Alfonsine Historiography: The Literary Narrative
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[141] In writing about the past, Alfonso X selected sources, determined the linguistic and stylistic medium of presentation, and extended his historiographic works to the general literate lay public, thus demonstrating in the intellectual sphere the same decisiveness and ambition that characterize his legal and political aspirations. [1] Interpreted within the framework of the late medieval formulation of Aristotelian causality, [2] Alfonso X played the dual roles as actor and author of history. He was the auctor of historical writings in the sense that he was the motivating agent of the text -- that is, the "efficient cause." His sources constituted the "material cause," his literary style and structure were the "formal cause," and his objective in writing would be the "final cause."

Alfonso appropriated the task of writing history from clerical predecessors, some of whom, because of working under royal patronage, exhibited pro-monarchic sympathies in addition to other vested interests. By increasing the variety and number of his sources to an encyclopedic range of narratives and documents from diverse cultural and social perspectives, he augmented the demographic register of people perceived and portrayed to have influenced the course of history.

Innovatively, Alfonso promoted the use of Castilian prose to relate the flow of past events, which he focused toward closure according to his unique sociopolitical vision of universal history and the position of Spain in the scheme, especially Castile. Choice of a selected sociogeographic linguistic variety, "true Castilian" (castellano drecho) rather than Latin, insured delivery of his view of history to an intended lay audience (reader or listener) in a medium consonant with the personae of the narrative.

The study of Alfonsine historiography is seriously complicated because Alfonso's historical works, like his personal political ambitions, were terminated without completion by his death. They were left in varying degrees of elaboration, to be reworked and continued by monarchs and [142] minions of different views and talents. The projected General estoria of universal scope and the Iberian-focused Estoria de Espanna come to us mostly through partially reworked posthumous collections of chronicles, derived from workbooks in varying states of completion prepared under his direction. The earlier portions of the Estoria de Espanna (relating the creation, pre-Roman and Roman history, and Gothic and Arabic invasions) had been more polished textually prior to Alfonso's death; later history from the Reconquest to his own time remained less formally elaborated. Fortunately, the inconclusive character of the hundred-or-so chronicle manuscripts provides a means for reconstructing in part the content, intent, and method of elaboration of the original Alfonsine histories. [3]

Writing about "modern" and "contemporary" Spanish history proved to be a significant, if not insurmountable, challenge for the Learned Monarch because of the plethora of divergent sources narrating and interpreting a single event, and because his prime structural framework inherited from the Latin chronicles failed him. Where he failed to dominate his dramatically pre-emplotted and politically charged narrative sources, precisely there do we witness the surprising state of development of Spanish prose narrative. This essay assesses Alfonso's historical works on the basis of treatment of the literary
narrative, both as material and formal cause, which advanced his writings beyond the chronicle toward
ture historical writing. By studying his use and, more importantly but more difficult to show, his
deliberate nonuse of extant narrative, we can perceive the complexity of the historiographic task and
why a small portion of the Estoria de Espanna failed to materialize.

Alfonso's treatment of the reign of Alfonso VIII has been selected for this study partly because of its
content—the earlier ruler's hereditary and political ties to Alfonso el Sabio, his popular appeal to the
intended thirteenth-century audience and later chronicle consumers, and his appeal to the modern
reader. It has been selected also for formal considerations—the unusually complicated beginning of that
earlier reign, the availability of primary and secondary source materials, the abundance of textual
witnesses to the Alfonsine process, and the fact that it marks the conclusion of the last original
workbooks prepared for the Estoria de Espanna [4].

Narrative and Historiographic Modality
From Aristotle to the poststructuralists, medieval Spanish historians not excepted, textual critics have
pondered the relationship between historical [143] writing and literature. [5] The annal originated in the
early Carolingian period when the clergy found it necessary to distribute to provincial monks and
priests the exact date of the movable feasts based on the shifting Easter festival. [6] Systematic annals
mentioned only a few memorable events of the writer's own time. Viewed as a whole, the apparently
unrelated listing of births, deaths, climate, battles, and events presents a curious picture to the modern
reader, but it must represent some cohesion in the writer's mind. Hayden White observes that "we are
likely to be put off by the annalist's apparent failure to see that historical events dispose themselves to
the perceiving eye as 'stories' waiting to be told." [7] When events have no beginning other than the
calendar date and have no story conclusion, their "meaning" derives from inclusion in the list. White
questions the validity of the annal as a type of historical representation, since "it is a product of an
image of reality in which the social system, which alone could provide the diacritical markers for
ranking the importance of events, is only minimally present to the consciousness of the writer, or rather,
is present as a factor in the composition of the discourse only by virtue of its absence." He favors the
Hegelian thesis that a historical account must have a prescribed narrative form and content—that is, a
politicosal order. [8]
The chronicle developed from the annal, following the temporal ordering of events but summarizing
them, particularly when in the contemporary period more than one account existed. Like the annal, it
may appear not to "conclude" but simply to terminate. "Typically it lacks closure, that summing up of the
'meaning' of the chain of events with which it deals." [9] The writing of chronicles from
documentary sources entailed a process of "emplotment," that is, the encoding of the facts as
components of specific kinds of plot structures. "Most historical sequences can be emplotted in a
number of ways so as to provide different interpretations of these events and to endow them with
different meanings... But historical situations do not have built into them intrinsic meanings in the way
that literary texts do." [10] "Facts" are really story elements which can be suppressed, subordinated,
highlighted, and manipulated as one would the elements of a novel or a play.

