

**Fernando de la Torre's Letter to Enrique IV of Castile:
"Aquella osada, enojosa, e desuariada letra"**

Nancy F. Marino
Michigan State University

When Enrique IV inherited the Castilian throne from his father, Juan II, in 1454, he had already been actively involved in politics for some time. As Prince of Asturias, Enrique had alternately supported and opposed his father in Castile's ongoing struggles with the Infantes de Aragón and in conflicts with powerful aristocratic families that had plagued his reign since its beginnings. One of the most volatile issues concerned Juan II's favorite, Constable of Castile Álvaro de Luna, whose controversial relationship with the king and amassing of a great fortune led to his intermittent exile from Castile. Enmity toward Luna finally culminated in his imprisonment and execution in June, 1453. Enrique's support of the Constable had vacillated over the years, apparently following the advice of Juan Pacheco, the Marqués de Villena, who had been at Enrique's side for many years and would remain his *valido* until his death in October, 1474, just two months before the king's own demise. In the end, while still prince, Enrique joined forces with the anti-Luna aristocracy and his step-mother, Queen Juana, to bring an end to the Constable. He nevertheless withdrew from the political stage after Luna's death, returning to public life when Juan II died, little more than a year after his favorite's execution. Although Luna's disappearance had satisfied the nobility's complaint with the crown, it did not solve factional fighting among them. Enrique therefore was heir not only to the throne, but to the civil discord that his father's rule was unable to suppress. Despite these entrenched problems, the young monarch nevertheless was able to reign in relative peace for about a decade.

Fernando de la Torre was a native of Burgos who had been attached to the court of Juan II since his youth. Details of his life are somewhat sketchy, but a plausible biography has been pieced together from historical documents and information that he included in his correspondence with others and in his poetry.¹ Born around 1416, Fernando studied for a time in Florence. In 1434 he formed part of the Castilian delegation to the Council of Basel, probably accompanying Bishop of Burgos Alonso de Cartagena, with whose family he apparently had a close friendship. It is not evident whether he returned to Spain with the bishop in 1439 or prior to that year, but some time after his return he was in service to Juan II. There is no clear indication of when he joined the Castilian court; the earliest reference to his activities there are found in a letter that he wrote to a friend in which he mentions having participated in the sixteen-day siege of the town of Benavente, a struggle in the ongoing civil war with Aragon

¹ Antonio Paz y Melia provided a biography in his early edition of Fernando's works (1907, v-xxix). It has been superseded by the account that María Jesús Díez Garretas included in the introduction to her edition (Torre 1983, 13-26).

that occurred in 1449.² In several other letters –including the one addressed to Enrique IV that is the subject of this essay– Fernando refers to the loss of his right arm at a battle in Briones, which probably occurred in 1452. The injury would have meant the end of his military career, but it did not curtail his activities in the service of the king. His letters indicate that he had been in France as part of a delegation on more than one occasion. He was there in from 1452 to 1453 and was witness to the Battle of Bordeaux, which was the final conflict of the Hundred Years War. His interactions with members of the Burgundian court during this time prompted him to write the letter to Enrique IV. It was not, however, the only event that provided him motivation to address the king about issues that concerned the present and future of Castile. As we shall see, Fernando de la Torre’s letter was informed by his participation in the Council of Basel, his loyalty to Juan II, the death of Álvaro de Luna, as well as his visit to the court of Charles VII of France. But the text is not uniformly optimistic in its assessment of the state of the Castile in the mid-fifteenth century, as it points out the kingdoms shortcomings as well as its advantages over other European nations. Fernando was keenly aware of his boldness in addressing Castile’s negative as well as positive traits, and refers repeatedly to his audacity at sending such a “crazy” and “intemperate” missive to the new king. As Américo Castro correctly observed, it was written “en estilo inconcebible un siglo antes” (88).

