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“Alfonso X Writes to His Son: Reflections on the Crónica de Alfonso X”

Exemplaria Hispanica: A Journal on Alfonso X and Alfonsine Iberia

Preface

Dr. Paula K. Rodgers has kindly consented to an electronic republication of an article she published on the basis of her dissertation “Prolegomena to a Critical Edition of the Crónica de Alfonso X”, as a companion piece to the dissertation itself, which can be accessed at http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rk2d1ft. The article presents a remarkable achievement in textual reconstruction based on a large number of textual witnesses, all of which were described and placed in a stemma in her dissertation.

I am grateful to Professor Roberto González-Casanovas, Spanish, European and Latin American Studies, School of Cultures, Languages and Linguistics, University of Auckland, New Zealand (r.gonzalez@auckland.ac.nz), for permission to reproduce the article from the journal he edited, Exemplaria Hispanica.

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February 18, 2014
Alfonso X Writes to His Son: Reflections on the Crónica de Alfonso X

(together with a commentary on and critical text of the unique Alfonsine letter that it preserves)

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The fourteenth-century Crónica de Alfonso X is the only nearly-contemporary extended account of the reign of Spain’s most celebrated medieval king, Alfonso the Learned, who ruled Castile and Leon from 1252 to 1284. Among his achievements in law, letters and science, Alfonso initiated the two monumental historical projects known as the Estoria de España and the General estoria. Alfonso’s plan and personal direction inform both, and together they mark the beginnings of modern Spanish history in the vernacular. Posterity’s almost antonomastic association of Alfonso with early Spanish historiography is hardly exaggerated. It is therefore supremely ironic that the chronicle devoted to the events of the reign of the great historian himself has been described as seriously flawed by chronological error, misinformation and a general insufficiency of detail.

Coming to terms with the errors first pointed out by the Marqués de Mondéjar in 1777, modern historians tend to concur in negative evaluations (Mondéjar 569 ff, Ballesteros 418, Hillgarth 425). Even Evelyn Procter, whose 1931 assessment remains to this day the most fertile, summed up that the Crónica is late, unreliable, and in general, an unsatisfactory source (Procter 1931: 39, 53). Consequently, the Chronicle rests in the key moment between the justly famous Alfonsine estorias and the well-known chronicles of Pero López de Ayala almost totally neglected by all save a few political historians, who, while they continue to mine its contents, correcting it against the documentary evidence, rail against its real and perceived shortcomings.

Procter was the first to note that the seventy-seven chapters of the Crónica fall into three natural groupings. The first, chapters 1 to 19, is devoted to the early years of the reign to 1271, and establishes the annalistic structure typical of the Crónica. The imposition of the yearly organization is probably responsible for many of the numerous chronological errors in these early chapters. However, factual error is also common, and the entire section is characterized by what can only be described as maddeningly spotty coverage and a somniferous style. The overall negative evaluations of the Crónica are without doubt based on reactions to this first group of chapters.

The third section, comprising chapters 59 to 77, narrates the events from 1274 to 1284 and is a great deal more detailed and accurate, almost certainly because the events clustered around the problem of succession were dramatic in themselves, occurred closer in time to the writing of the Crónica and created problems for the ruling dynasty which were to continue into the era of the fourteenth-century chronicler, Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid. Procter observed some bias in favor of Alfonso’s second son Sancho after his revolt against his father, and believed that bias compromised the fullness of the account. In any event, Fernán Sánchez lived the aftermath of the final tragic years of Alfonso’s reign; he witnessed the struggles of Sancho’s royal descendents to defend themselves against the ever-difficult nobility and pretenders with strong claims to the throne, and his engaging, if not snappy, style reflects that involvement.

Procter pointed out that the second or middle section of the Chronicle, chapters 20 through 58, is superior in accuracy of detail and breadth of coverage to the other two. It describes just four years (1271-74) and fills almost half of the Crónica, which covers a reign of thirty-two years. The middle section deals with one crucial affair, the revolt of the nobles, who, led by the King’s brother Don Felipe and the ricohombre Don Nuño de Lara, had gone into exile to Granada in protest against Alfonso’s alleged violations of their traditional rights and privileges. The section is different from the other two in more than proportion. It includes, with little narrative interruption, a collection of letters which appear to be copies of originals sent and received by the royal household. If the letters are not inventions of the chronicler, they are in themselves sufficient to guarantee the historical value of the Crónica. Their compilation is an example of documentary history at its best.
The internal evidence suggests that all the letters are authentic. At no other point in the Crónica does the author break off the narrative to include an extensive body of documentary evidence. On the other hand, he does refer in all three sections and with some frequency to a written source or sources (Rosell X V 11, XXI 17, XLIV 33, XLIX 37, LV 44, LVIII 47, LXVII 53, LXVIII 53, LXXX IV 54). It is clear that there was some earlier account of the reign, which may have included, or been accompanied by, the collection of letters. Proctor believed that the entire middle section is an earlier and document-based record of the revolt, composed during or shortly after the events, and later incorporated in toto by the fourteenth-century chronicler into his own work.