Genuine historical writing for White, following a Lacanian formulation, pertains to the "discourse of
the real" versus that of the "imaginary" or "of desire," having a formal coherency (completion), the
equivalent of narrative closure. He distinguishes between narrating (objective recounting of events
perceived to exist within or behind evidence) and narrativizing (subjectively imposing upon events the
form of a story in which the events speak for themselves). [11] Meaning can be derived by subsuming
sets[144] of events into cause-effect paradigms, as a scientific approach, or by encoding them into
extant, culturally understood patterns such as a story frame. [12] Edward W. Said, acknowledging a debt
to White, proposes that there is no way to get past texts in order to apprehend "real" history directly.
[Said] affirms the connection between texts and the existential actualities of human life, politics, societies, and events. The realities of power and authority—as well as the resistances offered by men, women, and social movement to institutions, authorities, and orthodoxies—are the realities that make texts possible, that deliver them to their readers, that solicit the attention of critics. ... These realities are what should be taken account of by criticism and the critical consciousness. [13]

The Learned Monarch sought to bring meaning to historical events by artistic and scientific approaches, emplotting events into an effective narrative and explaining their causal relationships. His emplotment of history was as decisive a social and political strategem as any legal or political move of his career, motivated in principle by a refined, Aristotelian concept of order (por esto fue endereçado el curso del mundo de cada una cosa en su orden) which would lead his people to enlightenment (pora alumbrar los sos entendimientos) as explained in his authorial prologue to the Primera crónica general. His sources, whether secondary, such as a preconcatenated matrix or a recently confected Latin chronicle, or primary, such as an epic poem relative to political unification, appear in his history because he found them to be more plausible than any other choice. Aesthetic and moral considerations ultimately would be subjected to the author's formal and final criteria.

Structure, Narrative Sources, and Demographics of Alfonsine Chronicles

An essential feature of the Spanish chronicle is its traditional open structure, [14] in computing terminology a proclivity for block moves. Each authority—the Bible, patristic writers, classical and folk literature—displayed its own distinctive style of language and unique patterns of content selection, thereby implying preexisting different ideological and creative criteria. The presence of an artistically crafted infrastructure, for example a prosified epic poem or even a traditional legend, might render a historical work more metaphorical and active, in general more literary; but its thematic [145] artistic and structural cohesion was subject to the historian's quill. The historians could dilute or distort the form or intent of the infrastructure by stylistic and contextual alterations through reduction (such as deletions of affective references and shift of responsibility for potentially reprehensible action), by interpretive additions, and by contextual displacement.

In the chronistic organizational plan, multiple unifying structural arcs ordered each level of constituent elements of the Estoria de España, from its comprehensive metaplan through intermediate dynastic blocks to individual reigns, to minute details of human developmental stages of the protagonists of history. The literary narrative used in the compositional scheme at the lower levels, originating as both individual and traditional creations, already had been brought to narrative closure and now had to be "reopened" to mesh with alternate accounts—some complementary and some contradictory. The literariness of Alfonsine historiography derives in part from the stylistic tension between the aperture of "closed" sources at the lower structural levels, and narrative closure of potentially "open" structures at the metalevel. Alfonso's force as an author derived from his manipulation of the personae of events, the use of sources to empower or marginalize its actors, and his decisions on defining the flow of history.

Precursors of alfonsine historiography

Alfonso X formed part of a continuous tradition of writers about Spain's history, in a trajectory beginning from his oft-cited authority the Roman Paulus Orosius. [15] The earliest peninsular annals, criticized by modern Spanish historiographers for their dry gloominess, constituted notes and mere outlines for subsequent histories. [16] By the close of the twelfth century, preexisting annals formed the vertebral column onto which the Christian writers grafted diverse sources; these include in contemporary periods documentary, literary and folkloric narratives, personal observations and recollections, and progressive infusion of sanguinity into historical personages.
Alfonso's immediate predecessors, both Christian and Arabic, already had begun to transcend the stylistic-modal distance between annalistic lists and narrated history. Lucas de Tuy centralized history into constituent formal blocks constituting the reign of a monarch, marked by an exact beginning and ending, coterminous with accession to the throne and death. [146] He focused primarily upon an institution or office whose occupant changed through divine intervention, but he included few actual human details, scarcely threading together the strands at the lower structural levels. Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada incorporated more pre-emplotted narrative sources into his chronicle than did his predecessor and, consequently, portrayed more upper nobility and commoners as pivotal in shaping historical events. Although the cantares of Castilian counts appear in the Crónica najerense around 1150, Lucas de Tuy in 1236 included the legend of the Mora Zaida and a novelesque version of the pilgrimage of Louis VII to Santiago, both of which were extracted from traditional poetic roots. Rodrigo innovatively cited epic sources directly for specific details. [17] This recourse was to reach its apogee after Alfonso's time.

