

Alfonso X of Castile: Alfonso the Tolerant?

Michael Ruitter

Mediaeval Iberia was rife with inter-religious conflict between Christians, Jews, and Muslims that incited forced conversions and culminated in mass expulsions. Yet, in the midst of such a harrowing time in the peninsula's history, there were occasional elements of harmony between these three groups, made all the more impressive in their rarity. King Alfonso X, the Wise, was a man whose rule exhibited a relative tranquility in inter-religious relations some have even suggested is deserving of altering his sobriquet to Alfonso the Tolerant. Through an examination of his law code, the *Siete Partidas*, and a compilation of several hundred canticles, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, this paper pinpoints elements of Alfonso's rule to critically assess the claims of his tolerance.

The law codes of Alfonso the Learned of Castile, and especially his monumental *Siete partidas* or Seven Divisions, are arguably that monarch's greatest gift to posterity, surpassing his scientific contributions, his work in art and music, and his literary and linguistic heritage.

—Robert I. Burns¹

Without speaking of posterity, Alfonso X's *Siete Partidas* was certainly of great significance to Medieval Spain. So were his other works in the sciences, art, music, and literature. There has been debate among scholars that, as evidenced by his contributions to posterity, Alfonso the Wise may appropriately be called Alfonso the Tolerant. His work certainly provides evidence of inter-religious relations between Christians, Jews, and Muslims in medieval Iberia, but whether such relations are evidence of tolerance remains the subject of scrutiny. Examining the law code, *Siete Partidas* (Seven Divisions) as representative of his legislative work, as well as the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* as representative of his work in art, music, and literature, in light of any ulterior political intentions within those works, one can discern marked evidence of Alfonso X fostering tolerance under his rule.

Tolerance

Since the Moorish introduction of Islam to Iberia in 711, there has been a tension between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Over the years this tension was exacerbated or relieved on the basis of changing economic, social, and political conditions. Alfonso X's rule (1252-1284) may be seen as one such change in political conditions. A rule under which, some have claimed, Alfonso exhibited a tolerance towards the three main religions of Iberia.

In order to assess any claim of Alfonso X's tolerance, one must first define that term. Dwayne Carpenter, arguably the greatest supporter of the argument for Alfonso's edited epithet, addresses

1. Robert I. Burns, "Jews and Moors in the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X the Learned: a Background Perspective" in *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict and Coexistence*, edited by Roger Collins and Anthony Goodman (Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 46.

this argument on the premise of ‘tolerance’ holding the meaning of the Latin *tolerare*, specifically referring to the endurance or allowance of something.² He stresses, “tolerance does not require either a preference for or understanding of that which is tolerated.”³ In appointing Alfonso with a sobriquet of tolerance, Robert Burns cautions the word is “a modern construct” and a “legacy of the Enlightenment era.” However, he acknowledges Carpenter’s “reinventing tolerance as justice [. . .] may at least save the term.”⁴ Putting aside Burns’ warning regarding the origin of the term, an important warning without doubt, he is rather presumptuous in referring to Carpenter’s use of the term as a redefinition. In clarifying the meaning of ‘tolerance,’ Carpenter does not redefine it, he simply emphasises the original semantics of the word free from the ameliorative connotations it has received contemporarily. While Carpenter does indeed refer to justice as “the essence of tolerance,” he does so in the context of tolerance not requiring a preference or even understanding, and explicitly refers to ‘justice’ in its contrast relative to ‘love’—or further amelioration.⁵

