



**Alfonso el Sabio y la "General Estoria."**

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In sum: H. deserves high praise for putting together this most useful research instrument. Comparativists as well as researchers in the various linguistic branches of literary scholarship all owe him their thanks. We eagerly look forward to the periodic appearance of revised editions.

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187-210. —Miletich, J. S., "Narrative Style in Spanish and Slavic Traditional Narrative Poetry: Implications for the Study of the Romance Epic," *Olifant*, 2, No. 2 (1974), 109-128. —Monroe, J. T., "Hispano-Arabic Poetry During the Almoravid Period: Theory and Practice," *Viator*, 4 (1973), 65-98 (see p. 87 and n. 68).

Francisco Rico, *Alfonso el Sabio y la "General Estoria,"* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1972. 188 pp.) PROFESSOR RICO has undertaken a task which has only been attempted previously by María Rosa Lida: to write from a general perspective on the work Alfonso thought of as his greatest. It is a difficult and dangerous undertaking, difficult because one must master a huge text, and dangerous because even more of this text remains unpublished. Yet Rico has carried out this task well, and he has little to fear from the publication of the balance of the *General Estoria* (GE), the edition of Part 3 of which is completed (*La Corónica*, 2, No. 1 [Fall, 1973], 9). It is also a pleasure to find some of one's own conclusions confirmed by another researcher working independently.

A subtitle tells us that the book consists of "tres lecciones," dedicated respectively to the concept of a combined secular and religious history and how Alfonso came to write such a work, to the relation of time and history, and to Alfonso's conception of knowledge. In the first section, Rico corrects María Rosa Lida in her discussions of the structure of the GE, and points to the *Canons* of Eusebius of Pamphilus as Alfonso's guide. (This suggestion the present reviewer also made in an article accepted for publication in 1969, "The *General Estoria*: Sources and Source Treatment," *ZRPh*, 89 [1973], 206-27.) Pointing to the later date of the GE and the prior abandonment of the *Primera Crónica General*, Rico suggests that Alfonso abandoned it because it was too narrow in scope, and that he intended to incorporate the completed part into the GE, presumably in Part 6. This is an original and even startling suggestion, but a plausible one, especially when we consider that Part 6 breaks off at about the same point in time that the *Primera Crónica General* begins.

In his second "lección" Rico discusses the temporal structure and organization of Alfonso's history. He finds religious influence in Alfonso's organization and chronology, and greater emphasis and care given to the temporal organization than that found in his sources. Rico rectifies previous opinions

which have deemphasized the king's direct contribution, and cites many passages, from different parts of the work, which suggest a direct royal intervention. One of these is a passage on Jupiter, and Rico suggests, tentatively, that Alfonso meant to suggest a familial link between himself and this god; this would not be out of character with what we know of his attempts to broaden the basis for his imperial claims.

Following Aristotle, Alfonso sees knowledge, which has a moral purpose, as one in nature. At the same time, however, it is divided into the familiar trivium and quadrivium, the latter of which is seen as superior and the only one which can truly make a man "sabio." Rico thus sees Alfonso as resisting the specializing tendencies of his day. Finally, Rico points out that the frequent digressions in the GE are not to be seen as a negative feature, because the intent of the editors was less to provide an unadorned translation of the sources than to give an exposition on a text, as done in the medieval university.

This book, like Rico's others, is not easy to read, as he makes no concessions to the non-specialist; it bristles with parenthetical documentation and untranslated terms in Greek as well as Latin. But the reader who will give this book the attention and effort it deserves will be rewarded with important insights into the GE, the personality of Alfonso, and medieval Spanish culture. For the Alfonso specialist it is, of course, obligatory.

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Teresa Labarta de Chaves, ed., *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 1972. 247 pp.). BOOK reviews do not usually start with praise for the publisher, but one feels the need to acknowledge the efforts of Castalia to bring out low-cost up-to-date editions of early works. We are especially grateful when they are of the generally high quality of Teresa Labarta de Chaves' edition of Gonzalo de Berceo's *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos*. Good editions of Berceo's works have been too long in coming. The editions of past years have helped put his poetry, especially the *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, within reach of several levels of student. Professor Labarta de Chaves' edition advances this commendable trend. The completion within the next few years of more editions of Berceo's works, possibly under the general editorship of Castalia, and of the complete works edited by Brian Dutton for Tamesis will provide accessibility to most of Berceo's production for all levels, from student to specialist. It is a fact that in studies on the *Libro de buen amor*, on *El Cid* and on *La Celestina*, as well, the first most important step to re-evaluation and to creative critical approaches to these works has been the establishment of good, viable texts and textual studies. This increased effort to produce good texts of Berceo causes us to look