In form and intention the several letters of the collection which are from the King are significantly different from the public documents issued by the royal chancery known as cartas plomadas and cartas abiertas. They lack the usual introductory formula of notification, sepan quanta est a carta vieren; the salutation, the internal formulae of dating and the subscription of the rector. Rather, all begin with the simple identification of the addressee, followed immediately by a summary of the items the King proceeds to discuss. The majority of these letters are addressed to the rebels and refer to the King in the third person; they were relayed by the royal messengers, Gonzalo Ruiz de Atienza and Sancho Pérez (Rosell XXVII 24, XXXVII 29, XXXVIII 30, XLIX 36, LI 38). While the procedure suggests that the King wished to distance himself in his displeasure from the rebels, and the letters all carry political import, their contents are predominantly personal in nature.

It is unlikely that the letters from the King were issued by the chancery, nor would they have been copied into the chancery registers, none of which survive. They were probably dictated by Alfonso to his chamber notary and preserved as records of his chamber secretariat. There have been some efforts to identify such a secretariat, dependent specially upon the monarch’s personal needs and designed to handle matters requiring particular discretion, as the antecedent of the fourteenth-century chancery de la poridad (Procter 1968: 117, Sánchez Belda 217). The fact that Fernán Sánchez de Valladolid was canceller de la poridad under the Learned King’s great-grandson Alfonso XI, suggests that such records would have been available to him. In any case, the letters point to a subgenre of royal correspondence that has not been studied.

Among the letters from the King, there is only one that Alfonso directed to a member of his party. It is addressed to his son and heir, Fernando de La Cerda, who at the time was in Córdoba with the King’s commission to defend the frontier and act as intermediary to the rebels. The letter is not dated, but would have been written in late May or early June of 1273 (Ballesteros 648). The case for authenticity of the letter is strengthened by the fact that a collation of the versions provided by seven MSS representative of the main families of the thirty-five witnesses of the Crónica revealed virtually no significant variation, with the notable exception of vacillation on verb tense and mood. This is not the case in other sections of the Crónica collated. Copyists were evidently reluctant to tamper with the King’s word. It is probable that a chronicler nurtured in the same tradition would have been more hesitant to invent it. Most telling, the investigators who have mentioned Alfonso’s letter to his son, the Marqués de Mondejar (306 ff), Antonio Ballesteros Beretta (650 ff), Francisco Rico (107 ff) and Manuel González Jiménez (xcii) never pause to consider the possibility that the letter might be an invention of the chronicler. Francisco Rico’s faith in the authenticity of the letter is eloquently implicit in his use of its style and content as the basis for the identification of passages in the General estoria which Alfonso personally wrote.

Alfonso’s letter to his son is explicitly secret: the last lines warn Fernando that only the King’s illegitimate son, Alfonso Fernández, and his trusted advisors, Jofre de Losa and Diego de Corral, are to be privy to its contents (Appendix 1: 308). We are thus prepared for revelations at odds with the King’s public posture as the patient, even-tempered monarch who repeatedly initiated negotiations in face of the rebels’ continued refusals, in which they invariably upped the ante in their demands (Ballesteros 574 ff). The King’s irritation is transparent from the outset in his despatch reference to the rebels as “esos que son en Granada” (3). After a summation of the contents of Fernando’s last communication from the frontier, Alfonso reveals that his annoyance extends to Fernando’s handling of affairs: he states that when he received the Prince’s letter, he was in Avila, ill with a cold and fever, which upset him, as it kept him from dealing with the pressing business at hand, but he was more upset on reading Fernando’s account of the news from Córdoba (18-24). The King points out to his son that the advice which had informed the Prince’s actions was clearly not trustworthy as it was given by the Masters of the military orders of Uclés and Calatrava, the first of whom was cautiously but nevertheless certainly supporting the rebels, the second of whom was intimately linked by family ties with one of the leaders of the revolt, Lope Díaz de Haro (25-46). Alfonso does not expressly indict Fernando for having followed their advice, but the negative criticism is implicit as Alfonso proceeds im-
mediately to analyze the situation and its roots, all of which should have been intuitively obvious to the trainee for the throne.

