

Studia epigraphica et historica in honorem Ioannis Pisonis

Herausgegeben von Lucrețiu Mihailescu-Bîrliba,
Radu Ardevan, Rada Varga, Florian Matei-Popescu
und Ovidiu Țentea

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AMONG WISE MEN THE GAME GOES: DECENEUS AND ALFONSO X OF CASTILE

Juan Ramón Carbó García

In 2021, Spain celebrated the eighth centenary of the birth of King Alfonso X of Castile and León (1252–1284). He remains one of the most reliably famous and well-studied monarchs, not just of medieval Iberia, but of the entirety of the European Middle Ages. Whether as “the Learned King”, “el Sabio”, or “the Wise King”, Alfonso’s reign and his exceptional literary, scholarly, and juridical work have attracted scholarly attention regularly and reliably for years¹.

Several were the fields of knowledge that attracted the interest of the wise king, and several were the languages in which they were expressed. Both the choice of those fields and those languages did not take place at random but in connection with a broad project of reform of his kingdom. The books acted as true pillars, and not as cultural amusements or marginal additions to the work of government. All these books proclaim the king as their author, hardly mentioning the Christian and Jewish scholars with whom he surrounded himself to write them. The purpose was for Alfonso X to appear as a model of wisdom before his subjects and, with this, to cement a monarchy in whose head were the kings. In his vision, these were vicars of God on earth.

The areas of knowledge addressed by Alfonso X aspired to dominate the three times in which humanity organizes the axis of its life on earth –the present, the past and the future– as well as the time that awaits beyond death: eternal life. In the very broad theme of his literary production, we could contemplate law as the ordering of the present, history as the teaching of the past, science as the knowledge of the future, and finally the cult of the Virgin Mary as the support of divinity, in relation to the Hereafter.

Today, in the Spanish National Library, five original Alfonso’s codices (or close to his workshop) are preserved: the “*Fuero real*” (1255), the “*Libro complido de los juizios de las estrellas*” (c.1254), the “*Libro de las cruces*” (1259), the first part of the “*Grande e general estoria*” (c. 1270) and the first version of the “*Cantigas de Santa María*” (c. 1270). In addition, there are also luxurious copies of other works composed by order of the Learned King, such as the astrological treatise on the constellations, called “*Libro de las figuras de*

1 E.g.: O’Callaghan 1993; O’Callaghan 1998; Doubleday 2015; Kennedy 2019; O’Callaghan 2019.

las estrellas fixas”, with Renaissance decoration, or the “Siete Partidas” that belonged to the Catholic Monarchs.

1 Alfonso X and his legal reform

The centrality of legal reform to the reign of Alfonso X, and in particular the significance of the famous “Siete Partidas” law code has been demonstrated since the last thirty years. The project that created the Alfonsine codes was initiated under his father, Fernando III, who ordered his son to complete it. These codes were essentially completed in two stages: the “Espéculo” (which was a law code itself, but probably intended as a guide for judges) and the “Fuero Real”, likely promulgated in 1254 and 1256, were followed by the later expansion on his original work, the “Libro de las leyes”, better known as the “Siete Partidas”, which was completed in 1265. Alfonso and his court made different justifications for this major revision of Castilian legal practice. In this way, the wise king emphasized not only the expediency of a uniform law code for his realm, but the well-ordered society dedicated to the common good, which could be produced by a systematic revision like that².

The divine origin of the king’s power was emphasized, as was his superiority in all temporal matters. The codes made extensive use of the theory of the two swords, the temporal and the spiritual, which should work jointly. Nevertheless, the king’s authority in temporal matters was pre-eminent. The king’s duty to his people, especially his duty to promote and enforce justice, and the people’s duty to obey the king were paired³. Defense of the realm was a rather more straightforward issue, dealt with at some length in the various pieces of the Alfonsine code. Perhaps most striking is the notion, found in the fourth of the “Siete Partidas”, that men have a great debt to the land to love it, increase it, and die for it.