Fernando de la Torre states in the letter that he was moved to write the Castilian king because of a conversation he had in the presence of King Charles with a “cavallero francés” concerning the imprisonment, death, and great wealth of don Álvaro de Luna. He and the French courtier apparently had a heated discussion about the Constable’s execution, but Fernando decides not to elaborate on this aspect of their interaction at this time (“dexadas las otras altercaçiones sobre la manera de su muerte” [Torre 1983, 345]), choosing instead to inform Enrique IV about the Frenchman’s comments concerning the assets that Luna had accumulated over the years. How is it, he challenges the Castilian visitor, that the Constable –regardless of how long he had been Juan II’s favorite– had amassed in his castle at Escalona so enormous a fortune that it was greater than all the riches of the King of France? Fernando considered this question an affront to the excellence, greatness, and fertility of the Kingdom of Castile, which had provided Luna with the great wealth that he enjoyed. It is important to note, however, that Fernando was not defending the Constable himself, but the kingdom. He was one of several Castilian authors (most notable among them, the Marqués de Santillana) who composed poems on Don Álvaro’s death, depicting him as hungry for power and material possessions.³ Instead, Fernando understood the French courtiers’ question as a challenge to Castilians:

² Fernando de la Torre was a diligent correspondent with men and women alike. Forty of his letters are extant, and in these are references to others, now lost. For an overview see Parrilla & Chas Aguión.

³ Fernando’s own composition is a lengthy text in which he has Luna described his own execution and contemplated the transitory nature of life. It appears in six fifteenth-century *cancioneros*.

Como quier que a mí me desplaze argüir contra la exçelencia e grandeza de Françia, por ser hermana d'esta noble, grande e virtuosa Castilla, mas vuestra demasía me faze que non pueda nin deua callar; e pues que en fabla e sin armas contendemos, antes me plaze contra el más grande e excelente reyno de Christianos, que es el de Françia, que contra otro que fuese menor. (345)

Fernando de la Torre then proceeds to direct his comments to Enrique IV, pointing out to him the great advantages that the Castilian had over her sister kingdom, as well as making comparisons to the present state of conditions in Flanders and Italy. Along the way he reveals an impressive knowledge of the incomes of other kingdoms, the basis for their economies, and commercial trade among them. He will also unwittingly reveal a peculiarity in the Castilian character that he defends as a sign of superiority, a disdain for manual labor with its emphasis on the superior position of providing the raw materials for other nations less endowed for them to manufacture into goods.⁴ The purpose of this detailed discourse is to remind the new king of the abundance of the kingdom that he has inherited and to urge him to continue to take advantage of its potential. This, in turn, gives Fernando the opportunity to provide Enrique with a primer on good government, and finally to appeal to him to fulfill Spain's destiny by completing the conquest of Granada. The defense of Castile and the exhortation to govern well are clearly the result of Fernando's long experience in Spain and abroad, as well as his observation of Juan II's weakness that allowed Álvaro de Luna to wield great authority. His letter can be read as a caution as well as an exhortation. The letter's introductory remarks prepare the monarch for the strong opinions that follow: "a Vuestra Alteza e reposo plega de no aver enojo, como quiera mejor lo sepa e entienda, de leer esta desuariada e loca letra que con el dicho deseo osé escreuir" (344). It may be revealing that Fernando de la Torre apparently never addressed another text to Enrique IV; at least there are no extant prose communications nor poems that he dedicated to him.

Fernando divides his description of the qualities of Castile into three general categories: the prosperity of the high aristocracy and how they are indebted to their king; the merits of the lesser nobility that defends the kingdom and is able to conquer other lands if necessary; and the availability of military provisions, arms, and horses essential to defend the nation, as well as the abundance and fertility of its lands. This praise of the kingdom's men as well as the richness of its natural resources connect Fernando de la Torre's text to the *Laus Hispaniae* tradition with which he was apparently familiar.⁵ But perhaps his closest model for the exaltation of Spain's

⁴ This attitude became wide spread and it earned the Spanish a reputation for indolence that –deservedly or not– would come to define its national character for centuries afterward, especially in the opinion of other countries. See Mackay's study for a history of this notoriety.