Under the guise of a lesson in history and government for the Prince, the analysis affords Alfonso the opportunity to vent his frustration in face of the threat to the monarchy inherent in the attitude of the nobles. He repeatedly returns to the leitmotif of their self-interest and ingratitude. In a studied parallelistic style, the King summarily dispatches the nobles’ assertions that they had moved against him for the fuero that he had taken from them, for the tuertos that he had committed against them and, in general, for the pro de la tierra (50-60). The rhetorical parallelisms quickly move Alfonso’s defense forward, without addressing the issues, to his main point: that the reason for the revolt rests squarely in the nobles’ desire to limit the monarch’s power and enrich themselves at the expense of the crown, just as the forefathers of these same nobles had harbored the ancestors of Alfonso (61-65).

Alfonso prepares for his next shot with another series of perfectly balanced and rapid parallel statements on the historical generosity of his royal ancestors required invariably by rebellion and ingratitude on the part of the ancestors of the nobles (63-74). Here, he is calling to mind the subversive activities of the fathers of the two greatest magnates, who together with Don Felipe, Alfonso’s brother, led the revolt, Nuño de Lara and Lope Díaz de Haro. The careers of the older Lara and Haro ended in disgrace and exile, brought on by overweening ambition and greed (Ballesteros 21 ff, 520 ff). The series is designed to throw into high relief the sarcastic conclusion that such is the fuero and pro de la tierra that the nobles have always sought (74-75).

At this point, Alfonso slips in a reference to the great preoccupation which shaped his public policy of benevolent conciliation toward the rebellious nobles: the King was anxious to leave the Peninsula to pursue his claim as emperor-elect to the Holy Roman Empire, frankly admitted as his most important concern (76-79). He could hardly pursue that claim until the revolt was settled and the southern frontier was relatively secure. The reference is revealing as it has little to do with the development of the argument to this point, or with Fernando’s business on the frontier. The overriding concern intrudes because Alfonso was pressed for time. As the days passed, his chances of securing the title diminished.

Furthermore, the issue of the Empire was inextricably involved with the question of the monetary services due the nobles. An extraordinary sum would be necessary to finance the retinues of the magnates who were to accompany the King abroad. The King, always financially strapped, hoped to cover those costs in part with the tribute due him from Granada, which had not been paid for the last two years. He is non-plussed that the nobles should request that the crown pay the tab as compensation for the income on their lands in Castile and Leon which, by customary law, they had not received since abandoning the realm (79-82). The reference to the ida del imperio, then, recalls the King’s frame of reference for his course of action during the revolt. The impatience he shows here with what he considered the nobles’ inherited tendency to self-interested and obstructionist behavior contrasts violently with the series of royal concessions in which the revolt finally ended (Ballesteros 660 ff).

Alfonso then addresses the nobles’ threat that they will support Yusuf, Emir of Morocco, in a massive invasion. In an attempt to reassure Fernando, who was at the first line of defense on the frontier in Córdoba, the King minimizes the threat, as well as the nobles, in his use of the curiously familiar term chufar (90, 125). He then reminds Fernando of the fate of earlier invasions in an historical digression on his great-grandfather, Alfonso VIII, the disastrous battle of Alarcos of 1195, and the dramatic recovery of the monarchy that followed. Alfonso VIII eventually triumphed over an invader more powerful than Yusuf, who was supported by traitorous nobles more numerous, of better lineage, and, more intelligent, than those presently in Granada (97-102). Our Alfonso cannot resist the temptation to point out that Alarcos was lost due to the cowardice of Diego López de Haro, the great-grandfather of one of the leaders of the current revolt; he relishes the opportunity to recall sarcastically that the traitor is known as “el Bueno” (109-114).

In the following lines, Alfonso turns to the substance of the threat from Granada and Morocco. It is not clear if Alfonso sincerely believed the threat to be minimal or if his attitude arises from a desire to reassure Fernando. The fact that such an invasion actually took place in 1275, when Alfonso was in Beaucaire, where he was forced to relinquish his bid for the Empire (Ballesteros 745 ff), may be taken to support the latter interpretation. In any case, in the letter the important enemy in Alfonso’s mind is not the infidel (118-37).