The code covers the different forms of ownership of land and other forms of property, as well as the proper conduct of and regulations for commercial enterprises. In addition to covering the landed rights of the monarchy, Church, and nobility, the third Partida describes common property rights, rental property, and even the ownership of wild animals. The Alfonsine code made provisions for contract law, lending, and the payment of debts. The king enacted extensive market regulations, including attempts to set fair prices and wages, and to discourage guilds and private price-fixing. Fairs and foreign trade were encouraged, and the royal duties and taxes set.

A vast array of criminal conduct is described, from fraud to heresy to murder, and beyond. The array of punishments that the law might prescribe included execution (only for serious crimes), exile, imprisonment, mutilation, humiliation, and court-imposed fines. Though the king reserved the right to pardon convicted criminals, the emphasis of the code was on the maintenance of public order, and the exemplary punishment of those who threatened it.

² O’Callaghan 2019, 21.

³ O’Callaghan 2019, 42.

The achievements of Alfonso X in the realm of legal scholarship and reform are especially noted in the long shadow that the "Siete Partidas" would cast down the centuries, both in Spain and in the wider world. The ideals of law, order, and governance are envisioned in the Alfonsine codes, demonstrating the remarkable vision of the king to create a society in which carefully considered laws made justice available to all.

2 The historiographical work of Alfonso X and the transmission of the figure of Deceneus

To the great work of legal reform of the wise king we must add, for our immediate interest in this study, his great historiographical work, the culmination of Castilian production in this area in the thirteenth century. This is the "Estoria de España" –also known as the "Primera Crónica General de España"⁴–, written from 1260 on the initiative of King Alfonso X the Learned.

The monarch actively collaborated in its drafting, and it was the first extensive history of Spain written in the Romance language. It covered chronologically from the biblical and legendary origins of Spain to the immediate history of the kingdom of Castile under Fernando III⁵.

This great work of the Alfonsine desk is divided into four parts: the first of them constitutes a history of Rome, since the medieval kings of the European nations considered themselves heirs of the Roman Empire; the second part is dedicated to showing the history of the barbarian kings, the Gothic kings among them, being the direct ancestors in the Peninsula; the third is a history of the Asturian kingdom and, finally, the fourth, a history of the kingdoms of León and Castile. However, as in the chronicles of the time, it goes back to the most remote past found in the Bible, specifically to Moses, to continue with myths and legends mixed with Greek sources and ancient history⁶. Very diverse works were used for its composition, such as the Bible, classical Latin historiography, ecclesiastical legends, medieval chansons de geste in the Romance language, and works made by Arab historians. But among all of them stand out the two great Latin chronicles that constituted the most complete knowledge of the history of Spain in the thirteenth century: the "Chronicon mundi" by Lucas of Tuy and the "Historia de rebus Hispaniae" by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada; although the work team of Alfonso X also used other medieval Latin chronicles⁷.

4 Menéndez Pidal 1977.

5 Catalán 1962; Catalán 1992; Crespo 2000.

6 Estévez Sola 2004; De Carlos Villamarín 1993.

7 Dyer 1990; Fernández-Ordóñez 1992, 138–158; Fernández-Ordóñez 1999; Fernández-Ordóñez 2000.

2.1 *Lucas of Tuy*

Lucas of Tuy represents the continuation of the tradition coming from Isidore of Seville. He was born at the end of the twelfth century. He developed his ecclesiastical career as a canon of the collegiate church of San Isidoro de León in the first part of the thirteenth century. During the last ten years of his life until 1249, as bishop of Tuy, he carried out his historical work, in which the "*Chronicon mundi*" (approximately between 1230 and 1238) stands out⁸. This is but an extension of Isidore's "*Chronicon de sex aetatibus*". In the first part we will find a complete paragraph about Trajan, even longer than that of Isidore. When, in a second book, he reproduces without modifications the "*Historia Gothorum*", some elements of the identification between Goths and Getae that Isidore had etymologically developed make a reappearance⁹.

We can find examples of Gothicism everywhere in the work of Lucas of Tuy. When he deals with the time after the fall of the Kingdom of Toledo, he will continue to refer to the peninsular Christians as "Goths", both in his interpolations and when the information from any source differs¹⁰. The touchstone of Hispanic Gothicism will be the conception of organized resistance in the north of the Peninsula against the Arab invaders, in the Pyrenees, the Cantabrian Mountain range and the Galician mountains, a conception that would continue to be transmitted much later. The Christians who resisted Islam in those areas were called Goths by Lucas of Tuy¹¹.