While in the Isidorian tradition the Latin-ecclesiastical historians focused on grandiose events affecting national concerns, their fellow Arabic historiographers were attentive to the individual, even secondary personages of history. [18] Ahmad b. al-Razî(899-955) even conceived of the history of Spain as the continuation of familial lineages coexisting in the peninsula. [19] In the four decades between the composition of the Latin-ecclesiastical chronicles and the origins of the secularized Alfonsine project, the concept of writing about the recent past again evolved markedly toward greater narrativity and emplotment. Perhaps, as has been suggested, the shift was influenced by the more demographically representative Arabic historiographic models, and perhaps through inclusion of near-contemporary vernacular narratives which often included nonroyal protagonists.

**HISTORIOGRAPHIC TEXTS FROM THE ALFONSONE Scriptorium**

*Estoria de España*

The *Estoria de España* was not written in serial progression from one chapter to another but was composed by teams of specialists charged with tasks of translating, chronological sequencing, justifying of content, and stylistic leveling. [20] Assigning tasks to the scribe, compiler, and commentator was done as much from the physical need to facilitate production as to validate Alfonso's individual role as the efficient cause or author of the history. Diego Catalan's magisterial reconstruction of the composition of the *Estoria de España* reveals that Jiménez de Rada's recent De rebus Hispaniae of 1243 was translated before 1271 to serve as the backbone of the [147] history; details were fused to this from the slightly earlier parallel narrative of Lucas de Tuy and a mixed range of sources. [21] The *Estoria de España* does not exist in a conclusive manuscript form, but is reflected in dozens of compilations put together from the Alfonsine materials under the direction of Sancho IV, Alfonso XI, and Don Juan Manuel. The reign of Alfonso VIII, shown in the Primera crónica, general (ed. R. Menéndez Pidal), represents fairly advanced elaboration of that incomplete work. Catalán explains:

In the royal Castilian chamber there must have remained stored, I believe, together with codices and workbooks from the Alfonsine workshop together with already concluded sections of the *Estoria, de España*, fragments still in the course of elaboration (some already far enough advanced, others in initial states of construction); taking advantage of those materials, but without continuing the inconclusive compilatory work, the formulator of the Primera crónica general tried to compose a history of Spain without interruptions of continuity. [22]

For Alfonso X, encoding the narrative of power and authority entailed textual criticism and edition. His
Projected histories would represent, in Said's terms, a "system of forces institutionalized by the reigning culture at some human costs to its various components." To relate a reign, Alfonso must manipulate sources, limiting and subsuming parts of the human side of the ruler's life to those features felt to have affected the course of history. Narrative sources already imbued with thematic focus, emplotment, and affective and stylistic color fatally complicated the task. In studying the official history of a monarchy, the modern reader must evaluate narrative elements (including their presence, absence, and variants), respectfully observant of the stated or implied critical evaluations by the authors/editors.

**Post-Alfonsine Use of Compilations and Source Materials**

The vernacular chroniclers who continued to mine the Alfonsine compilations and their primary sources after that monarch's death valued traditional narrative for its content and style, at times barely effacing the stylistic contours of the originals. This can be heard particularly in traces of assonant rhyme of epic poetry used as sources in the Primera crónica general, the Crónica de Castilla, and the Crónica de veinte reyes. By 1292 or 1293, the Alfonsine sources again served the author(s) of Castigos e documentos para bien vivir, ordenados por el rey don Sancho IV who appropriated the "final cause" but not the narratives of the legends such as the tragedies of La Cava and Fermosa.

Less than 40 years after Alfonso's death, Don Juan Manuel studied a different, lost version of the Crónica general which he condensed in his Crónica abreviada. He planned a Crónica cumplida, best seen in the unpublished so-called Crónica manuelina interpolada. The third of that work dealing with "modern" history parallels most closely the primitive version (versión vulgar) of the Primera crónica general (Biblioteca del Palacio Nacional II-429), which is in its Alfonsine redactive state; in the reign of Alfonso VIII, its structural and compositional boundaries relate intimately to the Crónica, ocampiana.

By the fourteenth century, the vernacular historians working with Alfonsine materials drifted further from the annalistic form, toward the elaborated looser narrative. The compiling phase, once thought to constitute the "efficient cause" of authorship, was overshadowed by the moralistic interpretation of sources, with heavier elaboration of the "final cause." The Crónica de 1344 and the so-called Ocampiana elaborate portions of an already focused and styled Alfonsine matrix, substituting and heavily embroidering into it more novelized accounts. Greater emplotment favored fictionalization of data, and the protagonists began to live personal lives outside their office. Once-marginalized characters -- commoners, women, children, Jews -- now occupied the stage of history formerly dominated by male monarchs, and new narratives featuring them split into popular ballads. Influenced by the romances viejos, the drama and "truth" of the Alfonsine literary narratives were poeticized by the sixteenth-century balladeer Lorenzo de Sepúlveda, who incorporated not only the narratives but the Alfonsine and post-Alfonsine interpretations.