⁵ In addition to the Alfonsine text the most notable early examples were the writings of St. Isidore and Lucas de Tuy.

superiority was the “Discurso de D. Alonso de Cartagena, Obispo de Burgos, sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea.” The bishop had been assigned the mission of defending Castile’s primacy over the English nation, a sensitive subject for both sides of the conflict. The day before his speech, Juan de Silva, Count of Cifuentes, had forcefully removed the English ambassador from a seat of superiority over the Castilian representation and then occupied that place himself.⁶ Cartagena’s eloquent discourse provided a more temperate, verbal version of Silva’s actions. He began by stating Castile’s precedence over England due to its having provided Emperors to the Roman Empire, to its historical independence from control by other nations, and to its greater number of military orders. The bishop then refers to the greater size of Spain as compared to England, and the fertility of its lands that made its people wealthy. At the end of the discourse Cartagena responds to the English ambassador’s claims of superiority to Castile, among them, the richness and productivity of its lands:

[Y] traré dos testigos suficientes e mayores de toda excepción... Es éstos son las viñas y los olivares, de las cuales hay gran habundancia en el regno de Castilla, e son desterrados para sienpre del regno de Inglaterra... [E]l vino y el aceite es en Castilla en tanta habundancia, que se lleva dende a nasciones estrañas. E si de los oficiales e fase paños fablaran, por ventura algo les confesara, ca non hay en nuestra tierra texedores, que tan delicado paño fagan como es la escarlata de Londres. Pero aun aquella confeción que llamamos grana, con que la escarlata rescibe la suavidad de olor e el encendimiento del color, en el regno de Castilla nasce, e dende se lleva a Inglaterra e aun a Italia... Pero respondiendigo digo que los castellanos... non miden la honor por la cantidad del dinero, mas por la qualidad de las obras fermosas. Por ende las riquezas non son de allegar en esta materia, ca si por las riquezas mediésemos los asentamientos, Cosmo de Médicis o otro muy rico mercadero precedería por ventura a algún duque. (227-28)

Fernando de la Torre was most likely in attendance when Cartagena pronounced this speech, which persuaded the Council of Basel to grant Castile precedence over England. Although twenty years would pass before he composed his letter to Enrique IV, he apparently kept in mind its winning arguments and most likely had access to it in written form as well.⁷ Fernando would elaborate on the bishop’s points in his discussion with the French courtier and then in his missive to the king.

In the first part of his exposition Fernando de la Torre addresses the French courtier’s challenge concerning the wealth of Castile’s high aristocracy. He tells

⁶ This was evidently a well-known incident, as Pulgar refers to it in detail in his *semblante* of Juan de Silva (40-41).

⁷ There are at least six known extant copies of the “Discurso” from the fifteenth century.

Enrique IV of the advantages of Castilian noblemen over their counterparts in France. He does so by criticizing the French system, which allowed nobles of great wealth to keep the incomes from their lands and to mint their own coin without contributing anything to the Crown. He compares this unfavorably with the custom of his own kingdom, in which the wealthiest aristocrats pay an annual tribute to their king's coffers through taxes and other obligations, and who cannot issue currency. Fernando is conversant with the income of the Duke of Burgundy (800,000 gold crowns per annum), over which the king of France has no jurisdiction, and with his military power, with which he responds to the king's call with only 700-800 men. This, in comparison to the Duke of Medina and the Counts of Haro or Plasencia, who had far less earnings from their property, yet who contribute both money and soldiers –paid from their own capital– to their king. He asks which nation's nobles could muster so great a number of men from their house alone? Fernando uses as an example of this shortcoming the fate of John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, who was defeated at Bordeaux in 1453, a battle which brought to an end the Hundred Years War. Fernando, who claims “yo vi por mis ojos esta postrimera conquista de Burdeos,” praises Talbot's bravery, but attributes his defeat to the lack of troops.⁸

Fernando then turns to the lesser nobility, who far outnumber their cohort in other kingdoms. He claims that these men reside in thirty cities that cover 300 leagues, and that in only ten hours they could come to the aid of the Crown. Among them he counts the military orders of Santiago, Alcántara, Calatrava, and San Juan, endowed not only with great might but with significant incomes of their own; in number and significance the French military orders could not measure up to them. This comment about the strength of these orders has an echo in Alonso de Cartagena's speech, as does Fernando's next point, on the number of men born in Castile who became Roman emperors (seven). He adds to the Castilian-born rulers of other kingdoms Enrique's cousin, Alfonso V of Aragon.

