

# Spanish Ballads of Charlemagne

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## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about Charlemagne and the great heroes of France in his day. *The Song of Roland* is the story of how King Charlemagne led his armies to invade northern Spain, then controlled by the Moors. Many well-fortified cities yielded to the French forces, bringing victory and wealth to the French. However, on Charlemagne's march back out of Spain through the Pyrenees, a narrow mountain pass that the French had to pass through rendered them vulnerable for an ambush, which destroyed a large part of the French armies. *The Song of Roland* gives us a look at this history, and at Charlemagne's nephew Roland, a valiant knight dying bravely at this mountain pass in the Battle of Roncevaux.

This is a (very short) summary of the French stories. But what about the Spanish point of view? After all, it would make sense that the Spanish didn't particularly enjoy being invaded. What is the Spanish story? There were heroes in France; who were the Spanish heroes? What did they do to protect their people?

I have translated these Spanish Ballads in the hope that they may answer some of these questions and give a glimpse of the Spanish side of these stories. These ballads build off of the more well-known French stories, and offer a different perspective, as well as new ideas to take into account.

These ballads in their original Spanish form were taken and translated from Guy Le Strange's 1920 compilation of Spanish Ballads. Le Strange was a British Orientalist noted for his work on the historical geography of the pre-modern Middle Eastern and Eastern Islamic lands, as well as a scholar of the Persian, Arabic, and Spanish languages. These ballads comprise #39-48 of his compilation. My goal is not only to provide another view on *The Song of Roland*, but also to make this material more easily accessible to those who don't have Le Strange's out-of-print book, and to those who don't speak Spanish but still want to enjoy the beauty of this poetry.

As the reader will notice, many of the following ballads describe the story of Bernardo del Carpio, a legendary figure said to be one of the greatest heroes of medieval Spain. I have put these ballads in chronological order to the best of my ability, but there are many gaps in between the stories, and a brief knowledge of this legendary figure will be very useful for understanding what is going on.

Here follows a short history of the hero (quoted from the Medieval Studies Research Blog at Notre Dame University):

[Bernardo] is born from the illicit union between Jimena, Alfonso II's sister, and San Díaz, Count of Saldaña ("Sancius" in the Latin texts). The irate King imprisons San Díaz in Luna and sends Jimena to a convent, though Bernardo is raised in the court... However, the Alfonsine chroniclers subsequently mention a contradictory story... Bernardo is again

illegitimate, though his mother is Timbor, sister of Charlemagne, who is enticed by San Díaz while making a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

As an adult, Bernardo joins forces with Marsilio, Muslim King of Zaragoza, in the victory over Charlemagne's troops at Roncesvalles. He is later made aware of his lineage through a game of backgammon, which prompts his first failed request for his father's freedom.

The hero next appears in Alfonso III's reign. He is an invaluable knight, aiding the King in victories over Muslim armies at Benavente, Zamora, Polvorosa, and Valdemora. The hero then plays a crucial role in the victory over French troops at Ordejón, defeating his cousin, Bueso. After each battle, Bernardo requests his father's freedom, which Alfonso consistently denies.

The following year, a confrontation between Bernardo and the King leads to the hero's banishment. Bernardo founds El Carpio and ravages Salamanca and surrounding areas, until Alfonso agrees to release San Díaz in exchange for the fortress. However, they soon discover the Count has died. The hero is subsequently presented with his father's corpse and is again exiled. He travels France, where he is received by Charles, his uncle, though rejected by Timbor's son, his half-brother. Dejected, he returns to Spain; conquers Ainsa, Berbegal, Barbastro, Sobrarbe, and Montblanc; and settles near the Canal de Jaca, where he marries and spends the remainder of his life.<sup>1</sup>

As will be obvious, the ballads do not follow this chronology exactly, but this sketch of the main hero is helpful while reading the poetry. It may be helpful to refer back to this chronology from time to time so the story of the ballads makes more sense.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