An additional caveat should be added regarding the issue of intention. If Alfonso’s rule was one of tolerance by happenstance, in spite of specific legislation aiming for the opposite, then he should not be said to be ‘tolerant’. Connie L. Scarborough argues, “for Alfonso, the political is always present, subtly and at times not so subtly, revealing itself even in the work most critics consider to be the most personal expression of his religious sentiments.”⁶ If the political takes precedence at the expense of tolerance, then Alfonso cannot be said to be tolerant. More specifically, if the tolerance he exhibited was the unintentional side effect of some larger political design it cannot be called tolerance. Conversely, if tolerance is a primary feature, and aim, of the political nature ever-present in Alfonso’s works, then perhaps he is deserving of the title. Thus, with the warnings regarding the semantics of the term in mind, tolerance, for the purpose of this paper, will be defined as Alfonso X’s intentional acceptance or allowance of the endurance of Muslim and Jewish practices—a tolerance for which, Burns agrees with Carpenter, can be found in “both religious praxis and economic elements.”⁷

The Siete Partidas

Although completed between 1256 and 1265, it has long been argued that Alfonso’s law code, the *Siete Partidas*, was not promulgated until the 14th century, and even then only as a supplementary law.⁸ More recently, some historians, Burns and Carpenter among them, have argued based on the “framing language in the *Partidas*,” it was actually an amplification of the statutes put into effect by the *Especulo*—promulgated in 1254—which took effect immediately upon completion.⁹ Joseph O’Callaghan takes a similar position, positing that the *Siete Partidas* was indeed in effect during Alfonso’s lifetime within the royal court, with the towns of Castile and *Extremadura* being governed under the separate laws of the *Fuero Real*.¹⁰ There is a statement in the *Chronicle of Alfonso X* regarding

2. Dwayne E. Carpenter, *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas* 7.24 “De los judios” (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 105.

3. Carpenter, 105.

4. Burns, 48.

5. Carpenter, 105.

6. Connie L. Scarborough, *A Holy Alliance: Alfonso X’s use of Marian Poetry* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta—Hispanic Monographs, 2009), 14. While Scarborough argues this point in exclusive reference to the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, one can assume that if such political issues were present in works of literature and music, they would also be present, perhaps even more so, in legislative works such as the *Siete Partidas*.

7. Burns, 48.

8. *Ibid.*, 47.

9. *Ibid.*, 47.

10. Shelby Thacker and José Escobar, trans., *Chronicle of Alfonso X* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 2. The argument cited is in the introduction written by Joseph O’Callaghan.

the promulgation of laws in 1260 that some interpret to include the *Siete Partidas*.¹¹ Some lines of the *Siete Partidas* are qualified by the statement, “in any part of our dominions,” implying a universal nature to that particular law.¹² Unfortunately, such qualifications support either argument since these laws are repeated in the *Fuero Real*, which warrants mentioning they apply everywhere in Alfonso’s dominion, or else they are formulaic statements (implied when not found explicitly) meaning the entire *Siete Partidas* was applicable everywhere in Alfonso’s domain. Whether it was in use only within the royal court, or throughout all settlements in Alfonso X’s domain, its use within Alfonso’s lifetime is likely. Given that the rival argument is simply a *terminus ante quem*, following Carpenter’s logic, the *Siete Partidas* is presumed to have been put to use upon its completion, or shortly thereafter.¹³ Having been penned by Alfonso—or at the very least supervised by him—and likely put to use during his lifetime, the laws Alfonso puts down in the *Siete Partidas* are done so intentionally and with political motivation.¹⁴

One aspect of the *Siete Partidas* worth noting is both in its construction as a law code, as well as the ideology behind those laws, it was influenced by past events and legislation.¹⁵ Modelled on Roman law codes and influenced by inter-religious relations, particularly those between the Christians and Jews, by everything from the Visigothic rule of Spain to the Talmudic controversy of Judaism, Alfonso, although adding nuanced distinctions of his own, was for the most part following a pre-existing model of ideology and philosophy in his *Siete Partidas*.¹⁶