He reacts strongly, however, on the key question of his alliance with the arrayazes of Malaga and Guadix, rebellious vassals of Granada, and Alfonso’s ace-in-the-hole as he sought to keep the Emir of Granada constantly off balance. By the treaty of Alcalá de Benzaide of 1265, Alfonso had agreed to withdraw his support of the arrayazes (Ballesteros 385). His failure to do so was the key issue of contention with the Emir of Granada. The Emir surely found profound satisfaction in his tit
for that support of the rebels against Alfonso. It was the news of Fernando's decision to follow the advice of the Maestres of Uclés and Calatara and officially agree to the treaty, while secretly continuing to aid and abet the arrayazos, all summarized in the first lines of the letter (5-10), which so aggravated Alfonso's cold.

We gain an insight on intrigue and on Alfonso's mental processes in his interpretation of his brother Don Felipe's communication that in Granada it was broadcast that no harm should be done to the arrayazos. For Alfonso, it is a cunning maneuver designed to lead him to question his allies' loyalty (138-42). Given that Don Felipe had not been especially helpful in his earlier communications, Alfonso's interpretation was most likely accurate. His response is fierce: to abandon the arrayazos would bring dishonor and shame; it must not even occur to Fernando to mention the possibility; whosoever advises such a policy, advises it as a traitor (142-48). The King's anger leads him to a statement of his position vis-à-vis the rebels that is utterly at odds with his subsequent conciliatory behavior and the ultimate resolution of the conflict. He states succinctly that from this moment on, unless the nobles obey him in his every command, without the promise of recompense, they are not to be heard (151-55). Alfonso here is all stick and no carrot.

Alfonso assures Fernando that the crown will prevail, as the law, justice, truth and God are on its side. His parallel statement on the king as the instrument to enforce and defend the law in face of the nobles who do all possible to destroy it evokes a complex of associations on Alfonso's troubles in imposing a uniform municipal law code in face of the nobles' insistence on their customary privileges (157-60). Alfonso's confidence in the justice of his course prepares for his remarks on the only real danger to the royal position: the harm that the royals may do to themselves (166-68), an allusion to Fernando's mistake with the arrayazos, and in fact, the chief admonition of the letter. Alfonso softens his remarks adding that God will guard the king as He guarded his ancestors (170-71), and he proceeds to bolster the Prince's confidence in yet another string of parallel constructions contrasting the wealth of Castile and Leon with the meager resources of Granada (171-78).

In lines 179-86 the King returns to the theme of the reputed intelligence of the rebels. He deals concisely with Don Nuño de Lara, the cleverest of the lot, who followed in the footsteps of his ancestors, and in his ingratitude to God and the King, had lost everything in this “locura” (179-86). Alfonso does not mention that it was his personal protection of Don Nuño that had rescued and augmented the latter's honor, inherited titles and possessions following the senior Lara's dis-

concludes the same (xcii). In the larger scheme of things, the point is small, but it does suggest that the letter, in fact the letters as a group, may afford the opportunity for future discoveries of significance.

The final lines reassure Fernando that his father is on his way to join him. The reassurance is reiterated in the King's confident affirmation that if the Prince reflects and acts on the advice contained in the letter, the boasting from Granada will turn into something entirely different, presumably better. Nevertheless, the concluding note of confidence is somewhat qualified by the final admonition to secrecy.

In sum, the letter portrays a man whose roles as king and as father are virtually inseparable. This is due in part to the political purpose of the letter, but also to the fact that this father was first and foremost the father of a future king. As such, Alfonso's confidence and reassurances to Fernando are never based in praise of the Prince's personal attributes, but rather in the conviction of the righteousness of the monarchy. His criticism, while never harsh, is direct, and his instructions are explicit. The stakes were high; the future of the dynasty warranted a rational, no-nonsense approach.

In spite of the resulting somewhat impersonal tone, the letter fleshes out the shadowy image of the Alfonso behind the monarch behind the cultural endeavors and the documentary history. He reveals a capacity for righteous indignation, frustration and anger, rarely expressed beyond the confines of this letter, but always latent in the caution and perspicacity his advisors exercised when dealing with him (e.g. Rosell XIX 14). We see as well his overriding concern for the Imperial title and a rather cavalier attitude toward the nagging economic problems. He shows a particular fondness for the disciplines of history and law, the bulwarks of his policy. And, he reveals himself to be no mean military strategist. The integrity of his personality is never compromised by purely personal carping. The curious reference to his cold and fever at the beginning of the letter (19-24) is remarkably out of step in his self-portrayal. It may be a variation of the caputiato benevolentiae employed rhetorically to cast his reaction to the news from Córdoba in the most negative terms possible. If so, it is further evidence of the careful stylist whose tendency towards parallel structures suggests an ordered and ordering intelligence. The intelligence is no surprise, but the emotional energy, the strength and the attention to detail here depicted all negate the still popular image of Alfonso as a weak king whose political failures were due to his absent-minded pursuit of intellectual interests.