On the other hand, by highlighting the virtues of the Goths, he departs from the myth of the undefeated Visigothic army, only surpassed in civil strife, following the extensive reference of Isidore in his "*Historia Gothorum*" on the courage and military capacity of the Goths, identified with the Getae¹². By considering blood nobility as an indispensable condition to be able to stand out for their courage and mastery of arms, the supreme nobility of the Goths is indirectly proclaimed. This has its most evident testimony in its excellence on the battlefield. And it is very likely that the proclamation of such nobility constituted a veiled expression of Leonese exaltation, given that the kings of León were considered the legitimate heirs of the Visigothic monarchy¹³.

2.2 *Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada*

Practically contemporary of the "*Chronicon Mundi*" of Lucas of Tuy is the "*Historia de rebus Hispaniae sive Historia gothica*" of the Toledan archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (c. 1170–1247), in which the history of the Peninsula until the year 1243 is de-

8 Linchan 1997; Martín 2001; Falque 2003; Fernández Gallardo 2004.

9 Falque 1998.

10 Lucas de Tuy, *Chron. mun.*, IV.3. 21–22; 5. 16; 35. 21–22 y 45; 36. 5; 37. 5 y 67; 40. 3; 45. 5; 57. 25; 70. 50; 77. 55; 83. 42.

11 Lucas de Tuy, *Chron. mun.*, III. 63. 42–46.

12 Isid., *Hist. Goth.*, 66–70; Carbó García 2015, 62–65.

13 Lucas de Tuy, *Chron. mun.*, II, Prologus.

scribed¹⁴. Jiménez de Rada continued to draw notably inspiration from Isidore of Seville, but he also relied heavily on the "Getica" of Jordanes. From this, as we shall see, he would take complete passages referring to the mythical past of the Goths. In the thirteenth century, the work of Jordanes had a remarkable influence on the Iberian Peninsula, since the kings sought to legitimize themselves through the Visigothic "ancestors" and were going to appropriate the history of the Goths¹⁵. The Isidorian tradition also remained in this century, which sees the arrival of these new sources from Europe that will feed the chroniclers of this time. Nevertheless, the identification between Getae and Goths and the etymological theory of Isidore had practically lost their value until that moment.

For the elaboration of his work, Jiménez de Rada followed the model of the "Crónica najerense", and the "De rebus Hispaniae" would become one of the main sources for the historical work of Alfonso X the Learned. It would have a very important impact on the conception of peninsular historical writing and, in addition, in the thirteenth century several translations would be made in peninsular vernacular languages. For this reason, it would significantly influence the conception of a dominant unitary history of Spain until the fifteenth century¹⁶.

The nature of the commissioned work is what determines the historical perspective in the writings of Rodrigo. In the case of Lucas of Tuy, if we know that he made his work commissioned by Queen Berenguela, Jiménez de Rada composed his own at the request of King Fernando III. This king, Alfonso's father, must have felt somehow dissatisfied and required a history that covered from the most remote peninsular past to his time. It is also possible that Jiménez de Rada could also be the one who indicated to the monarch the deficiencies of the "Chronicon Mundi" of Lucas of Tuy and the need of a peninsular, Hispanic, complete history. Perhaps he was even looking for the primacy of the city of Toledo over that of León, in which Lucas of Tuy wrote his work¹⁷. King Fernando III is interested in the peninsular past, the antiquities of Spain, not only in the search for identity and dynastic legitimation, in such a way that the tradition coming from Isidore was insufficient for this task¹⁸.

In his preliminary reflections, the starting point is the need to present the past with an exemplary character, an approach that he takes from the "Etymologiae" of Isidore¹⁹ and he develops later. He takes up the initial idea of transmission of the past as an example but directing his interests towards the communication of science and the mechanical arts. Thus, instead of listing the liberal arts, he mentions the disciplines that supposedly interested him, such as astronomy, geometry, botany, and pharmacology. And once he demonstrates the usefulness and necessity of writing, he points out the exemplary usefulness of

¹⁴ Fernández Valverde 1987.