Section 7.24 of the *Siete Partidas* focuses specifically on the Jews under Alfonso’s rule and, as such, bears the most evidence of a Visigothic legacy.¹⁷ For this reason, it is often considered to be antagonistic toward the Jews.¹⁸ Indeed, the penalty for converting a Christian to Judaism was loss of property and death; if a Jew was to venture out of his home or district on Good Friday, he is likely to be subjected to crimes inflicted by Christians and if this is the case, he was not entitled to any reparations; moreover, if a Jew was found guilty to having been present, “no matter how many there may be,” at the anti-Christian crimes reportedly taking place on Good Friday, he was to be “put to death in a disgraceful manner.”¹⁹ Further indications of possible intolerance can be found in the laws forbidding Jews and Moors from inter-religious relationships with Christians, the prohibitions against Jews housing Christians, and the proscriptions against Christians taking medicine given by

11. *Ibid.*, 46 (Ch. 8 of *Cronica del rey don Alfonso X*). The position that the *Siete Partidas* is included in this promulgation can be found under endnote 2 of that chapter.

12. Olivia Remie Constable, ed., “The Legal Status of Jews and Muslims in Castile: *Siete Partidas* (early fourteenth century)” in *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, translated by S. P. Scott (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 400. Two such examples may be found on this page alone.

13. Burns, 47. The argument of the 14th century being a *terminus ante quem* is based on the fact that it was only named the *Siete Partidas* in the 14th century. The common assumption is that it only received this name when it was promulgated and was therefore not promulgated until the 14th century. Cf. Richard P. Kinkade and Joseph T. Snow, “Alfonso X (23 November 1221-4 April 1284)” in *Castilian Writers, 1200-1400*, edited by George D. Greenia and Frank A. Dominguez (Detroit: Gale, 2008), 5-7, http://galenet.galegroup.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/servlet/DLBC_Online/edmo69826/BK1560745002.

14. Scarborough, 14. See footnote 5.

15. Joseph O’Callaghan, *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 17-19.

16. Burns, 48, 50-51 for Talmudic controversy and influence of preexisting philosophy and ideology. For further evidence of the *Siete Partidas* being influenced by preexisting ideologies, as well as, specifically, the legacy of the Visigoths on Christian-Jewish relations, see Carpenter, 3-5.

17. Carpenter, 4-5.

18. Constable, “The Legal Status of Jews and Muslims in Castile,” 399. It should be noted that Constable makes this argument in a way that contrasts Christian-Jewish relations with Christian-Mudejar ones.

19. *Ibid.*, 399-400.

Jews.²⁰ One law in particular shows a particular anti-Jewish bias, claiming “no Christian shall take any medicine [. . .] made by a Jew; but he can take it by the advice of some wise person, only where it is made by a Christian.”²¹ Presumably, this “wise person” could apply to anyone, Christian or Jew, yet the advice of that person may only be followed if the medication itself is made by a Christian, implying mistrust, or at the very least apprehension, toward Jews. Yet, ethnocentric as it may be, mistrust is not, by the above-defined parameters, intolerance. In fact, none of the laws here mentioned fit such a definition.

One set of laws which, by the definition put forth above, illustrates intolerance regarding mosques and synagogues. Mosques and synagogues are integral buildings for worship and therefore integral to the maintenance of Islam and Judaism. Although history has proven the faithful of both religions endure without these buildings, one could argue that such perseverance was in the direct face of intolerance since the lack of such religious buildings is detrimental to the continuance of these faiths. The *Siete Partidas* forbids the construction of new mosques and synagogues.²² Furthermore, the mosques already in existence were to become the property of the king and—although he could still permit their existence—they were forbidden from existing in Christian towns.²³ Although ostensibly this law was designed to hinder continuance of Islam and Judaism, it bears stipulations proves Alfonso was more concerned with diminishing the public display of these religions, than he was with eradicating them.²⁴