The foregoing remarks barely suggest the resources of information that remain to be worked in the Crónica. We err in dismissing a source
because sections of it are flawed by factual error. It is worth reaffirming that the broader insights provided by texts considered primarily political history are valuable complements to the data. On the other hand, Peter Linehan recently showed that the Marqués de Mondejar shaped the political history he wrote according to a political agenda of his own, and that Ballesteros is, on occasion, warmed-up Mondejar. The Crónica, at least, preserves only the errors of fact and biased perspectives of the fourteenth-century chronicler. It remains a primary source.

Works Cited


APPENDIX

Alfonso X's Letter to Fernando de la Cerda

Crónica de Alfonso X (LII)

Critical Text as Transcribed by Paula K. Rodgers

The critical text is based on a collation of MSS. 829, 10195 (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid); M563 (Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo, Santander); M.II.2, N.III.12, Y.II.15, Z.III.7 (Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial).

It is transcribed according to David Mackenzie, A Manual of Manuscript Transcription for the Dictionary of the Old Spanish Language (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1986). The punctuation has been inserted by me. [Editor's note: The text has been divided into five-line segments to aid in reading and making references.]
Don Fermando,
vi la carta que me enbiastes, & otros los que vos enbio
el maestre de Calatrava, que le enbiaron esos que son en Granada. & entendí otros que despues que Gonçalo Ruiz veno de alla, que vos consejaron que enbiasesdes al maestre de Calatrava a Granada que otorgase al rey de Granada el pleito de Alcala de Bençàide & que le diese mi carta que lo jurava a buena fe que lo toviese, & que desanpara deses a los arrayazes en consejo & despues que lo non fiziesedes en poridat. & esto, que vos lo consejaron los maestres de Ucles & de Calatrava. & sobre esto que ovistes vuestro acuerdo de enbiar alla al maestre de Calatrava, & el que fue a Porcuna, & enbio dezir [a] aquellos que son en Granada que le enbiasen cavalleros que le guiasen. & ellos que le enbiaron su respuesta que si esto sobre dicho non leuase firmado, & pleito de sus dinares que los oviessen en Granada, que en otra guisa no avia por que ir alla. & don Fermando, quando estas cartas me llegaron, era en Avila, que venía y por fablar con los concejos de tierra de Leon & de las Estremaduras, que fize y ayudar,
& ove y enfermedad de rromadizo & de calentura poca, & peso me mucho por que en tal tiempos me acaesçiera; mas mucho rescebi mayor pesar quando entendi lo que las cartas dezian. & a lo que dezides que vos consejaron los maestres, bien vos devedes guardar de la maestria del maestre de Ucles en lo creer de tal consejo commo este, ca este es uno de los omnes del mundo que mas consejo a estos ricos omnes que fiziesen lo que fazen. & mande le yo que fuese derecha mente al reyno de Murçia,
a do serviria a mi & a vos, & non lo quiso fazer, & fuese para vos por consejar a los ricos omnes esto que fazen, & a vos que fiziesedes aquello que vos dava el por consejo. & demas enbio dezir al rey de Aragon que se non dexe de venir a las vistas comigo, ca pazes eran, & que el iria a el & le diria todo el fecho como era. & del maestre de Calatrava vos digo que commo quier que lo yo amo & lo tengo por omne bueno, se que cosa quita es de Lope Díaz por todo su linaje & aquellos que el mas amava susy son.
Pero maravillo me mucho dar vos el tal consejo, aviendo le yo dicho que si el fuese a Granada que de llano les dixiese que nunca avrian mi merçe si non se partesen de demandar estas cosas tan sin razon, & demas aviendo el oido a Juan Nunnez & a Estevan Fernandez lo que vos dixieron en Jaen, & consejar vos el esto al. & don Fermando, quiero vos agora fablar deste fecho commo es aqui llegado & que ha menester de fazer y, por que sepades mejor y obrar & mostrar a los omnes la cosa commo es. & estos ricos omnes non se movieron contra mi por razon de fuero nin por puerto que les yo toviese, ca fuero nunca gelo yo tolly, mas aun que gelo oviessen tollito, pues que gelo otorgua, mas pagados devieran ser & quedan devieran con tanto. Otrofi tuerto non gelo fize, mas aun que gelo oviesse fecho el mayor del mundo, pues que gelo quieria emendar a su bien vista dellos, non avien por que mas demandar. Otrofi por pro de la tierra non lo fazer, ca esto non lo querria ninguno tanto commo yo, cuya es la heredat, & muy poca pro han ellos ende si non el bien que les nos fazemos. Mas la razon por que lo fizeron fue esta: por querer siempre tener los reyes apremiados & levar dellos lo suyo, pensando les buscar carreras por do los desbredasen & los desonrasen, como las buscaron aquellos donde ellos vienen. Ca asi comomo los reyes criaron a ellos, pugnaron ellos de los descriar & de toller los regnmos a algunos dellos seyendo ninnos.
& asio como los reyes los heredaron, pugnaron ellos
de los deserald, lo uno consejera mente con sus enemigos,
lo al a furto en la tierra levando lo suyo poco a poco