**Alfonso VIII in the Literary and Historiographic Tradition**

Alfonso VIII of Castile, best remembered in world literature for his cameo role opposite the Jewess of Toledo, ascended the throne a few months before his fourth birthday, following the death of his father, Sancho III, el Deseado (the desired). Known as el rey Niño (child-king) during his lengthy reign (1158-1214), he later earned the sobriquets el Noble (the noble) and el de Las Navas (he of the victory at Las Navas) for his acts of piety, such as founding cities, hospitals, and monasteries, and for his military prowess. Through both Castilian and Leonese grandparents, Alfonso X was the great
grandson of Alfonso VIII and was indebted to him for precedents in legal practices. [30]
In the chronicles, the reign of Alfonso VIII was more difficult to narrate in many respects, because of its troubled early years and an unclear, indecisive beginning. Orphaned before the age of four, Alfonso VIII was a pawn between the Laras into whose guardianship he was entrusted and his uncle Fernando II of León; Fernando enlisted the Castro dynasty, bitter enemies of the Laras, to usurp the child's patrimony. When he reached his majority at the age of fifteen as specified in Sancho III's will, the young monarch was to assume full direction of the Castilian empire; yet for a period of time, he still remained under the control of the upper nobility who arranged his marriage to the nine-year-old Eleanor of England, daughter of Henry II and sister of Richard the Lion-Hearted.
The thirteenth-century Latin chronicles cast Eleanor in the pivotal role in his development from *el rey Niño* to *el Noble*. In the vernacular histories, the legend of his relationship with Fermosa, the Jewess of Toledo, leading to grief at her death, was interpreted as prelude to *despertamiento*, or awakening, explaining his repentance, charitable acts, and military excellence. The trajectory of literary narratives relating the early years of Alfonso VIII illustrates stages in the development of Alfonsine and post-Alfonsine historical writing.

**El Rey Niño**

For the Latin historians, the employment of Alfonso's reign was intrinsically more difficult because he was their contemporary, so that living witnesses could question the sequence and interpretation of events. Each writer moreover had biases that channeled his perception of the young monarch and frustrated his effort at compilation. The Alfonsine teams inherited those structural flaws in their secondary sources, and compounded the problem as they worked primary materials into the matrix, undermining their own well-planned effort.

**LUCAS DE TUY, CHRONICON MUNDI**

Less than a quarter-century after the death of Alfonso VIII, the deacon Lucas of the church of León, later bishop of Tuy, completed in 1236 the [150] *Chronicon mundi*. He begins his account of Alfonso's reign with the ascent to the throne when Alfonso is three years old. The only allusion to the political discord is clearly pro-Leonese, both by what is stated (that after the death of Sancho III, Fernando II of León cared for the child left under the protectorship of Count Manrique) and by what is omitted. He pointedly does not include stories about how the Leonese monarch took advantage of his brother's death to seize the patrimony of his orphaned four-year-old nephew, hardly a flattering role in any time and culture.

The vicissitudes of Alfonso's minority failed to divert Lucas from his primary objective, a balanced overview of the monarch's military and spiritual reconquest of Spain from Islam. In one sentence, he mentions the wedding, Eleanor's lineage, and the children and initiates a lengthy discussion of the military conflicts with the Muslim ruler, or Miramolin (the caliphal title Amîr al-Mu'mínîn). He barely conceals the seams that concatenate sources; these include genealogical lines, lists of cities and monasteries founded, lists of military opponents, and lists of donations. Like Plutarch in his biographies, Lucas describes in general terms the virtues of the young monarch after he comes of age: "For he was great in wisdom, prudent in counsel, vigorous in military action, outstanding for generosity, and strong in the Catholic faith" (*Fuit namque sapientia magnus, consilio providus, armis strenuus, largitate praecipuus et fide catholica roboratus*). The end of Alfonso's reign concludes at his death and interment: "He was splendidly entombed at Burgos, in the monastery of Las Huelgas which he had built; he reigned for fifty-five years" (*Burgis in monasterio de Olgis, quod, ipse construxerat, gloriose sepultus est; regnavitannis quinquaginta quinque*). [31] No evidence of historical or literary narrative characterizes Lucas's account of Alfonso VIII, either as a source or at the metalevel structure.
Events occur and have beginnings and endings, but neither internally nor through the author's intrusion is meaning added to the events. Subjective commentary had to await another generation of historical writers.

RODRIGO JIMÉNEZ DE RADA, DE REBUS HÍSPANLAE
Jiménez de Rada in De rebus Hispaniae (1243) was more thorough in relating the perplexing early years of Alfonso's reign. Since neither inheriting the monarchy a few weeks shy of his fourth birthday nor receiving an impressive coronation on reaching majority at the age of fifteen immediately resulted in Alfonso's autonomy and majestic acts, the Toledan [151] historian was pressed to elect some sequence of events to explain his development from the status of child-king as Rex puellus and Rex parvulus to Rex nobilis. He attempted to rationalize Alfonso's dynamism and success in terms of his own ethical and political values.