Another arena for intolerance is the converts. In this case, it seems there are no redeeming provisions in the *Siete Partidas*: any Christian that converts to Islam or Judaism was sentenced to death and loss of property.²⁵ Through their conversions, these people were no longer part of Christianity, but a member of the faith they have chosen to convert to and, in condemning them to death, the *Siete Partidas* hindered their ability to continue practicing their chosen faith. The laws regarding conversions were, therefore, intolerant. Alfonso’s intention behind these laws may be questioned, for it seems he still perceived them to be Christians. Converts to Judaism were put on the level of heretics—although explicitly separated from heretics—and converts to Islam were condemned on the basis of treason.²⁶ Based on these perceptions as they appear in the *Siete Partidas*, one might argue that Alfonso’s intention was not for the detriment of enduring Islam and Judaism, but for the prolonged continuance of Christianity since conversions were crimes committed by Christians. Additionally, the outlined definition of tolerance was free from the need for understanding or appreciation, and it could be this very misapprehension of the nature of converts—or unwillingness to apprehend—that led to the creation of these laws.

Carpenter’s opinion is, “in spite of increasingly antipathetic attitudes and policies toward Spanish Jewry, Alfonso’s general posture in this regard is one of leniency.”²⁷ While it is true that Christians were actively attempting to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity, the *Siete Partidas* stresses that such conversion efforts should be made “by use of kind words, and not by compulsion.”²⁸ In

20. Ibid., 402-405. ‘Moors,’ as used in the *Siete Partidas*, and likewise used in this paper, refers not exclusively to the ethnicity, but to any Mudejar.

21. Ibid., 402.

22. Constable, “The Legal Status of Jews and Muslims in Castile,” 403.

23. Ibid., 403. Cantiga 169, discussed further below, provides evidence that the king did indeed permit the continuance of mosques in non-Christian towns.

24. Namely, the fact that they are permitted to exist as long as not in Christian towns—see footnote 21.

25. Ibid., 401-404.

26. Constable, “The Legal Status of Muslims and Jews in Castile,” 401-404.

27. Carpenter, 5.

28. Constable, “The Legal Status of Muslims and Jews in Castile,” 403.

specific reference to Jews, the *Siete Partidas* even goes so far as to say that they shall live their lives “without disorder, practicing their own religious rites,” which is evidence of an effort for the allowance of Judaism to continue under Alfonso’s reign.²⁹ Taking into account both the laws regarding synagogues and mosques, as well as those involving Christian converts to other religions—the latter with the question of intentionality taken into account—the laws within Alfonso’s *Siete Partidas* can perhaps best be described as exhibiting a “restrained tolerance.”³⁰

Cantigas de Santa Maria

Alfonso X commissioned the compilation of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (*CSM*), the two volumes of which were completed in his lifetime and contained over 400 songs.³¹ These Marian Canticles were written in Galician-Portuguese and contain multiple genres including songs of friendship and songs of love.³² Several of the canticles are written in the voice of Alfonso and, like the laws of the *Siete Partidas*, if not written by him, were certainly written with his influence.³³ O’Callaghan even goes as far as to argue that the *CSM* may be seen as a poetic autobiography.³⁴ While past scholars have argued that the *CSM* were influenced by Arabic musicians and thus pointed to inter-religious interactions, more recent research, most notably that of Dwight Reynolds, has pointed to the fact that although inter-religious relations are easy to prove, this is not the case with ‘influence,’ which can most often only be found “in the eye of the beholder.”³⁵ Taking the ambiguity of musical ‘influence,’ along with the fact that several of the canticles are in the voice of Alfonso, and keeping in mind Scarborough’s aforementioned assertion that the political is present in *all* of Alfonso’s works, one can conclude that the portrayals within the *CSM* are both intentional and bearing a political motive.³⁶

One such *cantiga* in the voice of Alfonso X with an outward appearance of evincing the king’s tolerant nature is *Cantiga 169*. Having predominantly assessed Christian-Jewish relations in examining the *Siete Partidas*, this canticle can be used to shift the focus to Christian-Muslim relations. In this canticle, the Muslims of La Arrija, a settlement of Murcia specifically designated as being a Mudejar settlement, make several requests to have a church of Mary taken down.³⁷ This church was formerly a mosque, but since it is on Mudejar land the Mudejars wish it dismantled. This request is granted by various rulers to whom the Mudejars appeal (both don Jaume, king of Portugal, and Alfonso X who is hesitant due to the church’s fresh paint job), and after several unsuccessful attempts to dismantle the church due to a supposed divine intervention, they finally appeal to the

29. *Ibid.*, 399.