*Romances*, Spanish ballads, have no set length. They are characterized by their octosyllabic (8-syllable) lines with assonance at the end of the even lines. In archaic ballads, assonance usually means matching the last two vowel sounds of two words, irrespective of the intervening consonants. For example, in the original Spanish of "Romance de Bernardo del Carpio" (Ballad of Bernardo del Carpio), the first two lines go as follows:

*En los reinos de León — el casto Alfonso reinAbA:  
hermosa hermana tenía, — Doña Ximena se llAmA.*

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<sup>1</sup> "Mapping the Legend of Bernardo del Carpio – Medieval Studies Research Blog: Meet us at the Crossroads of Everything." *Notre Dame Sites*, 1 May 2017, <https://sites.nd.edu/manuscript-studies/2017/05/01/mapping-the-legend-of-bernardo-del-carpio/>. Accessed 18 April 2022.

Regardless of the intervening consonants, *reinaba* is assonant with *llama*, because they follow the same pattern **A-A**. This pattern is repeated, using different words, all the way through the ballad. The same goes for two different vowel sounds in “Bernardo y Su Padre” (Bernardo and His Father):

*Hincado está de rodillas — ese valiente **BernArdO**  
delante el Conde su padre — para besarle la **mAnO**,  
porque el casto rey Alfonso — de merced se lo ha **otorgAdO**.*

The assonance rhyme pattern here is **A-O**, and again, this pattern goes all the way throughout the ballad. Most of the ballads in this selection followed this pattern. Certain others (perhaps written at a later date) followed other, more modern, alternating rhyme schemes.

As mentioned before, each line has eight syllables (except for an occasional nine when the poet couldn't write it any other way). This is not completely true. When a line ends with a stressed vowel, the syllable count of that line will add up to seven but a theoretical e (called a paragogic e) is imagined (or said, in the case of reading out loud) to create the eighth syllable. To cite an earlier example:

*En los reinos de León —*

This line has only seven syllables, but because it ends with a stressed vowel, it would be read like the following, making up for the eighth syllable:

*En los reinos de León(e)—*

It is helpful to remember that all words in Spanish that end with a consonant (except *n* or *s*) carry the stress on the last syllable unless indicated by a written accent earlier in the word (e.g. Sancho Díaz).

In translating the following ballads, I have kept the meter octosyllabic in each line, as in the original. I have not, however, tried to keep any assonance or rhyme scheme. A short look at some of the original Spanish in “La Muerte de Roldán” (The Death of Roland), can explain why:

*Por muchas partes herido — sale el viejo **Carlo-Magno**,  
huyendo de los de España — porque le han **desbaratado**:  
los once deja perdidos — solo Roldán ha **escapado**,  
que nunca ningún guerrero — llegó a su esfuerzo **sobrado**,  
y no podía ser herido — ni su sangre **derramado**.*

As is apparent, rhymes and assonance are very proliferant in Spanish, and it is difficult to replicate the same effect in English. Perhaps someone more talented than I will one day undertake the task of achieving a rhyme scheme for these ballads.

A final note: in his publication of these Spanish ballads, Le Strange separated each half-line with a caesura, a long dash to imply a pause between the two portions of the line. Though the traditional way is simply to have a space there instead of the long dash, I have followed the example of Le Strange and kept the caesura in there. A reciter of these ballads (as *canciones*, they are of course meant to be read aloud) would pause at these breaks in the line. Though it may be somewhat insignificant, the reader is entitled to know the decisions I've made in preparing this publication.

There's only one thing left to do. Now all has been said, stop reading the introduction and get to the good stuff -- the Spanish Carolingian Ballads.

Mahayla Bassett, Mount Liberty College, April 2022

## **Romance de Bernardo del Carpio**

### ***Ballad of Bernardo del Carpio***

In the kingdoms of León, — Alfonso the Chaste<sup>2</sup> proudly reigned:  
A beautiful sister had he, — Doña Ximena was her name.  
Passionately in love with her — the Count of Saldaña had fall'n;  
His devotion was not in vain, — for the woman also loved him.  
Many days they passed together — with no one's suspicion or blame;  
from these times spent with each other — the *infanta* with child became,  
brought her son Bernardo to light, — then entered a convent, face low'r'd.  
Wroth, the king imprisoned the count, — laying him under steadfast guard.