¹⁵ Svennung 1967, 21–33; Eliade 1985, 80–82; Busuiocanu 1985; Happ 2000, 13–21; Carbó García 2004; Dana 2008, 179–181.

¹⁶ Jerez Cabrero 2003; Catalán, Jerez Cabrero 2005.

¹⁷ Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *De reb. Hisp.*, *Præfatio*.

¹⁸ Fernández Gallardo 2004, 67.

¹⁹ Isid., *Etym.*, I, 2–3.

the history of monarchs, for which he highlights four virtues: wisdom, courage, liberality, and justice²⁰. In this way, the objects of study in his work are, as he himself affirms, the antiquities of Spain, the peoples who have invaded it, the origin of the Spanish kings and their great deeds²¹. For this, the Gothic origin not only of the reigning dynasty but also of the high Hispanic nobility will be defended by Jiménez de Rada, with an evident legitimizing purpose sought by and for all of them²². The Castilian-Leonese high nobility – or the part of that with which the Toledan had a closer contact – showed at this time an interest in the history of the Goths in search of their own legitimacy²³.

The political transformations in the reign of Fernando III, the definitive union of León and Castile and the military advance towards the Muslim south made necessary a reevaluation of historical memory – a fashionable concept in our days –. They needed an ideology that unified the different territories of the Crown and a historian who could give them a common past²⁴. In it, the Gothic story plays a main role. Hence the importance of Jordanes' work for Jiménez de Rada, although the Isidorian tradition continued to be "the central axis of the conception of the Hispanic past, endowed with an intense Gothic inspiration"²⁵.

The new character of the "Historia de rebus Hispaniae" of Jiménez de Rada, which will serve as a source and model for later historians even in the same thirteenth century, is also shown in the action of completing the historical account with chapters destined to clarify the origins. In these, he follows traditions and varied sources that he does not always identify, reaching the legend and myth. Some of these elements were already found in Orosius, in Isidore of Seville or in the closest in time, Lucas of Tuy, but until the appearance of the work of Jiménez de Rada, those legends and myths had not been gathered in a whole nor had they been added to a history of Spain in the form of a chapter on the origins²⁶. Despite this, in the historical part itself, Jiménez de Rada manifests a fairly pronounced critical spirit, the result of a concept of culture and moralization about history that is characteristic of the time in which he writes his work. He also resorts to Arab sources to contrast his data, an aspect to highlight since, at that time, aspects such as society or economy were only treated by Arab historiography²⁷.

20 Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *De reb. Hisp.*, Praefatio.

21 Quia igitur placuit vestrae excellentiae Maiestatis, meae requirere ignorantiam parvitatibus, ut si quae de antiquitatibus Hispaniae, et de iis etiam quae ab antiquis vel modernis temporibus acciderunt, meae memoriae occurrissent, petitioni vestrae describere laborarem, et ut a quibus gentibus calamitatas Hispania sit perpeassa, et Hispanorum Regum origo, et eorum magnalia (...) per scripturas meae indaginem ad diligentiae nostrae notitiam pervenirent.

22 Rodríguez 2003; Rodríguez 2004. Igitur quia magnorum petitio me coegit Gothorum originem et acta describere, (...) usque ad mea tempora contexui et descripsi.

23 Wulff 2003, 38–39; Moxo y Ortiz de Villajos 2000, 273–277; Fernández Gallardo 2004, 72.

24 Lomax 1977, 588.

25 Fernández Gallardo 2004, 73.

26 Carbó García 2004, 202.

27 Pick 2004.

Precisely one of the myths that he collects in his chapter on the origins of the Hispanic people is our subject of study on these pages, the myth of the wisdom of the Goths, which gains a moral meaning, as it will appear in later historians and writers and in relation to the exposed virtues of the Castilian-Leonese kings²⁸.

