recorded speeches include the usual expressions of Christian belief. Like all medieval kings, he founded monasteries: two in Segovia-Santa Mariá del Parral and San Antonio – and San Jerónimo del Pasco in Madrid. He also made some twenty-five grants to religious institutions for repairs and new buildings, bestowing privileges such as permission to hold markets on them. Therefore, there was no contradiction between Enrique’s Moorish-derived practices, which characterized much of Spain in the period, and allegiance to Christian dogma.

Counter with
some
evaluation

Nevertheless, we should acknowledge the limitations in justifying Enrique’s “pro-Muslim” attitudes. The existing chronicles, with diverse motivations for writing about the king, is to some degree in harmony with the others in their critique. Diego del Castillo (the king's own

¹¹ Fuchs, Barbara. "Mimesis and Empire: The New World, Islam, and European Identities." *Cambridge University Press*, 2001.

chronicler) and Pulgar (often praised for his air of impartiality) also included remarks on the king's unusual Muslim taste, like Palencia. The *Coplas del Provincial* (c. 1465), and the *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, written sometime after 1465, both circulated anonymously and engaged in defamatory rhetoric against the king during his own reign.¹² In addition, while official chronicles well serve the period, other documentation is scarce and incomplete. Fires in the alcázar of Madrid and the chancellery of Valladolid destroyed many important sources.¹³ We have almost no personal letters from the king or his retinue and scarce direct quotations. Indeed, there is abundant evidence that Isabel conducted a campaign of historical revision. But due to insufficient unofficial records and the consensus of contemporary chronicles, suspicions of Enrique's unorthodoxy couldn't be fully eradicated.

Some
evaluation

Upon evaluating historical records and modern research, in most respects, Enrique was merely implementing Muslim policies and adopting Moorish customs that had characterized his predecessors. Politically motivated contemporary sources intentionally created differences, but there is little evidence that Enrique was unique in his cultural choices. Historians still face difficulties separating fact from fabrications due to the availability of sources, but Enrique's reputation as an "enemy of Christians" deserves at least partial rehabilitation.

Weak conclusion
but consistent with
evidence
presented

Section 3: Reflection

This investigation helped me gain insight into the challenges faced by early modern historians when interpreting controversial figures and the ethics of revisionism.

¹² Castillo, Diego del. *Crónica de Enrique IV*. Translated by Aureliano Sánchez Martín, Universidad de Valladolid, 1994.

¹³ Warner, Byron H. III. "Centers of Marginality in Fifteenth-Century Castile: Critical Reevaluations of Enrique IV De Trastámara, Leonor López de Córdoba, and Alfonso de Cartagena." *The University of Georgia*, 2010.

Challenge

One challenge is discerning facts from fiction. The early modern period is served well by chronicles but lacks other unofficial sources for verification. Chronicles of controversial royal personages are fused with legendary or morally didactic storytelling. There's a union of Enrique's character with the Christian narrative of destined redemption: Enrique's "betrayal" of Christianity anticipates the exalted emergence of Isabel as a savior to reclaim "Christian purity." Overlooking the literary quality of Castilian chronicles could result in works such as Miller's. He's criticized for perpetuating unsubstantiated, melodramatic royal scandals. Aware of such indistinguishability between history and fiction, I became hesitant to draw conclusions. However, I came to realize that the uncertainty doesn't diminish the value of contextualizing Enrique's ill-reputation with the political atmosphere, cultural practices, and an awareness of the literary nature of chronicles. To come to the fairest possible speculation for Enrique's character, contemporary chronicles and historiographies' biases must be analyzed and compared with available primary sources.

Good
link

When evaluating the limitations in the revisionist approach to understanding scandalous figures, I also come to understand the role of the modern historians themselves as authors—rather than objective observers— as well as the responsibility and challenges this entails. Negative assessments of Enrique's reputation naturally invite revisionist interpretations. His image fits into the archetype of a monarch falling victim to the character massacres of his predecessors, waiting to be "rehabilitated" by modern historiography. A recent historiographical trend develops assuming Enrique's religious impiety as Isabella's propaganda. These assumptions led historiographies to disregard the questionings of the king's religious preference during his own reign. In this sense, the revisionist historiographies are also, to a degree, an

angled characterization rather than objective evaluation. I've started my research aligning with the revisionist approach. I've drawn a list of hypotheses, such as adherence to the culture of *Convivencia*, to explain Enrique's pro-Muslim attitudes. Reflecting on this process, I realized that I've made assumptions and sought evidence to support Enrique's victimhood. When reassessing the criticisms surrounding ill-reputed figures, revisionists need to minimize pre-assumptions to achieve a fair appraisal.

I think this is a very
good point

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