## **Bernardo y la Reina**

### ***Bernardo and the Queen***

Thirty and six years walked away — from king Don Alfonso the Chaste.  
As the great year of eight hundred — and fifty and three was written  
in the annals of this hist'ry, — the stiff pride of the king softened.  
He held royal court in León, — and filled the seats he had offered  
to the noblest men he could seek — and good men of middle estate.  
While the bustling court is held there — The king decrees forth a mandate  
of general celebrations — in which the court all delighted;  
they observed bullfights<sup>3</sup> every day — and competed with *tablados*.  
Don Arias and Don Tibalte, — two counts of distinguished estate,  
were tremendously sorrowful — when they perceived that Bernardo  
did not enter those gaities — in which his presence was required.  
Because he joined not the challenge, — the contests had great detriment,  
and the courts were much diminished — by the lack of his presence there.  
Agreeing between each other, — and both being in accordance,  
the twain beseeched the lovely queen — that she would implore Bernardo,  
that by her love, he should ride — and aim his lance at the targets.  
The queen, rejoicing o'er this plan, — commanded the man thus, saying:  
“I promise thee with all my heart — that the king shall be consulted;  
I will plead for thy dear father, — surely he will not refuse me.”

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<sup>2</sup> Alfonso II of Asturias, nicknamed Alfonso the Chaste, was king of Asturias (a kingdom in the Iberian Peninsula founded by the Visigothic nobleman Pelagius) during two different periods. He reigned first in the year 783 and again later from 791 till his death in 842.

<sup>3</sup> Bullfighting in Spain started as early as 711 AD, though it was performed differently than it is today. The fight was reserved for select members of the Spanish nobility and took place on horseback instead of on foot.

Thanking the queen, Bernardo rode, — and went to perform her command:  
in competition for the king, — with so much fury in his throw,  
that striving with all his great might, — he cracked the board of *tablados*<sup>4</sup>.  
The king was undisturbed by this, — and left to dine in the palace.  
Tibalte and Arias, Spaniards, — to the queen they now admonished  
To complete the promised favor — that she had made to Bernardo.  
Her majesty went to the king, — and spoke to him in this fashion:  
“I plead greatly with you, my lord; — give me this; go you by degrees  
to the count Don Sancho Díaz, — the man that you have imprisoned;  
do so, for this is the first gift — that I have ever asked of you.”  
The king was wroth when he heard this; — it caused a great weight in his heart,  
and filled with untamed displeasure, — this response was giv’n the lady:  
“Queen, I will not fulfill your request; — do not spend your labors in vain.  
I refuse to transgress upon — the oath I have sworn in years past.”  
Submissive in sorrow, the queen, — for the king would not heed her words;  
but when Bernardo heard the news, — his anger was beyond compare,  
resolving to go to the king — to kneel and plead for the last time  
for his father the noble count; — and if words failed, with swords they’d strive.

## **Bernardo y el Rey Alfonso**

### ***Bernardo and King Alfonso***

On the banks of the Arlanza<sup>5</sup> — Bernardo del Carpio rides  
astride a crimson-black stallion — harnessed in bright flaming scarlet.  
A thick lance is grasped in his hand; — he is girded with weaponry.  
All the common folk of Burgos — regard him with fear in their gaze,  
for this is an unusual sight — a singular and strange omen.  
The king was also watching him, — that knight as a heron flying,  
speaking to his nobles at court: — “This bold man shoulders a good lance:  
if not Bernardo del Carpio, — then Muza, he of Granada.”  
As he counseled in this manner, — Bernardo entered, eyes flaming.  
He’d left his calmed horse behind him, — but leave his lance he would not do;  
rather laid it on his shoulder, — and with this air spoke to the king.  
“They call me a bastard, oh king, — I being your sister’s sole child,  
and of noble Sancho Díaz, — that very count of Saldaña:  
They say that he was a traitor, — and call your sister a sinner.