The Toledan does not mention that Alfonso VIII's mother, Doña Blanca, died when the infante was nine months of age. [32] In a prehistory of the young monarch's reign, Archbishop Rodrigo detailed the deathbed scene where the moribund Sancho anticipated his own early demise. [33] Clearly concerned about the future of his son and the monarchy, the ailing ruler dictated the protectorship of his infant son to the upper nobility until he would reach the age of fifteen years. Sancho specified members of the Castro and Lara families to guard and tutor the rey don Alfonso niño, thus exacerbating the preexisting tension between the families and later embroiling Fernando II of León.

Subjectivity colors Rodrigo's description of Alfonso's early years. He appears to be clearly touched by the child's beauty, vivacity, and precocity: "from early childhood lively of countenance, retentive of memory, and broad of intellect" (hic ab infantia vultu vivax, memoria tenax, intellectu capax). [34] Some of the gratuitous, flattering, descriptive details about Alfonso VIII found in the De rebus do not appear in manuscripts of the Crónica de veinte reyes or of the Crónica de Castilla. Unlike Lucas, the Toledan relates the events of Alfonso's minority with detailed episodes characterized by a stylistically crafted literary narrative, containing minute details about the action, affective reactions (the child's crying, anger of the monarch, fear of the upper nobility), direct and reported discourse, attribution to oral sources (sic dicitur respondisse), interpretation by the narrative voice, rhetorical figures, frequent use of sobriquet, and a conclusion.

On Alfonso VIII's early childhood, Rodrigo relates a remarkable chapter in the Lara-Castro feud, in which Manrique de Lara and his nephews disinter the body of Gutierr Fernández de Castro to use as ransom, and the cortes of Castilian nobles meets and determines the outcome. [35] The Toledan's source is not annalistic but clearly a stylistically developed narrative, whose format may have been a historical legend or even an epic poem. [36] Although no evidence of assonance exists, a clear vernacular formula occurs twice in the 1289 post-Alfonsine translation of this portion: "dell una et de la otra part" (Primera crónica general, 669a51) and "de la vna et de la otra parte" (669b4 7-48). [37]

Because of the interrelationship between the reigns of Alfonso VIII of Castile and Fernando II of León and because of his own thinly veiled pro- [152] Castilian sympathies, the Toledan hesitates and falters in assigning the flow of events to the reign of one monarch or another. His most extensively detailed, sympathetic description of the innocence and beauty of the Rex puellus, or tender young king, appears in a chapter entitled "That King Ferdinand gained almost all Extremadura" (Quod Rex Fernandus obtinuit fere totam Extermaturam). The archbishop's smoldering anti-Leonese bias surfaces where he
narrates Alfonso's recovery of Toledo after twelve years under Leonese domination. He explains that Alfonso's political and spiritual triumphs (the restoration of his *infantaticum*, his good looks, manners, and protection from enemies and seductors) were God's gifts for recovering Toledo from Fernando.

**THE HISTORIA NOBILIARIA IN ALFONSINE AND POST-ALFONSINE CHRONICLES**

The vernacular chronicles under consideration which used the Alfonsine materials (the *Primera crónica general*, the *Crónica de Castilla*, the *Veinte reyes*, the *Ocampiana*, and the *Manuelina interpolada*) begin the narration of the rey Nino's life before the death of Sancho III. They appropriated a single vernacular translation of *De rebus*, which narrates the ruse whereby members of the Castro family kidnapped him under the nose of Fernando II of León and the Laras, and the disinterment of Gutierr Fernández which ultimately motivated the alliance between the Castros and Fernando II of León. The Alfonsine team translated Rodrigo's text directly from Latin; it is not to be confused with the fifteenth-century *Toledano romanzado*. [38] The *Crónica de Castilla* and the *Veinte reyes* lack the rhetorical amplifications found in the 1289 *Primera crónica general*, revealing their close proximity to the original Alfonsine translation.

Always intent upon exact dating of events by year of reign, the *Veinte reyes* notes that in the third year of Alfonso's reign, which would make him about seven, he was still not weaned: "he was not weaned from his nurse's breast" (*non era quito de la teta de su ama*), following the Toledan's "the little one clung to his nurse's breast" (*et qui adhuc a mamillis nutrias parvulus dependebat*) (161). The *Primera crónica general* and the *Ocampiana*, like the Toledan's *De rebus*, do not specify date or age. The first, like its Latin source, says that "he clung to the breasts of his nurses" (*de las tetas du sus amas colgaua*); the *Manuelina interpolada* more colorfully, but probably from a faulty reading, says: "he rode [horseback] on his nurses' breasts" (*de tetas de sus amas caualgaua*). [153]

Toward the end of this story, the vernacular chronicles "open" the shared Alfonsine matrix based on the *De rebus*; that matrix itself evidently was marred structurally, judging by lacunae in the *Primera crónica general* manuscripts (671b27, 55). In this matrix, the chronicles interpolate a literary narrative in which the rey Niño becomes a wisp of a background figure, less visible than the upper nobility fighting for his control. Stylistically and thematically, this narrative is similar to the chapter on the disinterment of Gutierr Fernández de Castro included in the *De rebus*, but the narrative is not found in the extant Latin chronicle.

