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The Alfonsine Encyclopaedia of Music

JOHN GRIFFITHS

EACH OF THE TWO ILLUMINATED COPIES of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* copied at the Castilian court in Toledo in the mid thirteenth century opens with a depiction of King Alfonso X 'the Wise' (1221-1284) in the act of their creation (fig. 1). He is surrounded by scribes who write the stories he dictates, by courtiers who listen attentively, and by musicians bearing citoles and fiddles who observe the scene with interest.¹ As is well understood, these illustrations are allegories of how a royal book is made rather than attempts to depict literally the process of its creation and manufacture. Consistent with his office, the King assumes the central role of creator although contemporary readings would tend to see him instead as the patron of the project; its originator, its coordinator, and its sponsor. Whichever way it is read, the legacy of the project is widely accepted as one of the great song collections of the Middle Ages, one of the most significant collections of secular devotional texts of the period, and the principal source of Spanish music to survive from the thirteenth century. Outside of the scholarly domain, in the world of contemporary musical practice, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* have enjoyed extraordinary success with both performers and audiences on recordings and live performances during the early music revival of the last thirty or forty years.² Without doubt, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* have never ever enjoyed such popularity in the almost seven hundred and fifty years of their existence. It is therefore within the context of both the contemporary imagination and the medieval imagination that I wish to pose some questions concerning this Alfonsine song repertory that reflect on the production of music manuscripts in the Middle Ages.

To establish the context for this evaluation of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, I would like to begin with some general observations concerning the roles of medieval music manuscripts both in their own time and our own: as physical objects, as cultural artifacts, as objects for scholarly study, and as musical scores. First and foremost, even excluding our enormous legacy of liturgical chant manuscripts, the large number of music manuscripts that survive from before the advent of printing is incontrovertible testimony of the importance afforded them by men and women in the Middle

Ages. The motivation for writing music down on parchment or paper was, in most respects, no different from recording any other text in written form. It responds to composite needs including preservation, transmission, the fixing of knowledge and its codification. At the same time, however, music has another dimension: its written code needs to embody information that allows it not merely to be comprehended, but also performed. Medieval music notation, however, provides little more than the skeleton of what is required for performance, and so even in the Middle Ages, the act of hearing written music needed a level of imagination that was kindled by experience and stylistic familiarity. Today, we cannot rely on the same aural heritage. Although we are able to listen to recorded performances of music from old manuscripts on compact discs, these do little more than add a further layer of complication to the contemporary perception of medieval music. While it might be possible to take a CD from the shelf and listen to any *cantiga* or other medieval song of our choice, there is no guarantee that the recorded music will even vaguely approximate what that song may have sounded like in the Middle Ages. This is due in part to the ever-lengthening shadow that falls between the present and the past, but it is just as much a consequence of the new fashions of 'early music' performance that have grown up in our own time. We must simply resign ourselves to that fact that we have no assurances that the performance practices re-imagined in the last decades of the twentieth century bring the music of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries back to life with more than the most superficial resemblance to how that music may have sounded to its creators.

The reconstruction of extinct musical performance practices emanates from the intersection of scholarly research and artistic imagination. There is no other path. Inevitably, the information contained in medieval music manuscripts is insufficient in itself to permit any kind of reconstruction of the sound world it represents. To a medieval reader many of the performance dimensions not embodied in the notated music might have been known as part of a living tradition and could have allowed the manuscript to be used to recreate its sound, real or imagined. To contemporary readers, by contrast, medieval notation is too imprecise; too

many fundamental elements of musical performance are not specified. Even if the pitch of melodies presents no difficulties, as is the case in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, the notation of rhythm is often thorny. During the period in which the *Cantigas* manuscripts were copied, the same set of note shapes had different rhythmic meanings according to whether it was used for monophonic or polyphonic music. Liturgical chant is generally considered not to have been interpreted rhythmically, although the same notational symbols when used in polyphonic music have specific rhythmic meaning.³ Between these opposing poles, we have other repertoires such as the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* or the songs of the Occitanian troubadours. These genres share the same notation and have kindled considerable debate over the last century concerning rhythm and performance style. In the case of the troubadours, even though the pendulum now swings in favour of non-rhythmic declamatory performance, this view is diametrically opposed to the one that prevailed until just fifty years ago.⁴ Scholars and performers of the *cantigas* appear more resistant to revision of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Most modern performances are still based principally on the rhythmicised edition made by Higinio Anglés over sixty years ago, despite contemporary concerns about questions of rhythm and rhythmic interpretation.⁵