30. Carpenter, 5.

31. Kinkade and Snow, 5.

32. Janice Wright, “Cantigas in the Galician-Portuguese Cancioneiros” in *Castilian Writers, 1200-1400*, edited by George D. Greenia and Frank A. Dominguez (Detroit: Gale, 2008), 49-50, http://galenet.galegroup.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/servlet/DLBC_Online/edmo69826/BK1560745004.

33. H. Salvador Martínez, *Studies in the History of Christian Traditions: Alfonso X the Learned: A Biography*, series edited by Robert J. Bast, translated by Odile Cisneros (Leiden: Brill, Hotei Publishing, 2010), 222.

34. Joseph O’Callaghan, *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: A Poetic Biography* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1998), 1.

35. Dwight F. Reynolds, “Music in Medieval Iberia: Contact, Influence and Hybridization” in *Al-Andalus, Sepharad and Medieval Iberia: Cultural Contact and Diffusion*, edited by Ivy A. Corfis (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 82.

36. For Scarborough’s claim see Footnote 5.

37. Olivia Remie Constable, ed., “Five Stories from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*” in *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, translated by Kathleen Kulp-Hill (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 366-367.

Moorish king who refuses due to a fear of retribution at the hands of Mary.³⁸ On the surface, this politically-charged canticle goes beyond tolerance and presents Alfonso's attitude toward the Mudejars as magnanimous, and the relationship between them as harmonious, he concedes with only a brief second thought to the dismantling of a Church for the sake of his Mudejar subjects.³⁹

Despite this outward appearance of harmony an examination of this *cantiga* in historical context suggests that not all is as it seems. La Arrija came to Alfonso's possession in his youth.⁴⁰ After a series of battles, and division among his military leaders, Muhammad Ibn Hud, fearing the Kingdom of Granada would annex his kingdom, decided to swear fealty to Alfonso X's father, Fernando III.⁴¹ Alfonso, on behalf of his father, was sent to accept Ibn Hud's vassalage and thus inherited the region of Murcia.⁴² While Fernando III restricted La Arrija as Mudejar territory, granting them autonomy under his authority, Alfonso X, in the interest of resettlement, moved Mudejars from Murcia to remote under-populated settlements and replaced them with Christians.⁴³ Among those to whom an appeal is made for the dismantling of the church, Fernando III's name is notably absent.⁴⁴ One could infer from this exclusion the Mudejars felt less satisfied under Alfonso's rule than under his father's rule.

Such an inference is supported by the Mudejar rebellions and uprisings in Murcia during Alfonso's reign—particularly when some side with the Granadan forces attacking Alfonso's border—as well as their (perceived) special relationship with Alfonso, predicated on the fact that they were a protectorate.⁴⁵ The importance of the latter is brought into relief by the fact that Alfonso's first time visiting Murcia in five years was spent consolidating the resettlements and may have been seen as a betrayal of the special relationship he had in the region with his Mudejar subjects.⁴⁶ Likewise, the argument can be made, that Alfonso likely felt betrayed by their rebellion in his absence. Evidence for this last point may be found in the reason for Alfonso's hesitance to agree to allow the church to be dismantled. The reason of the church being freshly painted can be seen as evidence it was damaged during the Mudejar rebellion.⁴⁷ The Moorish king in the canticle, who refuses to have the church removed, is suggested by O'Callaghan to be Abd Allah ibn Hud, a descendant of Muhammad Ibn Hud and vassal of Alfonso.⁴⁸ Given that this king "still retained some vestige of authority over the Muslim community," coupled with the knowledge relations between Alfonso and the Mudejars of Murcia were strained, may be evidence of political messages in Alfonso's hesitation to agree to the church's removal and in the Moorish king's refusal to do so.⁴⁹