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<sup>4</sup> The game of *los tablados* was played on a board (*tablado*) on which were set ‘pins’ of wood. These had to be knocked over at a great height by a javelin or short lance.

<sup>5</sup> The Arlanza River flows through the province of Burgos, in northern Spain.

You and all yours have muttered it, — no other would dare to object:  
but any man who taunts me so — is speaking falsely through his beard!  
My good father was no traitor, — neither my mother a sinner;  
for when I was thus begotten, — my mother was truly married.  
You held my father in irons — and my mother in a convent;  
now you wish to give your crown to France — so I will not inherit it.  
Those who are true Spaniards will die — before seeing such a day's work:  
Mountain folk, people of León, — and the men of the river mouths,  
and one king of Zaragoza<sup>6</sup> — will all lend me their company  
to sally forth and counter France — each man giving a fierce battle.  
If I return with victory, — it will be well with all of Spain;  
if defeat, for the republic — I will die if such is required.  
Then you must set my father free, — you gave me your kingly promise;  
and if not, you will be challenged — in field or any place you will.

### **La Liga Contra Los Franceses**

#### *Alliance Against the French*

With three thousand men of León, — Bernardo departs the city  
which of the lost Iberia — was miraculously restored;  
the one whose tow'ring city wall — guards and expands in two woodlands  
the name and immense victories — of the honored king Pelayo<sup>7</sup>.  
Seeing him, common farmers throw — from their leathered hands their plowshares,  
their sharpened sickles, their rough hoes; — shepherds abandon their bent crooks;  
bright youth are filled with elation; — the elderly find lost courage;  
the despairing remember hope, — the feeble counterfeit new strength;  
all to Bernardo they gather, — in one voice calling for freedom  
from the infamous yoke they fear — with which the Gauls now threaten them.  
“Free born are we,” they cry aloud, — “and to our sov'reign majesty  
we offer all that is due us, — by the just mandate of heaven.  
God does not permit, nor ordain — that the decrees of foreigners  
hold unjust sway on our children, — the glory of our ancestors:  
our frames are not without such strength, — neither our arms lack such vigor,

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<sup>6</sup> The king of Zaragoza (or Saragossa, as it is sometimes spelled) is the Muslim king Marsilio. King Alfonso allied with the French to be protected *against* Marsilio, and Bernardo allied *with* Marsilio to counter Alfonso's cowardice and drive the French from Spain.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. Pelagius, the founder of the Christian kingdom of Asturias in northern Spain. As far as can be ascertained, Pelagius was a page or a member of the Visigoth royal bodyguard, possibly of royal blood. He led a revolt of Asturians and Visigoth refugees against the Moors and eventually became the ruler of a new kingdom.

nor our veins without such life-blood, — that they consent to such insult.  
Have the French by sheer destiny — already conquered our homeland?  
Do they seek vict'ry without blood? — No, not while there's strength in our hands!  
The men of León will proclaim — that they gave their lives in battle,  
but never did they surrender; — they were true Spaniards to the end.  
If to the might of the Romans — fourteen years of forceful conquest  
by the valiant Numantines<sup>8</sup> — had caused such bloody damages,  
why should the kingdom of León, — that has bathed her furious nails  
in Libyan blood of past times, — listen to such paltry offers?  
The king gives the French his assets, — but he can not give his vassals;  
in bowing to another's will, — monarchs lose their right to command.”  
With these words, Bernardo orders — his fearless men into squadrons;  
in the meantime through a window — watches Don Alfonso the Chaste.  
Watching him as if the two shared blood, — as if he were a pleasing heir;  
considering his gallant mood — and bright composure of valor;  
as his numbers grow by degrees, — forming a camp of ready men.  
Vacant now are the city streets; — empty are the surrounding towns.  
March to the august city, — she whose walls are bathed in the pride  
of the famous wealth of Ebro, — throughout the world celebrated,  
where the saint son of Zebedee<sup>9</sup> — founded the peculiar building  
that surrounds the Holy Pillar<sup>10</sup>, — the cornerstone of our refuge.  
Nigh there Bravonel awaits you — with a ready Saracen band  
that obeys the king Marsilio, — sworn against the assailing French.