Fernando de la Torre focuses most on the third of his points, the abundance and fertility of the lands in his kingdom. He essentially develops the concepts that the Bishop of Burgos mentioned in his speech at Basel and provides ample examples and details to support these ideas. His text seems most closely informed not by the generalities that Cartagena makes in his speech, but by a much older model, Alfonso X's “Del loor de España” from his *Primera crónica general*:

España es abondada de mieses, deleitosa de fructas, ... llena de venados et de caza, cubierta de ganados, lozana de caballos, provechosa de mulos, segura et bastida de castiellos, alegre por buenos vinos, folgada de abondamiento de pan; rica de metales, de plomo, de estaño, de argent vivo, de fierro, de arambre, de plata, de oro, ... et d'otros mineros muchos:

⁸ The battle was fought at Castillon, near Bordeaux, with great loss of English lives, including Talbot's son. It is now generally agreed that, despite his reputation as a good general, the French troops prevailed because they far outnumbered the English.

azul, almagra, greda, alumbre et d'otros mineros muchos de cuantos se fallan en otras tierras; ... dulce de miel et de azucar, alumbrada de cera, complida de olio, alegre de azafrán. (2: 183)

Fernando's text reads:

...por actoridad de tanto fierro, tanto azero, tantas lanas, de tanto trigo, de tantos vinos, de tantos azyetes, de tanta fruta... e tanta miel, tanta grana e tanta greda, de tanto azogue... e de tantos e tan singulares caualllos e mulas e muchas otras e diuerssas cosas ...de las quales cosas algunas non en otra parte sinon en Castilla se fallan.... [L]a multitud de carnes que en ella ay,... oro e plata en mucha cantidad,...junto con los veneros del azogue... (352-53)

After Fernando de la Torre enumerates Castile's bounty, he reaches the conclusion that no other European nation could match it in productivity of the soil, the wealth its resources created for its owners, and their superiority for not having to engage in manual labor to benefit from its fruits. He recognizes, however, that other countries use the raw materials that Castile provides to manufacture excellent products: fine fabrics and tapestries in Flanders; harnesses from Milan; silks in Florence. He does admit that these items could be produced in Castile if the people knew how to make them. Using the hypothetical formula "si supiesen," Fernando makes a list of the skills that his countrymen lack: weaving, metallurgy, gold- and silversmithing, leather tanning and working, and more. But he adds a justification of their lack of manual skills, claiming that "lo podrían fazer, si quisiesen a ello disponerse" (351).

And that is the crux of the issue. Fernando de la Torre embraces a smug attitude about the need and desire for Castilians to engage in labor-intensive activities. Such occupations are not necessary, he writes, because they can simply live off the richness of the earth, an outlook that shaped their character and which he proudly compares to that of other nations. Commenting on the success of the market at Medina del Campo, Fernando exclaims: "¿E dónde esto imana e proçede saluo de la fertilidad de la tierra, e en otros reynos de la su neçesidad, la qual, trabajando las gentes, saben convertir en riquezas e rentas? Porque aquella los faze ser ingeniosos e ricos, e en Castilla la grosedad de la tierra los faze en çierta manera ser orgullosos e araganes e non tanto engeniosos nin trabajadores" (353). While it might seem that such indolence would be a source of embarrassment rather than national pride, Fernando is sincere in his espousal of a viewpoint that others were also advocating. Around the same time (c. 1455), Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo wrote his *Summa de la Política* in which he expressed the same notion about the "artes mecánicas." The Castilian diplomat (and later Bishop of Oviedo, Zamora, and Palencia) saw agriculture as the basis of the kingdom's economy, but at the same time recognized that its people also had material needs that had to be covered by the production of goods. However, Sánchez de