Problems pertaining to notation, however, are only one small part of the broader concerns of performance practice. More pressing are many of the questions about which medieval music manuscripts remain silent. No musical manuscript from the Middle Ages, for example, specifies anything about the participation of musical instruments in performance. This applies equally to polyphonic music and monophonic song. In the latter case, there is still considerable disagreement on the fundamental issue of whether the songs should have any kind of instrumental accompaniment at all, let alone the more nuanced discussion about the nature of any such accompaniments. To attempt to answer questions of this kind, musical sources need to be read in conjunction with a range of secondary materials if we wish to produce performances with any degree of historical veracity. The most common complementary information is drawn from music theory treatises, literary references, documentary sources and iconographic representations of instruments and musical performance. Although a considerable amount of scholarly enterprise has been invested in this area and extensive experimentation has been carried out by contemporary performers, it must be conceded that any performance of music from medieval manuscripts today requires the superimposition of a decisive layer of contemporary imagination onto the surviving medieval material.⁶

As indicated, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* have attracted more attention from modern performers than any other medieval

monophonic repertory. Their place in modern performance practice is central to the extent that a contemporary performance practice exists. Within the confines of this practice, considerable variety is to be found, although there still appears to be an external identity that perhaps comes from the nature of the musical material itself – its simple attractiveness and its spontaneity. Performances range from occasional solo unaccompanied vocal performances through to large ensembles with large numbers of singers and instrumentalists together. Some of the older unaccompanied ones were made in the 1960s by Spanish opera divas such as Victoria de los Angeles and Teresa Berganza for whom *cantigas* such as ‘*Rosa das rosas*’ (*Cantiga* 10) provided a vehicle to display pristine vocal clarity while at the same time contributing to the projection of their own national identity.⁷ At the other extreme, the recordings made by the Studio der Frühen Musik in the 1960s and 1970s established the foundations for most subsequent performance styles. Their strong and persuasive performances experimented with not only the use of instruments to accompany the voices, but also with a variety of styles and modes of performance. They adopted a cross-cultural approach that incorporated elements from diverse historical European traditions as well as borrowing from analogous contemporary Middle Eastern and North African performance styles and that also reflected current interests in comparative musicology.⁸ Vocal timbres range from conventional ‘classical’ voices to harsh Mediterranean styles, drones are commonly added in line with both Middle Eastern practices and what we understand of the playing techniques of some of the key instruments in use at the time. Some performances employ a chorus to sing the refrains of these strophic songs in a responsorial fashion as if sung by groups of pilgrims or clerics, and to stress a possible participatory performance practice for narrative song. The written song lines may be embellished heterophonically by instruments that loosely double the notated music, while some performers insert improvised or composed preludes, interludes or postludes based again on contemporary Middle Eastern styles of narrative song performance. Sometimes singers are accompanied by instrumental groupings inspired by the same contemporary Middle Eastern styles. The combination of flute, rabab, qanun and drum in medieval illustrations – including one in *Cantigas* manuscript T – has many parallels throughout the Mediterranean diaspora. Some ensembles use large instrumental ensembles based on the instrumentarium depicted in the manuscripts, large celestial orchestras that are unlikely to have existed in the Middle Ages. Overlaid upon all of this, and very tempting once a drone has been added, are other exotic elements that evoke with varying levels of authenticity the Moorish spirit of ‘Spain of the three cultures’, and Andalusia.