& negando gelo. & asio como los reyes los apoderaron
& los onrraron, ellos pugnaron en los desapoderar
& en los desonrar en tantas maneras que serian muchas
de contar & muy vergonzosas. Esto es el fuero & el pro
de la tierra que ellos siemrre quisieron.

Agora lo podeedes entender en esto, ca todas las cosas
por que yo me movia a fazer lo que ellos querian,
tiran las ende, sennalada mente la ida del imperio,
que es lo mas. & el aver que avian a fazer al rey de Granada
que me diese, con que fuesen ellos comaio.

dizen que gelo de yo a ellos en cuenta de los dineros
que les mengua fasta aqui. & sin todo esto,
que les torna las tierras que de ante tenian
& que les de mas de aquellas & que les de heredades,
que demandan sin derecho, por que sean mas poderosos

de lo que ante eran & que nos fagan siempre deservicio.
& demas quieren que non podamos fazer ninguna cosa
de abenencia con los moros menos dellos, asi que todavia
tengan el un pie firme alla & el otro aca, lo que non sera,
si Dios quisiere. Ca de aquello que ellos chufan

de pleito de Abenyuca, que pasara aca con grant poder,
don Ferrando, mucho avia mayor poder el Miramamolino,
que tenia la tierra que agora tiene Abenyuca,
& lo que tiene el rey de Tunez & los otros reyes
que son en medio, & demas era senor de toda el Andaluza

& nunca pasava aquende menos de ciento mill cavaleros,
& demas siempre eran con el ricos omnes desta tierra,
don Ferrant Ruiz de Castro algunas vegadas & don Pero Fernandes
& don Diego & filios de reyes, & el infante don Pedro
de Portugal, & aun el rey de Navarra mismo, & cada uno

destos ricos omnes eran de mejor ventura & de mejor seso
que non son estos de agora. & el rey don Alfonso de Castilla
non avia si non fasta Toledo, & destorvava le
el rey de Leon su yermo & aun el rey de Portugal
& el rey de Navarra quanto podian, & algunas vegadas

el rey de Aragon, pero con todo esto defendiendo muy bien
del Miramamolin, que nunca de lo suyo le pudo tomar
ninguna cosa si non la villa de Alarcons
quando fue vençida la batalla mas por culpa de los del rey
que non por bondat de los moros, ca don Diego,
su visabuelo deste don Lope Diaz, que llaman el Bueno,
fixo con la sena a la villa de Alarcons seyendo aun el rey
en la batalla, & despues dio la villa a los moros
con su mano, sin mandado de su senor. Pero despues
el rey don Alfonso, con aquello poco que avia,
sopo se vengan muy bien del Miramamolin
& vençio lo en campo & tollio le grant parrida
de lo que avia. & demas don Ferrando,
devedes parar mientes en como Abenyuca
ha muchas guerras, lo uno con Marruecos que tienen

que non es su senor, lo al de Gomaraçan,
que le faze guerra en la tierra, lo otro
que el es muy mal quisto, ca todo quanto gano
fue por traicion & por enganno, por que tengo
que non pode pasar asi como chufan esos que estan
en Granada. & pognamos que quisesse pasar:
where podria el aver navios para pasar tantos cavalleros
como diz que traera, & vianda que les abonde
a esos & a los otros que aca son? & yo non lo puedo creer
que pueda ser nin tan aina como ellos diz