Arévalo opposed the landowners' engaging in the acquisition of wealth through commerce, since he believed that merchants "no disponen de virtud" (55).⁹

There is a connection between Fernando de la Torre and the author of the *Summa* that would explain the similarity in their views. At the beginning of his career, Sánchez de Arévalo met Alonso de Cartagena in Burgos, and the bishop introduced him to the Castilian court. He was sent to Basel for the Council, where he participated in the debates; it is quite possible that he coincided there with the young Fernando. There is also apparently another link between them: near the end of Juan II's reign, Sánchez de Arévalo was sent on a diplomatic mission to the court of Charles VII of France (Marino 2004, 214-15). We can probably assume that this was the same entourage which included Fernando de la Torre, whose heated conversation with a French courtier incited him to write the letter in question to Enrique IV.

Fernando de la Torre's own prejudice against commerce stems from his allegation of greed against merchants, particularly the Flemish. He accuses them of "tráfgos e engaños" that allow them to become rich from charging duty on goods that do not originate in Bruges: "que los alimanes las traen, italianos las lleuan, castellanos las enbían, e otras muchas naçiones" (353). Not so in Medina, he claims, where foreign merchants are treated much better.

Were Fernando's assertions about Castilian prosperity and his complaints about the deceit by merchants valid? Several scholars have considered his statements and their opinions vary on some points. Ramón Menéndez Pidal thought that Fernando's defense of Castilian disdain for manual labor was an "exculpatoria fantasía" (xiv-xv), without being specific about details that would support this opinion. Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada's essay on Castilian-French relations in this era gives us a better idea of the reality of the situation. His findings on the import and export of goods mainly prove correct Fernando de la Torre's information. He tells us that Castilian and Basque ships transported from the interior of the peninsula a variety of natural resources, including iron, wool, and materials necessary for dyeing wool (alum, woad, and cochineal). They also carried an assortment of agricultural products (fruits, honey, oil, and rice), as well as animal skins. In exchange for these items the Castilians received manufactured products that satisfied their taste for luxury: Flemish and French textiles, lace, tapestries, painted objects, and silver objects (124-25, 128). But Ladero Quesada disagrees with Fernando's assertion that Castile's success was due to its supposed fruitful lands and abundance of natural resources. He writes that the kingdom seemed wealthy in the fifteenth century in relation to its necessities and its population, but that it lagged seriously behind other nations in technology, which would soon affect its economy. He does agree, however, with Fernando's declarations about Castile's readiness for war based on the the military contributions of the

⁹ He would reiterate the same opinion in his *Spejo de la vida humana* (1491), writing that the "mechanical arts" were necessary but not virtuous, and should be carried out only by those who could not do anything more meaningful.

aristocracy, the Church, the Military Orders, and common men, who were potentially soldiers in times of need (129).

Simon A. Vosters has also studied Fernando de la Torre's comments about the Castilian economy in the mid-fifteenth century. Like Ladero Quesada, Vosters finds that the kingdom's economic growth was falling behind that of its European counterparts because of its dependence on the export of raw materials and lack of manufacturing (293). He finds that the Castilian courtier constructed an artificial contrast between Spain and the rest of Europe, basing his "geoeconomic" ideas on the *Laus Hispaniae* tradition. In the end, Fernando's ideas defied reason, since even the most abundant land is unproductive if not worked by human effort (386).