As clearly reflected in the Alfonsine chronicles, this lost *Historia nobiliaria*, clearly pre-emplotted as a coherent and stylistically crafted literary narrative, contained personal and ethical conflicts, characterizations of physical and affective traits (wry humor, paternal instinct, emotional peaks and lows), thematic unity (loyalty, justice), stylistic distinctiveness (dialogue, repetition, rapid concatenations to evoke movement and urgency), perspective (preferential treatment of the Lara dynasty), and mood (a sense of immediacy, tragedy). The clear focus of this lost literary account of the childhood of Alfonso VIII doubtless posed editorial problems for the late thirteenth-century vernacular chroniclers, as it may have for the Toledan previously. Because identical fragments figure in the *Crónica abreviada*, the *Castilla*, and *Veinte reyes*, this *Historia nobiliaria* must have been present in the Alfonsine scriptorium. [39]

The *Ocampiana* and *Manuelina interpolada* chronicles, slightly later than *Castilla* and *Veinte reyes*, announce and justify the inclusion of this source which was *menos atajante* than the Toledan's history. *The Manuelina interpolada* explains:

> And because we feel that much more pertains to it that would not be "complete" if this were not included here, and because we know by proof of these writings that it was like this and is certain, hence we put it here in the history in the reasonable
place, neither diminishing nor augmenting the words that Archbishop Rodrigo nor Lucas, bishop of Tuy, nor the other sages and honorable men put here. [40]

Contextually, that introduction implies at least a collected if not unified work. Next, a table of narratives, as part of a scholastic prologue, lists episodes between the Castros and Laras: the trickery of Fernán Ruiz de Castro, the highly dramatic siege of Zorita, and the treason of Dominguillo, to name only a few episodes. This preface to the narrative merits further study in the light of Minnis's work on the prologue and late [154] medieval literary theory. Although the Veinte reyes and the Crónica de Castilla do not include the prologue or introduce the source by name, they cite its text directly, including discourse and rhetorical figures, suggesting the availability of the narrative body by the end of the thirteenth century.

The absence of the Historia nobiliaria from the Primera crónica general must be due to the unacceptable or confusing nature of its content, hence its deliberate suppression. Why did the Crónica de Castilla and Veinte reyes, particularly the latter, favor the Historia? Both reflect a democratizing tendency by the portrayal of upper nobility in enhanced political roles; sensing this political danger articulated in the Historia nobiliaria and wishing to suppress literary documentation of their nascent power, Alfonso X excluded it from his historical compilation. It simply was not in focus with the essentially pro-monarchic Primera crónica general. The bias in the Historia’s narratives favors the Lara dynasty, hence its favor with the Veinte reyes; but in the Crónica de Castilla and the later chronicles, it becomes politically hermaphroditic, favoring occasionally one family, then the other.

The dramatic and poetic potential of the Historia nobiliaria narratives caught the attention of Sepúlveda, who cast them into new romances: Romance del rey don Alfonso y Lope de Arenas (fols. 142v-45v), and Romance de el conde don Manrique y el conde de Castro (fols. 146-48v). Sepúlveda's early poetic accounts drawn from these legends corroborate the artistic and dramatic merit of the narrative fragments from the lost Historia nobiliaria and underscore the political undertones of their content. This may explain why the narratives originally were rejected by the evidently pro-Castro early Alfonsine teams.

El Rey Noble, Fermosa, and the Despertamiento Motif
When Alfonso X selected De rebus for the comprehensive organizational framework for the Estoria de Espanna, he inherited the Toledan's occasional inexplicable shifts of topic and his implausibly juxtaposed strings of events. The Learned Monarch consulted primary sources for alternate routes to narrative cohesion and "meaning." Following the Toledan in the reign of Alfonso VIII, the Primera crónica general and the Veinte reyes marginalize Fermosa from the course of history. The Crónica de Castilla, the Crónica abreviada, the Manuelina interpolada, and the Ocamiana, however, emplot the story of Alfonso's relationship with Fermosa as pivotal in the true beginning of his reign. In the absence of annalistic record of the events, or [155] specific mention of the affair in either annalistic or chronistic predecessors, factual historical documentation of this illicit relationship remains to be demonstrated. Contributing to the plausibility of an extramarital relationship are the significant difference between his own and his bride's tender ages (fifteen and nine years), the general acceptance by historians that the affair took place immediately following his marriage to Eleanor, the seven-year delay before the birth of the first child, and the premature death of that firstborn son.