Exciting and evocative as they may be, we have few guarantees that any of these performance styles accord closely with the practices of the Middle Ages. Certain elements have more likelihood of veracity than others and, on the whole, any honest evaluation will be bound to admit that modern performance still involves some very large leaps of faith. Perhaps these leaps are even greater when we consider the possibility that the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* might never have been intended as a performance repertory. In contrast, it is quite likely that the *Cantigas* are simply a manifestation of the medieval imagination, an idealised and imaginary repertory that never really otherwise existed. To this end, I propose to consider the *Cantigas* within a tradition of manuscript production rather than the realm of musical performance. On a personal note and as a musician who has toured the world performing *cantigas*, this was initially an extremely contradictory position for me to adopt.

Born in 1221 and crowned in 1252, Alfonso X gained his nickname 'the Wise' from his interest in learning and the codification of knowledge. Although history tends to judge Alfonso as a ruler of mixed fortunes, unable to control rival factions within his dominions and among his own nobles, his promotion of intellectual and scientific endeavour had lasting consequences at least equal to the military conquests of more conventional rulers. Throughout his reign, Alfonso brought together Christian, Muslim and Jewish scholars at his court in Toledo, initially through the *Escuela de traductores* in Toledo, and sponsored the translation from Arabic into Castilian of numerous texts at that time unknown in Europe, as well as the production of many new texts in diverse fields. In the area of law, his *Siete partidas* followed from his earlier treatises that established the precepts that continue to underpin Spanish law. In astronomy, the *Alfonsine Tables* based on Ptolemaic cosmology served until the mid-sixteenth century for astronomical calculations. His *Estoria de España*, *Estoria general* and *Crónica general* were his attempts to codify local and universal history. The statutes for the University of Salamanca are the oldest educational charter produced in medieval Europe, his *Lapidario* codifies the properties of minerals, and his *Libro de los juegos* instructs in chess and other games played at court. In this context, the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* can be comprehended first and foremost as part of this encyclopaedic enterprise, perhaps more than a mere act of piety aimed at his own salvation.⁹

As is well known, the collection of over 400 *Cantigas de Santa Maria* survives in several main manuscripts, two in San Lorenzo de El Escorial (E and T), one each in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (To) and the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence (F).¹⁰ They all were made in Toledo as part of a process that appears to have begun with a collection of one hundred Marian miracles.¹¹ Escorial manuscript E (shelf mark B.I.2, *olim* j.b.2.) is a

large single volume containing the full collection of 425 *cantigas*. This manuscript contains texts and music of the songs and includes painted miniatures of musicians and their instruments at the beginning of each tenth *cantiga*. The other Escorial manuscript (T), frequently called the *Códice Rico*, contains the first half of the collection in larger format. Each *cantiga* is accompanied by a page of six miniatures set out like a lavish comic strip depicting key moments or ideas from each of the texts. The *Códice Rico* is complemented by the Florentine manuscript (F) that was to have included the full second half of the collection in the same format, but was never completed. It has 104 songs but the music was never copied onto its ruled staves. The Toledan manuscript now in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (To) is the oldest and originally contained only the first one hundred *cantigas*.

In their totality, the *Cantigas* manuscripts offer an extraordinary wealth of knowledge on a large range of subjects. This starts with the miracle stories themselves, their poetry, their provenance and transmission, as well as their music. The illustrations in the manuscripts total more than 1600 individual items, including musical instruments, and are a valuable source of information on architecture, costume, urban living, religious imagery, and hosts of other areas.¹² In my own relationship with the *Cantigas* over many years I have increasingly come to wonder whether the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* were ever intended to be performed or whether they were put together for a different purpose.¹³ Despite the immediacy and vivacity of the texts and the compelling earthiness of the melodies, it seems perfectly logical in terms of Alfonso's ambitions in other areas to view the collection not as real living performance materials but as an imaginary idealisation of performance, and a systematic threefold encyclopaedic compilation of miracles of the Virgin Mary, popular melodies and musical instruments. Very easily he could have issued instructions to his court scholars to gather all the miracle stories they could find, to retell them in Galician verse, to set them to new or existing melodies in the manner of pilgrim songs, and to illustrate them lavishly. In the manuscript pair T-F, realistic illustrations would be used to confirm the veracity of the miracles while in manuscript E, the illustrations would echo the call in Psalm 150 to praise the Lord with all manner of instruments. In both versions, the result would be books: comprehensive, wondrous books.