At the end of his exposition of the richness of the land, Fernando de la Torre returns briefly to the great fortunes it made for some noblemen, and reiterates their willingness to share their wealth with the Crown, which in turn is more than generous with them. In sum, this is how he defends the Frenchman's query about Álvaro de Luna's enormous estate. What he did not mention at the outset of the letter, was that the courtier further challenged him with a follow-up question that arose from Fernando's justifications: if all of this is so, and if the aristocracy so generously lend their militias to the king, how is it the Castilians were defeated at the Battle of Aljubarrota by so few opponents?¹⁰ And why is "una pequeña conquista" like that of Granada taking so long to accomplish? (355). Fernando responds to the first impertinent question by saying that God was on the side of the Portuguese that day because he was displeased with the pride and scornful attitude of the Castilians; his national pride is evident when he claims that even today, the Portuguese know that this is the only reason that they won the battle. Before responding to the taunt about Granada, Fernando takes a jab at the French for having been beaten by the English so many times in the last century, and for an Englishman to have taken their crown, a conflict only recently resolved. He claims that God thus far has punished Castile for internal dissension by allowing the infidels to remain, but that he places his faith in King Enrique IV, "el más valiente, animoso e el más guerrero del mundo," who he expects will bring the conquest of Granada to its conclusion (356).

This brings Fernando de la Torre to the close of the main part of his letter. He now addresses the king about the significance and consequences of its contents. Despite all he has written about the great advantages of Castile's people and its dominions, it will not be worth much without "pure and just administration" on the part of the monarch. He advises Enrique that material abundance is not enough; what is as important for the success of his government are the intangible assets, "la virtud e nobleza del ánimo" (357). Fernando is asking the new king to equate moral virtue with good government, necessary for the nation to grown in honor. Fernando reminds Enrique that he succeeded to the throne in peace, and it is important that he maintain that peace through sound administration. He then adds another element that will be necessary for

¹⁰ The Battle of Aljubarrota (1385) was fought between João I of Portugal and Juan I of Castile, as a result of the latter's claim to the Portuguese throne.

this pursuit: the young king must surround himself with “los grandes, discretos e virtuosos que aman e zelan la onor... e esquiuar e maltraer aquellos que con mal zelo e cobdiçia dizen e fazen lo que aplaze e non lo que conviene, que es grande peligro a los príncipes” (358). Álvaro de Luna has already been mentioned in this letter, and Enrique would certainly have been aware of Fernando de la Torre’s (and others’s) opinion of the Constable’s grasping for power and material possessions. The example hardly seems worth reiterating. It seems clear that he is referring instead to the monarch’s relationship with his own favorite, Juan Pacheco, who had been at Enrique’s side since boyhood. Juan Pacheco was the eldest son of Alonso Téllez Girón, Señor de Belmonte, who served Juan II.¹¹ Don Juan was brought to court in the mid-1430’s as Prince Enrique’s page, then rose rapidly in honors, titles, and possessions: from *camarero mayor*, to *mayordomo mayor*, then Marqués de Villena (the first non-royal to hold the title), as well as count several times over. Like his mentor Luna, Pacheco was able to influence his lord about significant matters; he had convinced Enrique to defy his father and align with the Infantes de Aragón in the civil war that plagued the kingdom in the 1440s and 50s. For this reason, in the decade that preceded the prince’s ascension to the Castilian throne, Juan Pacheco had made many enemies.¹² Fernando de la Torre’s evident love for Juan II, which he reiterates at the end of his missive, would have placed him on the side of Pacheco’s detractors. He concludes this section by urging the king to take heed of his counsel on moral virtue and virtuous advisors as the key to the successful government of a nation rich in natural resources and brave men, which will benefit all segments of society, from the wealthiest and most powerful to peasants. The letter ends with a final exhortation to conclude the conquest of Granada to rid the territory of “poisonous, infidel blood.” He signs, “el humil seruidor de vuestra Señoría e real Magestad, criança e fechura de vuestro padre, Fernando de la Torre” (360).