DE REBUS HISPANLAE
Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada relates how, precisely fifteen years from Alfonso's birth, the monarch assumed the crown but continued to be under undue influence by the upper nobility, who shortly later
arranged his marriage with the nine-year-old Eleanor of England. Subsequently, Alfonso VIII failed to demonstrate political excellence and soon suffered a dramatic defeat by the Moors in 1195 at the battle of Alarcos. Archbishop Rodrigo extracted "facts" relative to this period of Alfonso's life from annals, monastic histories, and perhaps personal recollections; but his attempt to find "meaning" in the facts and to draw them to closure were not successful. Simultaneous with Alfonso's founding the monastery at Burgos with his new bride, he is seen planning revenge for the defeat at Alarcos during a truce with the kingdoms of Navarre and León, ventures hardly compatible. Rodrigo lists and elaborates Alfonso's charitable acts and the death of his infant son, and concludes Book VII of the De rebus before the battle of Ubeda or Las Navas in which he himself participated. Structurally, the extant version of the Toledan's history fails, naming Alfonso's children by Eleanor twice; and he does not narrate and elaborate details of the marriage. The legend of Alfonso's liaison with Fermosa does not appear in De rebus.

**ALFONSINE AND POST-ALFONSINE ACCOUNTS**

Alfonso's relationship with the Jewess of Toledo appears in writing for the first time as marginalia in the versión regia of the 1289 Primera crónica general, and it is incorporated into the text itself in a late fourteenth-century copy. It awkwardly intrudes an unresolved thematic and narrative counterpoint in the chapter based on the De rebus, in which Alfonso and Eleanor founded the monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos. The affair is linked with the monarch's defeat at Alarcos, both by its place of interpolation and by intertextual reference in the marginalia. During Alfonso's own lifetime, his dramatic spiritual awakening (despertamiento) and repentance were associated with the military defeat at Alarcos in the poetry of Folquet de Marselha, who later would become bishop of Toulouse. The early vernacular marginal mention in the Primera crónica general of the seven-year affair explains that the monastery at Burgos was founded for three reasons: service to God, nobility for Alfonso's body and soul, and repentance for his liaison with the Jewess of Toledo. Angered at Alfonso's sin with Fermosa, God sent an angel to Illescas two years after the loss at Alarcos to inform Alfonso that his daughter would inherit his lineage. The angel admonishes Alfonso at Illescas: "for the sin which he committed with the Jewess, " abandoning his wife for her, "he was defeated at the battle of Alarcos." When King Alfonso heard this, "he became very sad in his heart, deeply repenting his sins, and from that moment forward he worked to establish the monastery of Burgos and the hospital." The narrative account of Fermosa's violent beheading at the hands of the advisors, totally absent in the Primera crónica general marginalia, constitutes a familiarly grisly motif in popular legend and in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Evidence of a traditional popular legend can be postulated on the basis of other chronicle versions. Just as the Cid epic poem acquired monastic overlays, while the prose legend was convoluted and continued in prose at Cárdena, the account of Alfonso's extramarital conquests attracted monastic interpretation and was used for its contained "truth." The narrative form has disappeared entirely in the Primera crónica general's marginalia, leaving only the moralistic flotsam as witness to its earlier vitality and dramatic cohesion. Alfonso's "no-fault" adultery figures in the earlier Crónica de Castilla, where Fermosa is not the temptress or victim but a mutually consenting lover. Later chronicles emphasize antisemitism (Fermosa as a mala judia in the Crónica de 1344 and in Ocampiana, and "the sorcery she knew how to do" (por feitiços quelh ella sabia fazer in the Crónica de 1344). Edna Aizenberg's interesting observations about Fermosa as an object of desire are true of the later chronistic versions; but in the earlier Crónica de Castilla account, the story relates true love. Within the trajectory of the Alfonsine and post-Alfonsine chronicles, the once-shadowy paramour acquires powerfully negative dimensions to foil her Christian lover, a conceit for dramatic balance. The interpretive elements that accrued in fourteenth-century handling of Alfonsine texts further mediate to divide us from "reality."
Vernacular chronicles differ significantly among themselves in sequencing and in proportion of detail of the amorous liaison, versus the monastic interpretation and the position of the legend within the text. Unlike the Primera crónica general, the late thirteenth-century Crónica de Castilla, which in this part reflects most closely the Estoria de España materials in the Alfonsine scriptorium, "correctly" positions the legend of his illicit tryst immediately following the wedding to Eleanor, as do the Ocampiana and the Manuelina interpolada. In these fluent, stylistically embellished narratives, a crazed love causes him to lose control and to abandon governance of his kingdom. The wise counselors enter the king's luxuriously appointed bedroom and engage him in a conversation outside, while others behead Fermosa and her entourage.