The final part of this *cantiga*, which relates an attempt by Abu Yusuf of Salé to take Murcia by means of stealth, is chronologically skewed from the other events of the *cantiga*.⁵⁰ Scarborough posits such

38. Constable, "Five Stories from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," 366-367. This Cantiga also mentions a plot of trickery by an invading force to destroy the church but Mary intervenes and the church remains unharmed.

39. Scarborough, 44-45.

40. Scarborough, 42-43.

41. Ibid., 42. It was under the rule of Fernando III, during the battles preceding Murcia's surrender, that the mosque was converted into a church of Mary.

42. Martinez, 89-90.

43. Scarborough, 44.

44. Constable, "Five Stories from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," 366-367.

45. Scarborough, 44-46. A special relationship that they felt warranted special treatment (same citation).

46. Ibid., 47.

47. Scarborough, 47-48.

48. O'Callaghan, *A Poetic Biography*, 125.

49. Ibid., 125. O'Callaghan is the source of the quotation, the notion that the Moorish king and Alfonso's actions may be seen as political messages is my own, supported somewhat by Scarborough, 48.

50. Scarborough, 50.

an inaccurate portrayal of events in a song that was presumably printed with Alfonso's express permission is due "to the fact that Alfonso was less concerned with clarity [. . .] of historical data than imparting a political message."⁵¹ With the prevalence of a political message in the text, Alfonso being a magnanimous character, is reinforced by the fact he acts as such in spite of inter-religious tensions with the Mudejars. Regardless of the strained nature of such relationships *Cantiga 169* supports the above-described definition of tolerance due to Alfonso's willingness to dismantle a church, the presence of which the Mudejars see as detrimental to the continuance of their religious practices.

Importance of the Political

Scarborough is not alone in stressing the importance of the political in all of Alfonso's endeavours. When discussing his reign, many scholars note Alfonso X's political preoccupations, particularly his political ambitions to be named Holy Roman Emperor.⁵² Intentionality becomes paramount in discerning Alfonso's tolerance, for if the tolerance reflected in the *Siete Partidas* and *CSM* was simply put there to prove to other rulers his wise nature in an effort to be named Holy Roman Emperor, then such tolerance was likely not as well-reflected in practice under Alfonso's reign. Tantamount to a preoccupation with furthering his political standing—mainly because the two are inextricably linked—were Alfonso's efforts to complete the Reconquest of Spain: an effort to achieve a unity of Spain, both politically and religiously.⁵³ If Alfonso was truly aiming toward a religious unity of Spain this aim dashes any possibility of calling Alfonso tolerant, since such an aim would demand an end to the endurance of Islam and Judaism in Spain. Yet Scarborough cautions modern scholars not to fall prey to the "erroneous assumption [. . .] that the Reconquest was essentially religious in nature."⁵⁴ With this warning in mind, it is possible Alfonso sought the political unity of Spain under a united religious *rule* only. A rule, like his own in Castile, which left room for the continuance of other religions, such as Judaism and Islam, beneath it.