We have already seen that Fernando begins his remarks to Enrique by referring to them as a “loca letra” and making preemptive comments about his boldness in writing the letter. He repeats these defensive expressions at intervals, apparently conscious of the reaction that his critical observations might cause. Nevertheless, Fernando de la Torre could not have been too fearful, since he apparently read the letter aloud before the king and other courtiers. Near the beginning of his letter he remarks “para enformación vuestra e de los oyentes” (348); there are other allusions that also make us aware that this was as much a public speech as it was a written communication to king Enrique. We can only conjecture who might have been present at the court assembly. Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana (Fernando’s friend whom

¹¹ His younger brother was Pedro Girón, who rose alongside Pacheco and eventually became Master of Calatrava and aspirant to the hand of future Isabel I of Castile. He died en route to his betrothal to her.

¹² Details of the years 1445-54 can be found in Marino 2006, 47-65. Unlike Luna’s unflagging loyalty to Juan II, Pacheco had more than once abandoned Enrique. He was instrumental in the *Farsa de Ávila* in which the king was dethroned in effigy, and in circulating the allegation that Enrique’s daughter, Juana, was illegitimate, thus paving the way for Isabel’s ascension to the crown.

he greatly admired) was not in attendance, but had heard about it subsequently asked for a copy, as Fernando confirms in his preface to that copy: “acordé de enbiar a vuestra merçed e nobleza, la copia o traslado de aquella osada, enojosa e desuariada letra a quien Dios dé su graçia” (340). He also refers in these introductory remarks to having written to Pedro Fernández de Velasco, Conde de Haro, although it is not entirely clear that he sent the count a copy of the letter as well. What is clear, however, is that Fernando de la Torre had powerful friends, and could probably have counted on their protection if needed. Another courtier who asked him to provide a copy was Pedro Arias de Ávila, Enrique IV’s accountant (340-41). Judging from the tone and content of the Fernando’s letter to him about this request, they were apparently enjoying friendly relations.¹³

Perhaps it was this feeling of immunity that allowed Fernando de la Torre to address the new monarch with “osadía;” it is a word that he uses several times in the letter itself and in his exchanges with Santillana to describe his letter to Enrique IV. Together with “enojosa,” “desvariada,” “desabrida,” and “loca,” this choice of words clearly indicates that the author was acutely aware of the king’s probable displeasure on receiving his observations and advice. But, as Fernando writes to Pedro Arias, he compares himself to Valerius, who “praises good and noble citizens desirous of the public good, and censures those that put first private honors and interests” (341). His defense of Castilian advantages and scarcely veiled criticisms of the status quo seem to indicate that Fernando de la Torre decided to send the message out of a combination of national pride and personal interest in the outcomes for the kingdom. Despite characterizing his letter with the adjectives that we have seen, the author is nevertheless duly respectful of Enrique, whom he addresses with the usual appellatives of the era, such as “real magestad” and “muy alto e poderoso príncipe.” But he makes pointed reference to the concepts of “soberano” and “soberanía” in the section about noblemen paying tribute to the Castilian king:

Pues la justiçia criminal e çiuil de todos es sobreano, e como quiera que de algunos pueblos jurisdicçiones aya fecho merçed a sus duques, condes, marqueses e otros ricos omes, pero la apelaçión o soberanía sienpre queda anexa o subjecta a su Chançillería e corona real. (346)

José Luis Bermejo’s study of the term “soberanía” shows that, while “soberano” was used commonly enough, “soberanía” was not. He mentions this particular example and one other: Juan II’s document accusing Álvaro de Luna of usurping his authority, “contra mi soberanía é preeminencia real” (286). Fernando de la Torre, so familiar with the details of Luna’s downfall and so loyal to his king, may have been warning

¹³ There is also a letter that Fernando addresses to his “grande amigo” Álvaro de Villarreal (one of Enrique IV’s secretaries), in which he refers in general to some “desabridas letras” that he is sending to him (342). It seems likely that his letter to King Enrique is among them.

Enrique IV of the importance of maintaining his sovereignty over the aristocracy, perhaps over Juan Pacheco in particular.