In the Crónica de Castilla the drama of a vernacular legend overshadows any moralistic interpretation; the Illescas vision contains less detail than even the marginal note in the Primera crónica general. The Crónica de Castilla's sister chronicle Crónica de veinte reyes, like the Primera crónica, the De rebus, and the Crónica abreviada, does not include the story. The Manuelina interpolada and Ocampiana, however, based on the amplified, later version of the Primera crónica general, interpolate the legend in the same place and with the same detail as the Crónica de Castilla, emploted with sensual detail and affective overtones, following the identical Alfonsine account which predates its moralistic elaboration. Clearly, the presence or absence of the legend in some chronicles relates to ethical, political, and/or social bias and to the intent of the authors of history, not to its availability or perceived validity.

The Fermosa legend in Castigos e documentos preserves the later moralized version seen in the Primera crónica general marginalia, stripped of its narrative and affective elements. Lorenzo de Sepúlveda drew the historical narrative for his ballads from the Alfonsine version of the Estoria de España, involving "all the events and happenings which have happened in our Spain from the time of its settlement to the death of the sainted king don Fernando his father" (todos los hechos y acontecimientos que en nuestra España han acontecido desde el tiempo de su población, hasta la muerte del sancto rey don Fernando su padre, 2v-3r). They contain both the narrative and the moral, hence they are related only in gross structural lines to the Crónica de 1344 and the Ocampiana. The Romance del rey don Alfonso y de la Iudia mentions the youthful marriage arranged by high nobles of the kingdom [158] (los grandes de su reynado), positions the beginning of the affair immediately after the wedding, and again blames the affair on a blind love. These details clearly come from the primitive folkloric tradition, not from the later antisemitic monastic moralization. The ballad also narrates in detail the intrigue of the beheading, including interpretive features of the Crónica de Castilla version, not distinguishing between the narrative and the moral, poeticizing both the tryst and the vision at Illescas. Most significantly, the ballad does not directly relate the Fermosa episode to the loss of Alarcos, but more personally to the death of the firstborn son and to the future line of succession through the daughter: "God has taken from you great service because of your evil; no son of yours will remain, only a daughter will receive your inheritance":

| Dios deti gran servicio de tu maldad ha tomado no fincara de ti hijo mas hija te aura heredado. |
| (145v) |

The perception of female firstborn as punishment polarizes the legend toward popular origins and toward a folkloric treatment of the adultery motif.
The Alfonsine chronicles, and the later historical works drawn from them, reveal that the Fermosa legend existed in two stages of development—a popular one emphasizing the tryst and Alfonso VIII's failure to provide a successful heir, and another elaborating the awakening (despertamiento) motif with moralistic interpretations linked to the monarch's military failure, accountability, and ultimately successful reign.

Only at the highest structural order, the sequencing of reigns, did Alfonso perpetuate the inherited chronicist mode, presenting events with abrupt beginnings and endings. Within the defined boundaries of a monarch's reign, the Learned Author emplotted the events of history in meaningful sequence and populated the stories with demographically diversified actors, thereby decisively advancing the historiographic modality toward a coherent, unified literary narrative.

Notes for Chapter Ten

[1]. The manuscripts selected for this study are: Primera crónica general, in Biblioteca de El Escorial, X-I-4, and in Biblioteca del Palacio Nacional 11-429 (ant. 2-E-4); Crónica de Castilla, in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 12; Crónica de veinte reyes, in Biblioteca de El Escorial, Y-1-12; Crónica manuelina interpolada, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, 64-41; Crónica ocampiana, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Madrid, 1877. Some of the microfilm and typescripts of the manuscripts used in this study were provided by the Cátedra-Seminario Menéndez Pidal in Madrid. With research grants and travel money from Texas A&M University and the American Council for Learned Societies, I consulted all the original manuscripts in the summers of 1978, 1984, and 1986.


[12]. White, "Historical Text," 49.


[24] For what follows, consult the list of manuscript and source citations above in n. 1.


[31] *Chronicon mundi*, in *Crónica de España*, ed. Julio Puyol (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1926), 409, 414 (quotations). Scholars who pursue this subject may be interested in the curious fact that the earliest Castilian translation of the *Chronicon mundi* has a lacuna where the reign of Alfonso VIII should appear.


[34] *De rebus*, 1593.


[40] Fol. 15v: "E porque tenemos que le pertenesce mucho que (fueron); non podia ser conplida si esto non y fuese puesto. E porque sabemos por prueuas destas escripturas que esto fue asi e que es gierto, por ende pon é moslo aqui en la estoria en los logares convenibles, non menguando nin crescendo ninguna de los rrazones que el arzobispo don Rodrigo, nin de don Lucas Obispo de Tuy, nin los otros sabios e ornes honrrados y pusieron."

[41] This manuscript is Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, 10134 bis (ant. Ii, unnumbered) described in Catalán, *De Alfonso X*, 42-43, nn. 15-16.

[43]. *Primera crónica general*, 685b42-7: "por el peccado que feziste con la judia et dexauas la reyna tu muger por ella, quisotelo Dios calomiar . . . et por esso fuste uencudo en la batalla de Alarcos. . . . Quando el rey don Alfonso ouo oyro esto, fico muy triste en so coraíon, repentiendose mucho de sus peccados, et de allí adelante puso de fazer el monesterio de Burgos et el hospital."