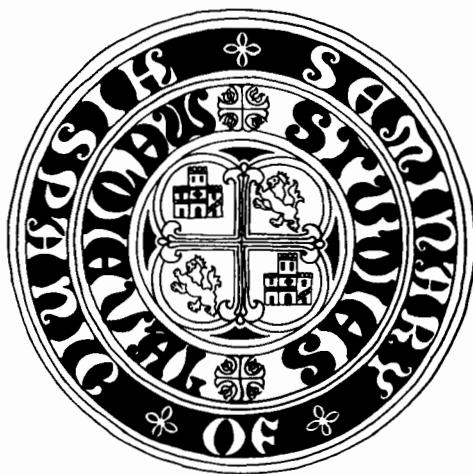**Alfonso Martínez de Toledo,**

Archpriest of Talavera

Atalaya de las Coronicas

Edited by

James B. Larkin

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Preface

The present edition of *Atalaya de las coronicas*, the first to be published of the entire text, is designed to provide an accurate, readable version of this important but hitherto-neglected work. The principal manuscript, on which the foliation is based, is Codex Egerton 287 of the British Library. While extensive cross-comparison has been made with other manuscripts of the work, variorum listings are limited to those which have a direct bearing on establishing an accurate and satisfactory reading of a passage. The running text has been relieved of the technical complications of paleographic transcription, but every effort has been made not to deform the fifteenth-century language of the original, including variant forms and spellings. Where necessary, separate Notes are supplied to help to explain the text, and a brief Glossary of unusual or difficult terms has been added.

An undertaking as extensive as the present one obviously owes much to its predecessors. The late Raúl del Piero in 1970 produced a paleographic transcription of the first ten chapters, through the chronicle of Amalaric (fol. 31v, p. 13b of the present editon); in 1966 he supplied a reading of the "evil archpriest" tale (fol. 110v, p. 48b), plus other useful commentaries. Inocencio Bombín, in his 1976 dissertation, carried the text through the reign of Ferdinand III of Castile (fol. 160r, p. 72a), and brought to light important information relative to sources of the entire *Atalaya*. It should be noted that Bombín's work, to date unpublished and difficult to obtain, was not available until the present edition was nearing completion; even so, I am much indebted to it for having enlightened numerous textual problems, and for calling attention to details which might have been missed otherwise.

Accordingly, for the purposes of the present research the work is divided into four parts: 1) the table of contents, and the first ten chapters, corresponding to del Piero (fols. 1r-31v); 2) from the chronicle of Teudis through that of Fernando III (31v-160r), corresponding to Bombín's edition; 3) the remaining text of the manuscripts in the "palatine tradition" (160r-260v), for which the various manuscripts themselves were the chief source of information; 4) the final portion (260v-292v), unique to the Egerton codex — for which cross-comparison was not possible.

There are many persons whose help and cooperation were indispensable to the editing of the text. I acknowledge my gratitude to the British Library, the Austrian National Library, and the monastery library in El Escorial for providing access to the various manuscripts; to the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, and its curator Julian Plante, for the use of the microfilm of the Vienna codex; and to Michael Gerli of Georgetown University for the loan

Introduction

I. The Author and the Work

The name of Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, archpriest of Talavera, is best known because of a single work, the *Corbacho*, which saw print soon after it was written, and established its author as a fifteenth-century literary figure of some note. Other works of his, of which the *Atalaya de las coronicas* is the longest, have received scant attention until recently. The *Atalaya* in particular has remained largely unknown, since its full text has not been edited or published to date. Within the past twenty years, Raúl del Piero brought into print several isolated chapters or fragments (the chapter on Mohammed [fol. 42r, p. 17b] in 1960, the tale of the evil archpriest [fol. 110v, p. 48b] in 1966); finally, in 1970, he published a paleographic text of the first ten "corónicas," up to the chapter on Teudis ("Tendio")[1]. From this point on, the dissertation of Inocencio Bombín supplies a significant body of critically-edited text, carrying through the reign of Fernando III [fol. 160r, p. 72a][2]. Unfortunately, this important addition to *Atalaya* scholarship remains unpublished and unavailable in microform, making it difficult of access.

As can be seen, the sum total of edited versions comes to slightly more than half of the 292 folios of the London codex—the base manuscript of the present text. This relatively sparse attention to date is no doubt due in part to the rather formidable length of the work; but, more significantly, it can be attributed also to the undeserved reputation the *Atalaya* had, until recently, of being little more than a direct copy of well-known earlier tracts, and therefore of scant interest on its own (see later, on sources). Despite this, there are some who have seen the neglect of the *Atalaya* as due precisely to the lack of a usable version. As early as 1904, Bonilla considered the text worthy of further knowledge; more recently, von Richthofen and Homero Serís have called for an edition.[3] Given the importance of the Archpriest as a literary figure in his time, more attention to the *Atalaya*, his longest work, is clearly deserved.