## **La Batalla de Roncesvalles**

### ***The Battle of Roncesvalles***<sup>11</sup>

It was a dismal Palm Sunday, — and time to recite the Passion,  
when Muslim and Christian alike — raised their war cries in fierce battle.

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<sup>8</sup> The Numantine War was the last conflict of the Celtiberian Wars fought by the Romans to subdue those people along the Ebro. It was a twenty-year conflict between the Celtiberian tribes of Hispania Citerior and the Roman government.

<sup>9</sup> i.e. Santiago, or James the son of Zebedee, disciple of Christ.

<sup>10</sup>In the year 40 A.D., while praying one night on the bank of the river Ebro, the Virgin Mary supposedly appeared to Saint James, asking him to build a church on the site and promising that “it will stand from that moment until the end of time in order that God may work miracles and wonders through my intercession for all those who place themselves under my patronage.” The church of Our Lady of the Pilar in Zaragoza is the first historical church dedicated to Mary. It remains standing to this day, having survived many invasions and wars - in the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939, three bombs were dropped on the church, but none of them exploded.

<sup>11</sup> For one who has read *The Song of Roland*, this is the Spanish name for Roncevaux.



Fall'n into despair were the Franks, — bitterly turning in retreat.  
But oh, how he strengthened them — that venerable knight Roland!  
“Turn, turn, ye noble men of France — prove your mettle in the conflict!  
Better to die now for justice, — than to endure life dishonored!”  
The Franks took each man his courage — and turned again towards the fight;  
and with the first clash of metal — sixty thousand stumbled lifeless.  
Through the Altamira mountains — flees the Moorish king, called Marsín:  
a knight upon a wild zebro<sup>12</sup> — travl'ing not by dallying nag.  
The blood that from him was flowing — did stain the bright meadow-grasses;  
the cries that sprang forth from his lips — desired to climb heavenward.  
“I do deny you, Mohammed; — and all I have done in your name!  
Make yourself a corpse of silver, — feet and hands of fair ivory;  
make yourself a house in Mecca — where the worshippers adore you.  
I did honor you, Mohammed; — E'en I made you a head of gold.  
Sixty thousand *caballeros* — I offered heart and soul to you;  
my wife, the lovely Moorish queen, — offered you some thirty thousand.”

### **Romance de Durandarte**

#### ***Ballad of Durandarte***<sup>13</sup>

“Oh Belerma! Oh Belerma! — oh, woe is me that thou wast born.  
For seven long years I served thee — without winning thy precious love;  
but now that thou hast chosen me — here I die in awful battle.  
I do not lament that I die — although I have been called early;  
I only regret that my chance — to see and to serve thee is lost.  
Oh my cousin Montesinos! — what I now humbly beg of thee,  
when from this life I'm departed — and my soul has been wrested out,  
take with thee now my faithful heart — to where my Belerma resides,  
and serve her well in place of me, — as I have faithfully served thee,  
and remind her of my mem'ry — two times each week; *two times each week*;  
and thou'll tell her to think fondly — of the great price paid with my life.  
Endow her with all my estate; — I am lord over it no more;  
since she's forever lost to me — all that is good must go to her.

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<sup>12</sup> The Iberian zebro, or *cebro*, a now-extinct animal, was similar in appearance to the zebra in Africa. It lived throughout the Iberian peninsula until it became extinct in the mid-16th century. It was mainly used as a pack and labor animal.

<sup>13</sup> Durandarte is not a historical figure. He is actually not a part of the *chansons de geste* French Carolingian cycle at all, the Spanish *juglares* having taken strange liberties with the French stories. The sword of Roland was called Durendal, and in the stories of Spain, this sword became one of Charlemagne's Twelve Peers, named Durandarte and having a cousin named Montesinos.