Without doubt, the *Cantigas* were conceived and assembled as a coherent collection. From the original text in the Prologue of the Toledo manuscript, it is evident that it was to comprise one hundred songs.¹⁴ Datable events in the first hundred *cantigas* indicate that compilation began some time between 1257 and 1264 and, from later pieces, that the expansion into a collection of four hundred songs occurred probably between 1275 and 1282

when Alfonso was in his mid fifties. It was thus an on-going project. Miracle stories had to be gathered from every corner of Europe, translated into Galician-Portuguese, Alfonso's preferred poetic language, and set in rhymed verse in the refrain form derived from Arabic poetry and crystallised in a later period in Spain as the *villancico*. This was no simple task and would have required time, skilled translators and agile wordsmiths. The *Cantigas* thus are the product of a conscious attempt to gathering miracle stories from all quarters and to encompass a full range of human experience. Jack Sage elegantly summarises this to include:

merchants as they travel to England and France, pilgrims journeying to shrines in and outside Spain, Moors and Christians giving battle, minstrels entertaining their superiors, a Jewish money-lender hoarding his profits, a physician amputating a foot, patients tended in hospital and criminals flogged, hanged, beheaded, stoned, speared or burnt at the stake; a young bride who has made a vow of chastity to the Virgin is raped by her frustrated bridegroom; a woman stricken by the loss of her husband fornicates with her son and later drops their child down the privy; a nun is about to flee with the knight who has seduced her. In every case, the Virgin appears at the crucial moment to dispense mercy and justice in a miraculous but – for the age – a wholly credible way.¹⁵

The same care is also evident in the non-narrative hymns that are regularly interspersed throughout the collection as every tenth *cantiga*. These songs praise the Virgin for her virtue, her beauty, her role as the Mother of God, and the superhuman powers that allow her to intercede in such extraordinary ways to protect those who are faithful to her. Narrative songs and hymns alike, all the *cantigas* are crafted within a virtually identical poetic framework with relatively little structural variation; their homogeneity is one of the strongest indicators that they were invented and constructed as a collection rather than drawn directly from a living performance tradition.

The *cantiga* 'iPor qué trobar?' that opens the collection in the form of a prologue offers justification of why it is good to sing the praises of the Virgin and promote her cause. It is preceded by a statement in which the king declares something of his role in the project and his claim to ownership and general authorship of the collection:

Don Affonso de Castela, / de Toledo, de León, / Rey e ben des Compostela/ta o reyno d'Aragon //... este livro, como achei, /fez a omr' e a loor // Da Virgen Santa Maria / que este Madre de Deus, / en que ele muito fia. / Poren dos miragres seus // Fezo cantares e sões / sabrosos de cantar, / todos de sennas razões, / com' y podedes achar.

Don Alfonso of Castile, Toledo and León, King of Compostela, also of the kingdom of Aragon ... made this book which, as I found, honours and praises the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of God, and in whom he greatly trusts. And therefore, he has made songs and melodies about her miracles, flavoursome to sing, and all of sound argument as you will discover.¹⁶