In his story, Deceneus reappears. Jiménez de Rada will make of him an example of wisdom and good government for the new Hispanic rulers, heirs of the Gothic tradition transmitted by Isidore and reactivated in the thirteenth century. It will also include Zalmoxis and some Dacian traditions, elements all of them taken, now, from Jordanes, who had mixed the history of the Goths with those of the Getae and Dacians in his "Getica"²⁹. Through Jordanes and the independent Hispanic tradition represented by Isidore of Seville, Jiménez de Rada introduced the myth and history of the Getae and Dacians –previously appropriated for the Goths– into the history of the Hispanic people³⁰. Thus, he affirms that, in the time of Sulla, a certain Dicineus (sic) would have taught the Visigoths all philosophy, physics, theoretical and practical disciplines, logic, the arrangement of the twelve signs, the movement of the planets, the growth and decrease of the moon, the course of the sun, astrology and astronomy, the natural sciences ...³¹:

"Deinde regnavit in Gothis Borvīsta, et venit ad eum in Gothiam Dicineus, quo tempore Silla in Romanis habuit principatum. Et Diciney consilio Germanorum terras quas nunc Franci detinent occuparunt, et dedit ei Borvista fere regiam potestatem (...) Gothi autem hoc commodum, hoc salubre, hoc votivum, hoc agendum in agendis et in iudiciis iudicabant, quod Dicineus eorum consiliarius aprobat. Ipse autem mores eorum barbaricos inmutavit, ipse fere omnen philosophiam, fisicam, theoricam, practicam, logicam, dispositiones XII signorum, planetarum cursus, augmentum lune et decrementum, solis circuitum, astrologiam et astronomian et naturales sciencias Gothos docuit et ex beluina ferocitate homines et philosophos instauravit. Hec et alia Dicineus Gothis pericia sua tradens mirabiliter enitot apud eos, et non solum mediocribus, immo et regibus imperavit. Elegit preterea nobiliores et prudentiores fecitque sacerdotes, quos ad theologiam instituens vocavit speciali nomine "pilleatos", et quia tyaris capita paliabant arbitror sic vocatos. Decedente vero Dicineo pene pari veneratione Eumusicum habuerunt, quia nec impar in solercia habebatur. Etenim rex et pontifex ob sui periciam illis fuit et in summa iustitia populos iudicabat, Et hoc rebus humanis exempt succedit in regno post multa tempora Dorpaneus".

Some of this knowledge that Jiménez de Rada highlights in the Goths we know that Jordanes had taken from the ancient references to Deceneus and the Dacians of the first cen-

28 Carbó García 2004, 203.

29 Carbó García 2015, 23–66.

30 Svennung 1967, 26–30; Busuiocanu 1985, 124–141.

31 Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *De reb. Hisp.*, I, 15.

ture BC and I AD³². This agrees with the aforementioned interests of Jiménez de Rada towards the communication of science and mechanical arts and the disciplines that should interest him especially. In fact, chapter XV of his work, "*De sapientibus Gothorum et consiliariis eorum*", is nothing but an excursus on Deceneus, whom he includes in a place of honor along with Zeuta and Zalmoxis –whom he calls Zalmoxes– among the "philosophers" of the Goths³³. Jiménez de Rada had to know the theories at the University of Paris on the *translatio studii*, which in the case at hand would have been carried out directly thanks to the Visigoths. They would have transferred their philosophical and cosmological knowledge learned in the east when they settled and were identified with Hispania³⁴. From the study of the first books of his work we can see to what extent he used Jordanes and Isidore. In them, the Toledan archbishop was guided especially by the "*Getica*" of Jordanes. Sometimes he literally transcribes it, with unimportant stylistic modifications, and other times he summarizes it. It is in the moments when he decides to expand the text when he transcribes or summarizes parts from the "*Etymologies*" or the "*Historia Gothorum*" of Isidore. In rarer cases, even from Orosius. And the verses he quotes from Lucan or Virgil come from references to Jordanes or Isidore. Of course, he does not differentiate between Goths and Getae, and like Isidore, he begins his chapter of the history of the Goths by going back to Magog, son of Japheth. The etymological theory of the identification between Getae and Goths proposed by Isidore will also be collected in its pages, although not without certain modifications resulting from the confrontation with what was exposed by Jordanes³⁵.

