Reverting to Napier’s *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Book XVII, Chapter 1, describing the Surprise of Almaraz, the map of the Middle Tagus shows the ‘Puente de Conde’ just upstream from Almaraz.

In the Fortescue Map 7 accompanying Volume VII, it does not mark Puente de Conde. However, on the Maps 22 & 23 accompanying Volume VIII, it is included.

The Bridge at Arzobispo (more correctly termed ‘the bridge of the Archbishop’) was built in the 14th century by order of the order of Pedro Tenorio, Archbishop Primate of Toledo. Originally it had just eight arches; in 1779 three more arches were added, the central one being larger than the others, plus two fortified gate towers. With walls 6 feet thick, and spanning 36 and 27 feet across at their bases, they rose up to 105 and 96 feet above the river level.
The towers were removed in 1890 and today only their massive foundations can be seen on each side of the main structure of the bridge.¹
In the retreat following the Battle of Talavera, the British army crossed the Tagus by the bridge at Arzobispo on the 4th August and marched west along the south bank towards Almaraz.

A couple of days later, Cuesta followed and a division of infantry and another of cavalry were detailed to hold the strong medieval bridge and ford. The bridge itself was barricaded and infantry manned the towers of the bridge; earthworks mounting 16 guns were thrown up on the southern bank to cover the bridge, but only cavalry defended the ford. On the night of the 7th, Soult discovered the exact position of the ford, which was not easy to identify from the north. During the Spanish siesta the next afternoon, squadrons of French cavalry forded the river while their infantry poured over the bridge. Six thousand Spanish were routed and pursued for mile in several directions.

Though the narrow bridge of Arzobispo on the middle Tagus still remained in French hands, it did not lead on to any good north/south road to Estremadura or Andalusia, but on to the defiles of the Mesa d’Ibor and the ravines of the Sierra de Guadalupe. No large force could march or feed in these solitudes.

Talavera

At Talavera the Tagus is very wide as it flows across the plains here. Since the banks barely contain the flow in full flood, the course of the river changes regularly as new sand banks are created. The Romans had certainly had a bridge here but over time even their skills at construction could not stand firm on the sandy bottom.
The other and critical problems of the Talavera crossing become apparent in Oman, Vol II, page 579.

It may be asked why the Captain-General (Cuesta) did not adopt the simpler course of crossing the Tagus at Talavera, and moving under cover of the river, instead of executing the long flank march by Oropesa to Almaraz on the exposed bank, where the French were known to be in movement. The answer, however, is simple and conclusive: the paths which lead southward from Talavera are impracticable for artillery and wheeled vehicles. Infantry alone could have retreated by the route which climbs up to the Puerto de San Vincente, the main pass of this section of the Sierra de Guadalupe: nor was the track along the (southern) edge of the river from Talavera to Arzobispo any better fitted for the transport of a large army. It is this want of any adequate communication with the south which makes Talavera such a dangerous position: no retreat from it is possible save that by the roads to Oropesa, unless the retiring army is prepared to sacrifice all its impedimenta.
There do not appear to have been any crossing points between Talavera and the major bridges at Toledo. The major road follows the line of the river on the right/northern bank. The Sierra de Guadalupe comes down close to the opposite bank and there were no villages nearby.
Toledo

In Toledo there are two ancient bridges spanning the River Tagus.
At the western side of the city is the Puente de San Martin.

This was built in the 14th century as part of the protective enclosure of the city. It has five arches, of which the central one, which is pointed and 27 metres high, is the largest. It is protected at each end by two gate towers dating from the Visigoth period.
On the eastern side of the city is the Puente de Alcantara; it takes its name from the 10th century Moorish Puerta de Alcantara in the city walls. The bridge was built by the Moors during the year 866 to replace a Roman bridge that was built further down the river. It was demolished in 1257 by the overflowing river but was re-built again by Alfonso X later that year. The bridge is built over two round arches with a fortified gate tower at the western entrance. At the other end there is an ornately decorated arch from a later period.