Montesinos, Montesinos! — Woe, how this spear-wound doth afflict!  
my arms have come to exhaustion — while grasping the hilt of my sword.  
Great are the wounds I've been given; — many drops of blood have I spilt;  
the chill of death enters my limbs; — and lo! my heart faints and fails me;  
these eyes that saw us so depart — will not see reunion in France.  
Embrace me, dear Montesinos, — my soul is now fleeing upward.  
From my dim eyes I do not see, — my tongue now ceases to utter;  
to thee I leave all my charges; — I do freely transfer them all.”  
“The Lord in whom thou hast belief — He hears the words thou hast uttered.”  
Here lies the dead Durandarte — at the foot of a high mountain,  
Montesinos, weeping for him, — since death had seized him so early:  
raising from his head his helmet, — loosening the girth of his sword;  
slyly cheating the sepulchre — with a trusty little dagger.  
With honor he cut out his heart — in the manner he had promised,  
to bring to Belerma's abode; — 'twas his final wish and command.  
The anguished words he spoke to him — burst forth from deep within his soul:  
“Oh, my kinsman Durandarte! — Oh beloved cousin of my soul!  
Conquered by sword; impossible! — Strength of the strong thou lived and breathed!  
Oh, who has killed thee, my cousin, — why did he take thee and leave me?”

### **La Muerte de Roldán**<sup>14</sup>

#### ***The Death of Roland***

Sorely wounded on all accounts — retreats Charlemagne, gray and tired,  
fleeing from the Spanish victors, — for in them lay his great ruin.  
The eleven<sup>15</sup> lay still, lifeless, — Roland only remained alive;  
never before had any man — come close to his ample, bold strength.  
No injury could hinder him — and no weapon could shed his blood.  
He was at the foot of a cross — kneeling bravely on the rough ground,  
his eyes turned upward to heaven; — lamenting to the empty sky:  
“Oh, my courageous, beating heart! — how didst thou let fear enter in  
by leaving this Roncesvalles — without being killed or avenged?  
Alas, my dear friends and good lords! — How you will moan in remembrance  
that I accompanied you in life, — and in death I am leaving you!”  
Being thus in so great anguish — he saw king Charlemagne's approach:

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<sup>14</sup> The Spanish name for Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne.

<sup>15</sup> Referring to the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne, of whom Roland was the leader. Knights of legend, they were the foremost members of King Charlemagne's court. The names of these paladins vary between stories, but there are always twelve men, led by Roland.

sorrowful, alone, without crown — with bloodied despair in his face.  
The moment he entered his view — Roland fell dead, the troubled wretch.

## **Romance de Doña Alda**

### ***Ballad of Doña Alda***<sup>16</sup>

In Paris lived Doña Alda — the fair betrothed of Don Roland.  
She had three hundred handmaidens — who attended her at all times:  
each donning the same style of dress, — all wearing the same fit of shoes,  
all eating at the same table, — taking from the same loaf of bread.  
And it was she, Doña Alda, — who was the lady of it all.  
Here were a hundred spinning gold, — one hundred knitting silk sendal,  
here one hundred strummed instruments — for the leisure of the lady.  
Doña Alda faintly slumbered — as the instruments sweetly sang,  
tossing and turning, for she dreamed — a dream of confusing sorrow.  
She remembered it with terror — a feeling of great dread filled her;  
giving passionate weeping sobs — that were heard throughout the city.  
Her maids, all consulting in fright; — gathered round about her to cry:  
“What is your distress, our lady? — who is it that causes you harm?”  
“A strange dream have I dreamed, my maids, — that has instilled in me great dread;  
I saw myself on a mountain — a desolate, abandoned place:  
out from the lofty mountain peaks — I saw a goshawk take his flight.  
Behind it came a small eagle — that pursued it, inflicting great harm.  
The goshawk, half-dead with worry — tried to hide underneath my skirt;  
the eagle with furious gaze — sought to tear the poor bird away;  
with his talons he deplumed it — with his beak he tore it apart.”  
Thus she spoke to her maidservant; — who responded in this fashion:  
“This dream, my ven’rable lady, — as I have heard you relate it:  
The goshawk is your dear betrothed, — that travels from across the sea.  
You are the eagle, my lady — thus seeking him out to be wed,  
and the mountain is the chapel — where you have kept faithful vigil.”  
“If this is so, my maidservant, — I will surely reward thee well.”  
Early next day in the morning — letters came to her from abroad;  
somber stains wept red from within — the outside was written in blood,  
that her Roland had breathed his last — in the hunt of Roncesvalles.