The surviving *Cantigas* manuscripts are primarily lavish receptacles into which memory, faith, poetry, music, and art have been poured. In these roles they excel more than as performing material for musicians. One of the most compelling arguments in favour of this assertion is the absence of any evidence of their performance. Unsurprisingly, the manuscripts themselves exhibit no signs of wear through usage. More importantly, there are no known records that point to a performance tradition of devotional Marian *cantigas* at Alfonso's court or elsewhere in Spain. The only reference to the performance of these songs is in Alfonso's own will. I suggest that the collection of *Cantigas* was made on the one hand, as part of the king's program of encyclopaedic gathering of knowledge about all areas of life and, on the other, as a device to help him achieve his own eternal salvation through pious deeds such as the compilation of the collection itself, perhaps through singing from it, or simply from reading and admiring it in silent devotion. This interpretation is supported by a reference in the text of one of the songs from the collection. In *Cantiga* 209 we learn that the manuscripts accompanied Alfonso when he travelled, and that on one occasion he used the book for therapeutic purposes to help him recover from illness. According to the text, the king miraculously recovered from illness by having 'o livro das *Cantigas de Santa Maria*' placed on top of his body instead of the customary hot cloths when he reached the point at which his doctors could do nothing more to alleviate his pain.¹⁷

If the first of the three encyclopaedias is the collection of miracles, the second is the music itself. The importance of the music has been long recognised. Higinio Anglés was perhaps exaggerating when he described it as 'the most important European repertory as far as the medieval lyric is concerned', although he declared his belief in a more particular connection between this repertory and folk music in declaring that 'no nation to this point has been able to offer a collection so rich in practical consequences for research into European musical folklore'.¹⁸ This belief in the connection between the *cantigas* and folk music might have been spurred on by Kurt Schindler's field research in western Spain in the 1920s. What initially appeared to be the survival of one *cantiga* melody in folk music for over half a millenium was later shown by Israel J. Katz to be the result of the popularity in the nineteenth century of arrangements of '*Rosa das Rosas*'

(*Cantiga* 10).¹⁹ Further investigation into the possible survival of medieval melodies in popular song has not been pursued in recent scholarship. Much more attention has instead been spent on investigating the relationships between the *Cantigas* melodies and other surviving medieval song. The studies of Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, Gerardo Huseby, Hendrik van der Werf and others have shown the broad similarities of melody and mode, while the question of rhythm and its notation has not been altogether resolved.²⁰

A small number of *cantiga* melodies have been identified as derived from songs by Gautier de Dargies (no 216) and Cadenet (nos 340 and 380) while resemblances between *cantigas* and various others from diverse medieval genres have also been observed.²¹ On the other hand, the noticeable characteristic of many of the *cantiga* melodies is their simplicity, their predominantly syllabic style, the frequency of D and F as final pitches, and their tonal clarity. These are all characteristics that are associable with popular song, or with a deliberate compositional style that aims less for sophistication than immediacy. Similarly, these qualities identify easily with the '*cantares e sones*' that Alfonso ordered to have 'made' and to be given tunes that are 'flavour-some' to sing. If the intention were to compile an encyclopaedia of songs fitted to these *cantiga* texts, then it would make more sense for these to be melodies collected and adapted from an existing stock of music rather than freshly composed. So even if the idea was not to create the *cantigas* for performance, they had to comprise real materials, and there are simply far too many intuitively catchy tunes in the collection for it to have been a purely academic exercise. Had Alfonso wished for something more refined, courtly, original and sophisticated, he could have had his musicians copy the more abstract melodic style of the Occitans troubadours whose music was known in Spain. Similarly, for devotional songs, Alfonso could have asked his musicians to produce melodies that were closer in style to liturgical chant. Perhaps, instead, he requested his musicians to compose or adapt melodies akin to the unrecorded songs sung by pilgrims en route to the Shrine of St James in Santiago de Compostela.