que lo faran, mas costumbre es de los moros
de fazer cartas maestres & falsas & enbias se las
unos a otros por cuidar ende sacar su pro.
& este alamir de Granada faria [a] Abenyuca
enbiar estas cartas, bien así como lo fazía su padre,
que me enbiase a mi dezir que me abeniese con él,
si non, que faria maravillas contra mi. & en lo que
me enbiava dezir don Felipe, que pregonaron en Granada
que non fizesen mal a los arrayazes,
bién lo podedes entender que arteria fue buscada
que veniese de alla por que los oviese yo de aborrecer
& de caber el pleito & desanparar los, & non catavan y
la desonra & la verguenza que nos vernie
en fazer nos tal fecho como este nin dezir lo,
por que, don Fernando, tal cosa como esta
non la fagades, nin solo non vos venga a corazón
de lo dezir, & quien quier que vos conseja esto,
conseja vos muy mal como traidor. & pues que ellos
asi lo fazen, que quando les otorgamos
lo que ellos quieren, luego demandan al,
de aqui adelante, a menos de se meter a fazer
todas las cosas que yo mandare, sin tierra & sin al
& a mi mercet & a mi mesura, como yo quisiere,
maguer vos enbien mover pleitesia, nunca otra cosa
sea cabida nin escuchada. Ca don Fernando,
fio por Dios que mucho aina avremos grant derecho dellos,
que non querrímos nos mayor, ca tenemos nos
con la ley & estamos en acrescentar la
& en defender la. & ellos pugnan quanto pueden
de la abaxar. & demas tenemos nos derecho & verdad,
lo que ellos non tienen, ca andan con tuerto conocída mente
& con falsedad, & avemos lo sobre lo nuestro,
que se nos quieren tomar a danno & a desonra de nos,
& que nos mismos gelo demos, lo que non se faze mucho
si todo el mundo se ayunta & sopesemos mill vezes morir.
& don Fernando, quando omne reschibe mal a fuerça,
esto non ay maravilla, mas quando se lo faze el
con su mano, esté el mayor quebranto que ser puede,


& nos punnemos de nos guardar quanto pudieremos,
ca fio por Dios que el nos guardara, que guardo siempre
a los otros onde nos venimos. & si nos fazen entender
que por mengua de aver nos vençeran, a esto vos ruego
& vos digo que paredes mientes que aver es el de Granada
para ellos & que aver es el de Castilla & de Leon para nos,
& donde han ellos aver & vianda & donde la avemos nos,
& donde avran ellos cavallos & donde los avremos nos,
& que poder es el de Granada para ellos & que poder es
el de Castilla & de Leon para nos. & si vos fazen entender
que ellos son sesudos, parat mientes a don Nuno,
que es tenido por el mas sesudo dellos, que non sopo
gradesçer a Dios el bien que le fizierea nin a mi servir
en qual estado & otra que lo puse & sopo lo perder
por esta locura en que entro. & aqui podedes ver
el suo seso qual es. & demas viene de linaje
que siempre perdieron quanto avían & por esta razón
muriern mal andantes. & de don Felipe mi hermano
non he por que vos fable de su seso, ca bien sabedos vos
lo que fizo a Dios & lo que dexo que tenía de santa iglesia
& lo que fizo a nos en que mostro muy complida mente su seso
& paresçe segunt que oy esta. & de Lope Diaz

& de Estevan Fernandez vos digo que creo que non son ellos
tan sesudos nin nos tan sin ventura que nos vençan
de saber. & si ellos fazen cuenta que son
muchos ricos omnes, bien sabedos vos que non son ellos
mas de don Felipe & don Nuno & sus fijos & Lope Diaz

& Estevan Fernandez, & cuentan y por ricos omnes
a Lope de Mendoça & Ferrant Ruiz, & dar vos he yo
aca ochenta que son todos fijos de ricos omnes
& de omnes buenos, & demas don Ferrant Ruiz de Castro
& Rodrigo Rodriguez de Saldanna, que vinieron de alla.

& si fablan de la otra cavalleria, mejor es la nuestra
& muy mas, ca aquellos suyos de los nuestros son,
& los mejores son conuso, & demas vinieronse
una grant partida dellos a nos, & verman de cada dia,
lo uno por que conocen que fazen tuerto de estar alla
conociendo el bien que les fize & lo otro
cobdiçiendo el bien que les quiero fazer,
lo al por que estando alla son mal andantes & ser lo han
mas de cada dia. Mas don Fermando, sabedes lo que me pesa,
 que tenedes vos tres para uno dellos & mejores que ellos,
& sin todos los de la frontera, & esos que vos aconsejan
fazen vos los poner en los castillos & tenedes los derramados
& non hacen ningunt bien, & vos non podedes fazer
nada de lo que avedes a fazer con esas compans
que alla tenedes. Otrosi dizen que los moros
han peones & gente: esta es muy poca
la que han & muy mala, & avedes vos mucha & buena
en la frontera, que non ha en ninguna tierra mas.
& tengo que si vos juntasedes los que estan puestos
por fronteros en los castillos con esos que tenedes
y conbusco & con las gentes de pie que podriedes aver
de la frontera, & fuesedes agora a la vega de Granada
mientras es el pan verde, que aun que otro mal
non les fizesedes si non en pisando lo, gelo tirariedes.
& si ellos aquel poco de pan perdiesen, con el otro danno
que rescebirian en las huertas & en las vinmas
& con el danno que les han hecho los que estan
en Granada, tengo que muy poco duraria la guerra.
Mas non me semea que ay ninguno que vos esto diga,
mas dizen vos que son ellos mucho & muy buenos
& que pasaran moros de allen mar, & que los vuestros
han servido su tiempo & se verman luego. & de otra parte
vos dizen que vos non avedes aver que les dar
& yo que non he con que vos acorra. & deziendo vos
las cosas falsa mente desta guisa, meten vos miedo
por cuidar vos traer a fazer lo peor; por que ha menester