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<sup>16</sup> Doña Alda is Lady Aude from *The Song of Roland*, engaged to Roland. Before their wedding, he went away to Spain with Charlemagne to establish conquest there. He never returned.

## **El Rey Alfonso y Bernardo**

### ***The King Alfonso and Bernardo***

With a royally seal'd epistle, — a messenger to Carpio went;  
Bernardo, ever vigilant, — viewed this attention with mistrust.  
Flinging the letter to the ground, — he indignantly told the man:  
“Friend, thou art but a messenger, — it is not thy blame to take, no;  
but the king that has sent thee here — give thou to him this my response:  
that I esteem him but little, — no matter the number with him;  
but, to see what he desires, — I will go to him nonetheless.”  
He ordered his men to gather: — and in this manner he declared:  
“Four hundreds of mine have gathered, — all you who do eat of my bread:  
one hundred go to Carpio, — to guard, to protect the castle;  
another hundred guard the roads, — so that no one may pass them by;  
two hundred will travel with me — to hold audience with the king;  
if evil be the words he speaks — I'll return to him greater ill.”  
The days went on; the time arrived — for him to stand in the king's hall.  
“May God keep you, my liege and king, — and also those who are with you.”  
“Cursed be thy coming, Bernardo, — traitor, child of a wicked man:  
I gave thee Carpio to tenant, — thou tookst it as inheritance.”  
“You do lie, my king, you do lie; — you speak not the apparent truth;  
if I were to be a traitor, — I would resemble you in part.  
Surely, you do remember well — that which did happen in the Oaks,  
when the men from a foreign land — there treated you with such disdain.  
They killed your horse from under you — and further did seek to kill you.  
Bernardo, whom you call traitor, — carried you safely from their midst;  
then you did give me Carpio — of oath and of inheritance:  
you promised my father to me, — but you did not swear truthfully.”  
“Take hold of him, my loyal knights — he aspires to equal a king.”  
“To me, to me, my two hundred, — all you who do eat of my bread;  
the day has now finally come; — we drink the honor of winning.”  
Seeing the man's strength of numbers, — the king hastily laughed:  
“What have I done here, Bernardo, — that has caused thee to be angered?  
What man has said to thee in jest — wilt thou believe it in all truth?  
I give you Carpio, Bernardo, — of oath and of inheritance.”  
“What you call mere jests, oh my king, — are not jests but rather mocking;  
just now you did call me traitor, — traitor son of a wicked man:  
for Carpio I have no desire, — you may retain all your cursed lands;  
for if ever I should want it, — I will know the means to take it.”

## **Bernardo y Su Padre**

### ***Bernardo and His Father***<sup>17</sup>

‘Twas with passion he was kneeling — the valorous knight Bernardo,  
reverently kissing the pale hand — of his father, the count, before him.  
He supposed Alfonso the chaste — had giv’n mercy; but it was feigned.  
From the moment he clasped his hand — cold and dead he discovered it;  
anguish-filled lamenting burst forth; — he groaned aloud in this manner:  
“Alas, my lord, Sancho Díaz! — Oh noble and wretched father!  
By the deeds of thy wicked son — thou hast come to awful estate.  
Life loses its joy without thee: — in death I could find atonement;  
I deserve not to be called Spaniard, — nor may Bernardo be my name  
until I have avenged thy death, — as I am now bound and obliged.”  
Having resolved this argument, — he rode hard towards the palace,  
in search of his uncle the king, — for he wished to deal him vengeance;  
fury burned in his countenance, — distorted color in his cheeks.

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<sup>17</sup> The story behind this ballad is that at last the king seemed to relent and told Bernardo that he would release his father from prison. However, the treacherous King Alfonso secretly had the count killed and then sent his corpse to Bernardo, where we find him in this ballad.