There is no indication of how the young monarch reacted to Fernando's public letter. Judging from at least two requests for copies, it must have been much talked about in the court. Enrique did heed some of the advice it offered. His attempt to reconquer Granada was not very enthusiastic and it did not last long.¹⁴ He kept Juan Pacheco at his side and did not always surround himself with aristocratic counselors who had the kingdom's best interests in mind instead of their own. If the first ten years of Enrique's reign were generally promising, the last ten were filled with strife and confusion. But it is significant to note that the strong missive apparently did not affect Fernando de la Torre's favor with the king. He remained in Enrique's service after delivering the bold letter before a court assembly, although he seems to have distanced himself from him soon afterward (Salvador Miguel 18 n. 34). He apparently returned to his native Burgos, where Enrique endowed him with a series of grants and a *juro de heredad*. But in 1467 –during the civil war sparked by the *Farsa de Ávila* two years before– the king withdrew all these gifts because the author was in “su deservicio.” The alternating loyalties that characterized the era are evident in the restoration of all the grants and incomes in 1468. Fernando returned to Burgos once again, where from 1471-75 he served as the city's *regidor*. His death probably occurred at the end of the latter year, twelve months after Enrique's own demise (Díez Garretas ed. 18-25).

¹⁴ Enrique made incursions into Granada from 1455-58, but without any real fervor or success. He limited action to destroying crops but avoided skirmishes because he considered Christian lives too valuable to be lost in this pursuit. The monarch never managed to carry out his intention of first surrounding, then taking the kingdom.”

Works Cited

- Alfonso X of Castile. Ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal. *Primera crónica general de España*. 2 vols. Madrid: Gredos, 1977.
- Bermejo, José Luis. "Orígenes medievales de la idea de soberanía." *Revista de estudios políticos* 200-201 (1975): 283-90.
- Cartagena, Alonso de. "Discurso de D. Alonso de Cartagena, Obispo de Burgos, sobre la precedencia del Rey Católico sobre el de Inglaterra en el Concilio de Basilea." Ed. Mario Penna. *Prosistas castellanos del siglo XV*. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 116. Madrid: Atlas, 1959. 205-33.
- Castro, Américo. *La realidad histórica de España*. Mexico City: Porrúa, 1966.
- Ladero Quesada, Miguel Ángel. "Las relaciones entre Francia y España en la época de los Reyes Católicos." *Mélanges de la Bibliothèque Espagnole*. Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1977-78.
- Mackay, Ruth. *Lazy, Improvident People: Myth and Reality in the Writing of Spanish History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Marino, Nancy F. "Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo." Eds. Frank Domínguez and George D. Greenia. *Castilian Writers, 1400-1500*. Dictionary of Literary Biography, 286. Detroit: Gale Group, 2004. 213-20.
- . *Don Juan Pacheco: Wealth and Power in Late Medieval Spain*. Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2006.
- Menéndez Pidal, Ramón. *Historia de España*. Vol. XVII-1. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1973.
- Parrilla, Carmen, & Antonio Chas Aguión. "Notas y apostillas al epistolario de Fernando de la Torre." Eds. Andrew M. Beresford & Alan Deyermond. *Proceedings of the Ninth Colloquium*. Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, 26. London: Queen Mary and Westfield College, 2000. 53-59.
- Pulgar, Fernando de. Ed. J. Domínguez Bordona. *Claros varones de Castilla*. Clásicos Castellanos, 49. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1954.
- Salvador Miguel, Nicasio. *Isabel la Católica. Educación, mecenazgo y entorno literario*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Cervantinos, 2008.
- Sánchez de Arévalo, Rodrigo. Ed. Juan Beneyto Pérez. *Suma de política*. Madrid: CSIC, 1944.
- Torre, Fernando de la. Ed. Antonio Paz y Melia. *Cancionero y obras en prosa*. Dresden: Gedrukt für die Gesellschaft für romanische literatur, 1907.
- . Ed. María Jesús Díez Garretas. *La obra literaria de Fernando de la Torre*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1983.
- Vosters, Simon A. *Los países bajos en la literatura española. Parte I*. Valencia: Albatros, 1978.