What of the intentions of his works? Were the *Siete Partidas* and *CSM* intended simply for the sake of posterity because, as Charles Fraker claims, Alfonso was obsessed with his legacy?⁵⁵ Were these works solely meant for other rulers to see the greatness of Alfonso and therefore beyond the knowledge of his subjects? Does the use of Mary as an agent of the Reconquest render all *Cantigas* intolerant?⁵⁶ The answer to these questions appears to be a resounding no. Although some scholars remain unconvinced of when the *Siete Partidas* was promulgated, even those in favour of the fourteenth century hypothesis acknowledge that Alfonso's intention was for it to be put to use in his lifetime.⁵⁷ The *Siete Partidas* even calls for the need for all citizens to be aware of the laws it

51. Ibid., 50.

52. Cayetano J. Socarras, *Alfonso X of Castile: A Study on Imperialistic Frustration* (Barcelona: Talleres Graficos de Sololibros, 1975), 10. O'Callaghan, *A Poetic Biography*, 1 voices an identical argument, although not explicitly attesting to Alfonso's desire for the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. Similarly, Carpenter, 3 draws several connections between the influence of Rome (both Ancient Rome and the Holy Roman Empire) and Alfonso's legislative works.

53. O'Callaghan, *The Learned King*, 19.

54. Scarborough, 14-15.

55. Charles F. Fraker, *The Scope of History: Studies in the Historiography of Alfonso el Sabio* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 1.

56. Scarborough, 82-83.

57. Ibid., 82.

contains.⁵⁸ The *CSM* was also presumably compiled for public consumption. The fact that all four hundred and twenty-seven canticles are performative in nature, a fact reinforced by the texts beginning with the refrain rather than the first verse, as well as by virtue of several of the *cantigas* being accompanied by musical notation, meaning they were publicly known.⁵⁹ Therefore, despite Alfonso X's political ambitions behind his works, or perhaps due to their very existence, the *Siete Partidas* and *CSM* were intentionally made known to the public.

Conclusions

The works of scholars examining the representations of Jews and Muslims in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* “have reached conflicting opinions, ranging from praising Alfonso for his tolerant attitude to condemning him as a tyrannical bigot.”⁶⁰ Yet, by the above-defined parameters of tolerance, tyranny and bigoted portrayals of Jews and Muslims—unless detrimental to the endurance of their religious practices—do not preclude tolerance. Furthermore, some *cantigas*, such as *Cantiga 169*, are not guilty of any such portrayal. The explicit call in the *Siete Partidas* for the use of “kind words” in conversion efforts undermines the suggestion negative representations of Jews and Muslims would hinder the continuance of their religious practices.⁶¹ Additionally, although the *Siete Partidas* calls for harsh punishments of Jews and Mudejars for stepping outside the bounds proscribed by law, as they do for Christians, whose bounds, albeit, are far less prohibiting, they do so in a way that allows for the continuance of Islam and Judaism, thereby exhibiting tolerance.

Despite this positive outlook there remains one irredeemable factor in determining Alfonso's tolerance, the converts from Christianity to Judaism or Islam. In putting to death those who convert to Islam or Judaism who are then, by definition, among the members of one of those respective groups, Alfonso X intentionally prevented the acceptance or endurance of Muslim and Jewish practices for those individuals. However, there remains the possibility that Alfonso misapprehended such individuals to be Christians stepping outside the bounds of law rather than Jews or Muslims being prevented from practicing. Yet such misinterpretations do not excuse Alfonso of intolerance since, by his own logic in the *Siete Partidas*, ignorance of the law does not excuse one of penalty from it.⁶² Likewise, Alfonso's ignorance as to the religious identity of the converts cannot excuse him of this misinterpretation and Alfonso cannot, therefore, be called tolerant. Other than the issue of converts, Alfonso does however, come close to tolerance. Without looking at the other 426 *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, nor the other six *Partidas*, one can see that his intent in unifying Spain politically and religiously is not meant to be at the expense of the continuance of Islam and Judaism. Due to his proximity to the above-outlined definition of tolerance, Alfonso X was perhaps close enough to earn the sobriquet of Alfonso the Restrainedly Tolerant.

Bibliography

Burns, Robert I. “Jews and Moors in the *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X the Learned: a Background Perspective” in *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict and Coexistence*, edited by Roger Collins and Anthony Goodman, 46-62. Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

58. Samuel P. Scott, trans., *Las Siete Partidas of Alfonso X el Sabio* (New York: Commerce Clearing House, 1931), I.I.xx, http://faculty.washington.edu/petersen/alfonso/7part_1.htm#lawmaker.