In Jiménez de Rada, the Gothic myth related to the origins of the people who were going to be considered "founder" of Spain will be projected in the history and reality of the Iberian people, containing the identity and the appropriate past of the Getae and Dacians of Antiquity in it. However, these do not constitute by themselves the direct object of appropriation, but indirectly they are appropriated when the true object of that appropriation at that time –the Goths and their history– is taken by Jiménez de Rada on behalf of King Fernando III for the legitimization of the reigning dynasty over León and Castile and legitimization of the high nobility too. They had those same interests in enhancing their origins by appealing to the "glorious past" of unity of the different territories of the Peninsula under the Goths: a people whose remote antiquity –and consequently, the greater prestige and power of legitimation it could confer– would be reinforced by the repetition of passages about the legendary origin of the Goths, as it had been elaborated at the time by Cassiodorus and Jordanes from ancient sources.

32 Iord., *Get.*, XI, 67; 69–73.

33 Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *De reb. Hisp.*, I, 10 y I, 13.

34 Dana 2008, 179–180; Rucquoi 1998, 739–740.

35 Alarcos 1937.

2.3 *The Decenean model for Alfonso X*

The encyclopedic and exhaustive character of the knowledge of the thirteenth century finds in the historiographical work promoted by Alfonso X its fullness, surpassing in quality the two great chronicles that preceded it and with the difference of the use of Castilian versus Latin³⁶.

The intense Gothicism present in medieval Hispanic historiography, which was based on the Isidorian tradition and was stimulated from the political ideology of restoration of the Visigothic monarchy was a determining factor in preventing a search for the ancestors of the inhabitants of the Peninsula. The renewal and overcoming promoted by Fernando III with respect to the limited previous dynastic interests allow to investigate the most remote past by raising the question of the origins of the nation and the necessary research for that purpose. In the "*Estoria de España*", we find the idea –already developed by Jiménez de Rada– of some original peninsular inhabitants and different invasions that successively devastated Spain, as can be seen in the translation of the passage taken from Jiménez de Rada, which lists these calamitous invasions: Hercules, Romans, Vandals, Silings, Alans and Suebi³⁷. By contrast, the mention of the "Spanish" people is reiterated without leaving any doubt about the identity of the inhabitants of Spain who suffer these invasions. But when the time comes to deal with the arrival of the Visigoths, a problem arises, because it could not be presented as another invasion, like the previous ones, so that it would be alien to the Spanish identity, to those "espannoles" who inhabited Spain, and the simplest solution is chosen: omit the problem, so that the Goths appear, even without any link, together with the Spanish people. The arrival of the Goths supposes a new dominion, but not one more like the previous ones, but the one that generates the legitimacy on which the dynastic rights of Alfonso X and all the previous and subsequent kings are based. The recourse to Gothicism was inevitable, both from the perspective of the political arguments related to dynastic identity and those that supported the idea of Reconquista. The Hispanic historiographical tradition from Isidore onwards had consolidated an image of the past that at that time could not be renounced. It would have meant calling into question the collective identity that was sought to confer on the Spanish people, as inhabitants of that national entity whose origins were also sought, the medieval Hispanic nation³⁸.

When reading the history of the Goths in the "*Estoria de España*", it seems that for Alfonso X, promoter of Spanish culture, reformer of laws and cultivator of all sciences

36 Fernández Gallardo 2004, 77–80.

37 Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *De reb. Hisp.*, Praefatio: «(...) ortum eorum qui primo in Hispaniis habitavere, et bella Herculis quae exercuit super eos, et quae Romani mortis iudicia intulere, et quibus Vándalos, Silingos, Alanos, et Suevos exitiis consumpserunt (...) compilavi (...)». Alfonso X el Sabio, *Estoria de España*, Prólogo: «Et esto fiziemos por que fuesse sabudo el comienço de los espannoles, et de quales yentes fuera España maltrecha; et que sopiessen las batallas que Hercoles de Grecia fizo contra los espannoles, et las mortandades que los romanos fizieron en ellos, et los destruymientos que les fizieron otrossi los vándalos et los silingos et los alanos et los suevos...».