About the Archpriest himself not a great deal is known. He was born about 1398, and by 1443 he was serving as royal chaplain (and probably also chronicler, since these two posts were often combined) in the court of Juan II of Castile. It is not known whether he continued to hold this post after the king's death in July of 1454; or if he did in fact stay on, for how long and under what circumstances. Eventually, under Enrique IV, Diego Enríquez del Castillo was appointed to the post, but it seems unlikely that he succeeded to it as early as 1454, since he would have been only eleven years old at the time.[4] Likewise, the year of the Archpriest's death is not certain, although recent evidence has removed some doubt: Bombín (pp. 16-17) cites a statement in Beltrán de Heredia's *Bulario* of the University of Salamanca (documents 1218a and 1218b, dated March 7, 1468) recording a petition to Pope Paul II relative to naming one Nicolás Fernández to the post of archpriest of Talavera, left vacant by the death of the incumbent "Alfonso Martínez." Since such

appointments were much sought after, and promptly filled, it seems likely that the Archpriest's death occurred sometime early in 1468. Countering this, the Archpriest's gravestone in the cathedral of Toledo gives the date of his death as 2 January 1460; however, the "LX" part of the date is followed by a blank space, making it appear that the inscription is incomplete, and therefore inaccurate.[5]

Although the *Atalaya* is logically a result of the Archpriest's responsibility as a royal chronicler, there is no positive evidence that it was written in response to a specific mandate. It is, in any case, a document representative of its time and environment. The fifteenth century is a period rich in chronicles of various kinds. They fall into two general types: surveys or compilations of general history; and chronicles centered on specific reigns or personages. The *Atalaya* belongs, of course, to the first of these two groups. Both types by mid-fifteenth century usually had specific, identifiable authors, differing in this way from quasi-anonymous chronicles typical of earlier eras. There is no doubt about authorship of the *Atalaya*: in his prologue [fol. 8r, p. 2b] the Archpriest identifies himself, and announces his purpose: "copilar los mas rreyes asy godos commo españoles e castellanos que yo pudiese alcançar e saber, e so el mas conpendio breue que a mi posible fuese, e segunt las coronicas que alcançar pudiese . . ." Hence the title *Atalaya*—a high point from which much can be observed. The author dates his work here 1443, and later mentions the same date in two other places: at the end of the chronicle of Reccesvinth ("Resçesundo") [fol. 55v, p. 24a], and shortly afterward at the end of the chapter on Wamba [fol. 61v, p. 26b]. These rather obvious occurrences have unfortunately led to imprecise conclusions implying that the entire *Atalaya*, up to the end point of all the manuscripts save the London codex, was begun and completed in the same calendar year. In none of the instances cited does the Archpriest actually say he has *finished* the work; the phrases are, respectively: "propuse e comedi de copilar"; "este libro se fizo";[6] "este libro se conpuso." Furthermore, the last mention of a date of composition comes at folio 61v,[7] thus leaving some 200 folios afterward in which nothing of this sort is noted, although the work up to this point (folio 260v of the London ms.) is generally accepted as being that of the Archpriest, as opposed to the final section of *L*, about which important doubts can be raised (see later). It is unlikely that one person, having other responsibilities as well, could have put together an opus of the *Atalaya*'s bulk in a single year: without even considering the physical task of writing, one need reflect only upon the time-consuming compilation and collation from multiple sources, a task to which the author himself makes direct reference, as has already been noted. A reasonable assumption is that the *Atalaya* was begun in 1443, and that work on it continued over a number of years— perhaps as many as eleven, until 1454.

II. Manuscripts

As noted earlier, there is no printed version of the *Atalaya*. There are, however, eight known manuscript copies in existence. They are as follows:

L: Codex Egerton 287, the British Library, London, 15th century. This is the base manuscript for the present edition.

E: Monasterio de El Escorial, Biblioteca; a fragment occupying folios 312r-398v of codex X-I-12; 15th century

P: Biblioteca del Palacio Real, Madrid; nº 1892 (formerly 2-C-9); 15th century.

V: Codex Palatinus Vindobonensis Hispanicus 4324*; Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien; 15th century.

H: Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 9-5631 (formerly 26-1-21); 18th century.

P': Biblioteca del Palacio Real, II-1073 (formerly 2-F-4); part of a larger volume entitled "Crónicas inéditas "; 18th century.

B: Biblioteca de Cataluña (Barcelona), nº 1040; 18th century.

A: Biblioteca de la Academia Española, ms. 72; 18th century.

Del Piero (1966 and 1970) worked out a *stemma* showing the relationship of the various manuscripts; it was later somewhat modified by Bombín (p. 94). The composite result is shown in the graphic on the following page. The Greek letters in the diagram represent putative copies, now lost, whose existence is posited on the evidence offered by those extant. As is evident, there are two principal branches, one with *L* as its sole surviving representative, and the second including the other seven existing manuscripts (called by del Piero the "palatine transmission"). From the diagram it is also evident that *L* is one of the closest to the original. Of the total of eight manuscripts, four—*L, E, P,* and *V*—date from the fifteenth century and are of critical interest. Of these, *L* is clearly the most authentic and textually pure, and it is unique in that the narration continues through the death of Juan II, whereas all other versions terminate rather abruptly in the third year of Enrique III (1393). This unique feature of *L*, along with a pattern of omissions and errors distinct from *P, V,* and *E,* justify its position in the *stemma*, and also its use as the base text for the present edition. The physical aspect of the *L* text is hardly impressive: it is all in the same hand, the rapid cursive of an unpracticed scribe, or at least of one in a hurry. There are a number of marginal notes in another handwriting, that of Diego de Colmenares,[8] possessor of the manuscript until his death in 1651, at which time it passed to a dealer named Pedro Laso. It was acquired by the British Museum in 1835, upon the death of its last Spanish owner, Antonio de Uguina.