que paredes y mientes, que si agora en vuestro comienço
en estas cosas errades, despues quando las quisieredes emendar
non podreces. & escarnentado deierades ser del consejo
que vos dieron oganno, que en lugar que fuerades
al rey de Granada & fueran convusco los arrayazes
& ovierades perdida la cabeza o fracarades ende
onrado para siempre, fizieron vos ir a Algezira
faziendo vos creyente que el fijo de Abenyuçaf era y,
& en aquel camino non ovistes pro nin oura.
Tengo otrosi que en la cosa que primero devierades
parar mientes eran las galeas commo fuesen aguisadas,
ca si ellas agora estudiesen en el estrecho,
non podria pasar Abenyuçaf nin otro aun que quisiesen.
Otrosi tengo que des que salistes de la vega
devierades partir los omnes, los unos con el un arrayaz
& los otros con el otro, & quando el rey de Granada
fuese al uno, entrar le ye el otro la tierra.
Otrosi irian alla los que estoviesen conuso,
& con esto & con los otros omnes de la frontera,
tal guerra les podriedes fazer que avrian a fazer
lo que nos quisiesemos, ca el rey de Granada
non osa partir de si esos cristianos, & si lo provase
luego cuidaria ser mortuo. & lo que vos dizen
que los arrayazes non querrian consigo
los ricos omnes & cavalleros que les vos enbiedes
salvo si levasen de comer, verdad vos dizen,
& vos buscald las alguna cosa que les dedes
mas de lo que les dades aca por que estudiesen
si quier un mes, & de la una parte ayudierades bien
a los arrayazes & de otra fariedes esta guerra
que es dicha. & para esto devedes fablar
con los ricos omnes & deir les que agora
era sazon de vos adebar a vos para siempre,
& demas que les faria yo mucho bien & que tenia en que
en estas tierras mismas destos otros que se fueron,
& prometiendo les & deziendo les esto sofri vos van
& servir vos van mejor, ca dexar los en los castillos
& non les dezir nada, enojan se ende & recuden
a fazer lo peor. & eso mismo pudierades fazer

a los consejos que dexastes venir con que los tovierades
fasta que estos otros llegazen que van agora comigo.
& don Fernando, de lo que vos meten miedo de aver,
vos quiero dezir tanto que bien sabedes vos
quantas cosas vos di en ayuda para esto,

de que vos non tome un dinero, & demas mando a
todos los otros consejos que salgan en hueste
tan bien de las villas pequenas como de las grandes
de que avie muy grant algo con que vos acorra,
& sin todo esto los cogedores & los merinos

que fio que me ayudaran agora muy bien
& de otras partes muchas que vos non puedo
enviar dezir por carta. Mas por todo, non ha pro
si lo vos dieredes asi como lo dades, & dando yo aca
a las ordenes de Uciles & de Calatrava lo que les di,

dades les vos alla dineros & otros fueras & otras cosas
en que fazedes vuestro danno & rescibo yo desonrra,
ca tienen que quanto les do yo non es nada
si les vos non dieredes lo que non podedes
nin devedes dar, & desta guisa non ha aver en el mundo

que compliese, nin yo lo podria complir.
& demas tenedes y a don Culeman de que podedes aver
muy grant aver lo uno por que es mi servicio & lo al
que lo avedes menester a esta sazon & lo al
que vos fara a vos muy grant servicio. & desto

vos podedes acorrer fasta que lo de aca vos llegue,
ca yo luego me vo para alla quanto puedo
& non tardo por al si non por el rey de Aragon,
que non se aun por cierto quando ira. & ruego vos