38 Fernández Gallardo 2004, 83–87.

and arts, from music and literature to astronomy and astrology, the figure of Deceneus – called by him *Diceneo* or *Dicineo* – will not only be that of the wise advisor of Burebista – whom he calls *Boruista* –, but will become a model for the monarch himself. So Alfonso X the Learned lists Deceneus's activities, repeating Jiménez de Rada, who in turn followed Jordanes' account³⁹:

“Empos esto regnò en los godos *Boruista*, et uino a ell en *Goçia* uno que llamauan *Dicineo*. Et fue esto en el tiempo en que *Silla* era consol en *Roma* et tenie el principado. E leuantos este rey *Boruista* por conseio daquel *Dicineo*, et priso las tierras de los Germanos, las que tienen agora los Francos, et dio *Boruista* a *Dicineo* por ello fascas tod el poder del sennorio. E los Godos dalli adelant por que ueyen al so rey et assí mismos muy bien aconsejados daquel *Dicineo*, lo que el les conseiaua et tenie por bien aquello iudgauan por cosa prouechosa et de salut et de sanctidat en las cosas que ellos auien de fazer. E aquel mudò entrellos las costumbres que auien entonçes non tan buenas; et este *Dicineo* ensennò a los godos fascas toda la *philosophya* et la física, et la *theorica* et la *practica*, et la *logica*, et los ordenamientos de los doze signos, et los cossos de los planetas, et el crescer et le descrescer de la luna et el cosso del sol, et la *astrologia*, et la *astronomia*, et las sciencias naturales. Et sacolos duna braueza que trayen antes a manera de bestias saluages, et ensennò los a seer mansos et *philosophos*. Et sobresto escogì *Dicineo* de los mas nobles, et mas entendidos, et fizò dellos sacerdotes et obispos, et diò dellos que prendiessen *theologia* et llamò los *pileatos* por nombre de *pileus* que dicen el latin por sombrero de cauallero; et segund departen los sabios esto era por las mitras de que trayen cubiertas las cabeças, cuemo los caualleros las suyas de los sombreros. Et murio este *Dicineo*, et ouieron en logar del otro que dixieron *Eumusico*, sabio cuemo ell, et onrraron lo los Godos poco menos que a aquel, ca tanto fue sabidor aqueste que por rey et por obispo le tenien ellos entresi, et uidgaua este en sos pueblos toda iusticia muy complidamente. Et pues que murio este *Eumusico*, ouieron por rey a grand tiempo depues otro quel llamaron *Dorpaneo*, segund que adelante cuenta la estoria”.

And along with Deceneus and Burebista, *Zalmoxis* also appears in the Alfonsine chronicle, although his figure is eclipsed almost entirely in the Spanish chronicles by that of the intellectual “Goth”, Deceneus. In the case of Alfonso X, it is said of *Zalmoxis* that “cuentam las estorias que fue muy sabio to marauilla en la *philosophya*”⁴⁰.

In the thirteenth century, the Castilian-Leonese chronicles of Lucas of Tuy, Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and Alfonso X the Learned represent –progressively– the Spanish national exaltation against the northern neighbour. If in France it was sought to reaffirm the Trojan origin of the French people, mixed with the Germanic origins, in León and Castile Tubal, Hercules and especially the Visigoths are chosen as ancient ancestors, in search of affirming a consciousness of their own identity, unity and independence against

39 Alfonso X el Sabio, *Estoria de España*, cap. 388.

40 Alfonso X el Sabio, *Estoria de España*, cap. 393.

France and the main European powers, such as the Holy Roman Empire or the Papacy⁴¹. And with the Goths, the most outstanding characters of the ancient history of the Getae and Dacians, such as the aforementioned Deceneus, Burebista or Zalmoxis, are perfectly integrated into the history of the Spanish people when dealing with the legendary origins of the Visigothic people, always with an exemplary and legitimizing intentionality. In the specific case of Deceneus, we find the clearest model of a reformer and wise man for Alfonso X.

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41 Rucquoi 1992, 341–352.

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