59. Scarborough, 25.

60. Scarborough, 81.

61. Constable, “The Legal Status of Jews and Muslims in Castile,” 403.

62. Scott, I.I.xx.

- Carpenter, Dwayne E. *Alfonso X and the Jews: An Edition of and Commentary on Siete Partidas 7.24 "De los judios."* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Constable, Olivia Remie, ed. "Five Stories from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*" in *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, translated by Kathleen Kulp-Hill, 358-368. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- . "Slavery in Castile: *Siete Partidas* (early fourteenth century)" in *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, translated by S. P. Scott, 393-398. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- . "The Legal Status of Jews and Muslims in Castile: *Siete Partidas* (early fourteenth century)" in *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, translated by S. P. Scott, 399-405. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- . "The Proper Qualities of a King: *Siete Partidas* (early fourteenth century)" in *Medieval Iberia: Readings From Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*, translated by S. P. Scott, 377-390. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- Fraker, Charles F. *The Scope of History: Studies in the Historiography of Alfonso el Sabio*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999. (Although not entirely in keeping with the questions addressed in the above text, this work is invaluable for any seeking insight into the importance of Roman themes to Alfonso X, and was used as such in research for this paper).
- Kinkade, Richard P. and Snow, Joseph T. "Alfonso X (23 November 1221-4 April 1284)" in *Castilian Writers, 1200-1400*, edited by George D. Greenia and Frank A. Dominguez, 3-24. Detroit: Gale, 2008. Accessed 3 December 2012, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Complete Online*, University of Alberta. http://galenet.galegroup.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/servlet/DLBC_Online/edmo69826/BK1560745002.
- Martinez, H. Salvador. *Studies in the History of Christian Traditions: Alfonso X the Learned: A Biography*, series edited by Robert J. Bast, translated by Odile Cisneros. Leiden: Brill, Hotei Publishing, 2010.
- O'Callaghan, Joseph. *Alfonso X and the Cantigas de Santa Maria: A Poetic Biography*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1998.
- . *The Learned King: The Reign of Alfonso X of Castile*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1993.
- Reynolds, Dwight F. "Music in Medieval Iberia: Contact, Influence and Hybridization" in *Al-Andalus, Sepharad and Medieval Iberia: Cultural Contact and Diffusion*, edited by Ivy A. Corfis, 80-99. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

- Scarborough, Connie L. *A Holy Alliance: Alfonso X's use of Marian Poetry*. Newark: Juan de la Cuesta—Hispanic Monographs, 2009.
- Scorpo, Antonella Luizzo. "Spiritual Friendship in the Works of Alfonso X of Castile: Images on Interaction Between the Sacred and Spiritual Works of Thirteenth-Century Iberia" in *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture: Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, edited by Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge, 445-475. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011.
- Scott, Samuel P., trans. *Las Siete Partidas of Alfonso X el Sabio*. New York: Commerce Clearing House, 1931. Accessed 24 November 2012, ebook.
http://faculty.washington.edu/petersen/alfonso/7part_1.htm#lawmaker.
- Socarras, Cayetano J. *Alfonso X of Castile: A Study on Imperialistic Frustration*. Barcelona: Talleres Graficos de Sololibros, 1975.
- Thacker, Shelby and Escobar, José, trans. *Chronicle of Alfonso X*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002.
- Wright, Janice. "Cantigas in the Galician-Portuguese Cancioneiros" in *Castilian Writers, 1200-1400*, 47-61. Edited by George D. Greenia and Frank A. Dominguez. Detroit: Gale, 2008. Accessed 3 December 2012, *Dictionary of Literary Biography Complete Online*, University of Alberta.
http://galenet.galegroup.com/login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/servlet/DLBC_Online/edmo69826/BK1560745004.