

Article from the *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, ed. Wayne Dynes (New York: Garland, 1990).

Note: no footnotes could be published with this encyclopedia article. Also, the diacritics needed for accurate transliteration from Arabic were not available.

Juan II of Castile; Enrique IV of Castile. The most famous homosexual relationship in Spanish history is that between Juan II (1405–1454) and his older lover Álvaro de Luna (c. 1390–1453), who shared a bedroom for years. The king is remembered as a great patron of literature, who sponsored the birth of Castilian lyric poetry, until that time missing from the culture. He is also remembered for his choice of Álvaro de Luna to take over the tiresome business of running the country. Luna has long been recognized as one of the best administrators Spain ever had, and because of his dramatic fall from favor and public execution he became a well-known figure in both poetry and drama. The story of Álvaro de Luna was a covert way for later authors, such as Tirso de Molina, to deal with the topic of homosexuality.

The love between Juan and Álvaro, for which there are many sources, is worthy of a novel as well. The relationship began when the king was 3, with the appointment of Álvaro as his page (*doncel*). The bond which quickly emerged between them was so strong that those hostile said the king was victim of an *hechizo* or enchantment; this in fact became a euphemism in Spain for “inappropriate” sexual desire. When the young king was 7, his mother exiled Álvaro and kept the king virtually a prisoner, a period that ended only with her death six years

later. Juan and Álvaro were immediately reunited, and Álvaro, a brilliant conversationalist, was the favorite of many court ladies. He is also the author of one of the earliest and most balanced Spanish defenses of women against misogynist charges.

Save for a later period when the king was again prisoner and Álvaro exiled, which was intended to end their relationship, Juan and Álvaro remained together for thirty-five eventful years. They struggled together against a hostile aristocracy, sometimes fleeing together from superior force. The end came with Juan's remarriage after his first wife's death; his new wife, mother of the prudish Isabella the Catholic, was able to force the dismissal and then the execution of Álvaro. The king died a year later.

The homosexual tastes of Juan's son Enrique IV (1425–1474) have been dealt with more openly. His reign was much more chaotic, and he seems to have suffered from a disease which affected his personality. Enrique did not have a governor with the talent of Álvaro de Luna and was unable to meet the challenges from the aristocracy. His marriage with his first wife Blanca was unconsummated and annulled; Enrique's impotence was explained as enchantment. After remarriage, a major successorial and political issue arose concerning the legitimacy of his daughter Juana, widely believed to be the daughter of the court favorite Beltrán de la Cueva. Enrique was dethroned in effigy as "puto," and during the latter part of his reign was almost without authority. A kind, cultured, but sick and weak man, like his father he enjoyed hunting expeditions, which apparently served as cover for homosexual activity. Juan II and Enrique IV stayed on comparatively good terms with both their Jewish subjects and the Islamic kingdom of Granada. Enrique in particular had a

Moorish guard—the last Spanish ruler to do so until Franco—and gave other evidence of sympathy toward Spain's non-Christian cultures.

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Bibliography. Nicholas Round, *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Álvaro de Luna* (London: Tamesis, 1986), is a good introduction to the vast literature on Luna. Didier T. Jaén, *John II of Castile and The Grand Master Álvaro de Luna* (Madrid, 1978), translates relevant excerpts from the chronicles. On Enrique IV, Daniel Eisenberg, "Enrique IV and Gregorio Marañón," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), 21–29; a complaint about his maurophilia was published in *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de España*, XIV (Madrid, 1849), 369–95.