The most persuasive evidence that supports this view of the *cantigas* melodies as an encyclopaedia of monophonic song is that the compilers appear to have run out of melodies as they approached the end of their task, and began to recycle some that had already been used in earlier songs. It may thus not be accidental that this recycling only occurs at the end of the manuscript, after the bulk of the songs had been compiled and when ostensibly the song writers had exhausted their stockpile of melodies. As can be seen in the following table of recycled songs, many of the contrafact versions appear in close succession, particularly the consecutive groups 387-388 and 394-397.²²

| Contrafacta No. | Borrowed from No. |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 373 | 267 |
| 387 | 348 |
| 388 | 295 |
| 394 | 187 |
| 395 | 165 |
| 396 | 289 |
| 397 | 192 |
| 412 | 340 |
| 416 | 210 |

The third encyclopaedic collection of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* is formed by the miniatures of musical instruments that are in manuscript E, one at the head of each of the *cantigas* in praise of the Virgin Mary, numbers 10, 20, etc. This set represents the most comprehensive pictorial encyclopaedia of musical instruments to survive from the entire medieval period. Their inclusion is directly related to the use of music and instruments for songs of praise in biblical tradition. Many of these illustrations are well known today and have been reproduced frequently in diverse contexts. The complete set of forty miniatures is reproduced in colour in an article by Rosario Álvarez and can also be found easily on the internet.²³ Instruments of all kinds are included – strings, winds, brass, and percussion. In terms of the way instruments were classified in the Middle Ages, the illustrations include both loud and soft instruments designed distinctly for either indoor and outdoor use. The instruments are depicted with remarkable precision and clearly indicate that they are copied from real models or by illustrators with first-hand knowledge of their design and function. Further support for the encyclopaedic conception of the *Cantigas* is the sequence in which the instrument illustrations are interpolated into manuscript E: stringed instruments predominate in the first twenty illustrations (corresponding to *Cantigas* 10-200), while wind instruments and others also for outdoor use predominate in the second half of the manuscript. Although this is not done with absolute rigour, the coherence of the sequence is notable. The first two illustrations (*Cantigas* 10 and 20) show the typical courtly duo of a bowed and plucked instrument together, fiddle and citole. The illustration of *Cantigas* 40, 50, 70 and 80 present different varieties of psaltery, while varieties of long necked lutes are presented in four consecutive illustrations placed at the beginning of *Cantigas* 120, 130, 140 and 150.

Some of the instruments depicted – fiddle, rebec, lute, gittern, flute, harp, psaltery – are among the common instruments of medieval Europe while others are unique to the manuscript. One of the most significant difficulties of even discussing these instruments is that they are not named, and the task of matching instrument names found in medieval writings to these images is not always straightforward. The widely-disseminated lute and rebec (fig. 2), psalteries (fig. 3) and flutes (fig. 4) present no problems of description or nomenclature, whereas the multi-piped reeds (fig. 5) and the cornetto-like instruments (fig. 6) appear infrequently in other European sources. These may well be



instruments introduced by the Moors that were never adopted in other parts of Europe. The pipes in fig. 5 recall the Greek aulos and possible combine chanter and melody pipes similar to bagpipes, and the trumpets in fig. 6 clearly derive from the tradition of making instruments from animal horns, although those here may well be made from wood, like the later cornetto, or perhaps even metal.

The evidence of a performance tradition associated with the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* is the last aspect I wish to consider. Such evidence can be assembled from evidence from within the *Cantigas* texts as Joseph Snow has done, or from other documentary sources.²⁴ Although Snow has discussed the specific *cantigas* (numbers 8, 56, 194, 202, 238, 259, 279, 291, 293, 307 and 316) that allude to *joglares* and to the creation and performance of songs, these do not amount to evidence for the performance of this particular repertory. Some of them recount events that took place outside Spain, not even within Alfonso's lifetime and these, at best, can only reflect a broader song tradition that the *Cantigas*

attempt to idealise. At the same time, it is known that Alfonso had minstrels and troubadours at his court. Most famous among them was the renowned troubadour Giraut Riquier who remained there for ten years, and who is known to have authored song of Marian praise.²⁵ Even though evidence of this kind can be invoked to weaken if not completely undermine my hypothesis, there is still no direct evidence of musicians – or Alfonso himself – performing this very special and very particular collection of songs in Galician-Portuguese. Neither chronicles, letters, poems or any other kind of written word alludes to the performance of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. In the abundant documentation pertaining to Alfonso's court, the only document that alludes to these songs is a codicil to his will made on 10 January 1284 which reads as follows:

And we also order that the all the books of miracles and Praise of Santa Maria should be placed in the church in which our body is to be interred, and that they should be



Fig. 3: Psaltery Players, (Cantiga 50), *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, El Escorial, MS j.b.2, fol. 71v



Fig. 5: Musicians Playing Auloi [?], (Cantiga 60), *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, El Escorial, MS j.b.2, fol. 79v



Fig. 4: Musicians Playing Transverse Flutes, (Cantiga 240), *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, El Escorial, MS j.b.2, fol. 218v



Fig. 6: Musicians Playing Trumpets [?], (Cantiga 250), *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, El Escorial, MS j.b.2, fol. 227

sung on feasts of the Virgin and of Our Lord, and if our heirs should wish to have these books of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, we order that they offer compensation for them to the church from which they be taken respectfully and not by sinning ...²⁵

Alfonso was buried in the Cathedral of Seville but there is apparently no evidence of their presence there at any time, nor of any music-making of the kind specified in the royal will.

Even allowing for the fact that many pilgrim songs and miracle songs might never have passed from oral to written tradition, it is strange that no specific documentation exists confirming the performance of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. In proposing, therefore, that the *Cantigas* might have been conceived without performance in mind my main purpose has been to focus attention on the encyclopaedic dimensions of the entire enterprise. This goes beyond the Marian miracles to include the cycle of musical instrument illustrations – if not the *cantiga* melodies as well. Broader still, the *Cantigas* project should be contemplated within Alfonso's quasi-universalist scholarly programme. To conclude, I would like to reflect both on the past and the present. Looking to the past, it is probable that there will never be decisive answers to the questions I have raised here, and the reality may be more shaded than the arguments presented. More than anything, I am aware that my discussion has not allowed for the possibility that *Cantigas* might have been simultaneously enjoyed both in performance and in idealised abstraction. Alfonso and his courtiers may well have enjoyed this repertory as listeners, readers, viewers, or in pure contemplation. To some extent, contemporary reality is an exact mirror of this past. We have created a performance practice of dubious pedigree that nonetheless delights audiences with supposedly authentic live performances and recordings of these Marian tales and that, in the process, gives contemporary musicians a livelihood. At the same time, the contemporary community of *Cantiga* scholars possibly regards these particular medieval manuscripts in a way that is not so different from the way they may have been regarded by their creators. Hearing the repertory in performance may not have been even their ultimate goal when one considers the literary, artistic, and historical dimensions of their work. After that, all that is left is to believe in miracles.

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NOTES:

1. Other interpretations of this illustration see it as representing the act of performance rather than creation. See Pedro López Elum, *Interpretando la música medieval: Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, Valencia: Universitat de Valencia, 2005, 65.
2. The performance of a small number of *cantigas* in Spain can be traced back to the last half of the nineteenth century, to the point that one or two came close to becoming regarded as genuine folklore. See Israel J. Katz, 'Melodic Survivals? Kurt Schindler and the Tune of Alfonso X's Cantiga "Rosa das rosas" in Oral Tradition', *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X The Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, ed. Robert I. Burns, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, 159-81. For a list of *Cantigas* recordings, see the discography compiled by Pierre-F. Roberge and published on the internet at <http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/composers/cantigas.html> (accessed 31 October 2008). Nearly all of the 427 *Cantigas* listed there are available on LP or CD recordings, some on more than 30 separate recordings.
3. See José María Llorens Cisteró, 'El ritmo musical de las *Cantigas de Santa Maria*: estado de la cuestión', *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: art, music and poetry: proceedings of the International Symposium on the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio (1221-1284) in commemoration of its 700th anniversary year, 1981 (New York, November 19-21)*, ed. Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies: 1987, 203-21. For some interesting case studies, see H. van der Werf, 'Accentuation and Duration in the Music of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*' in the same volume, 223-34.
4. The complete music of the troubadours was published in rhythmic transcription just fifty years ago in F. Gennrich, *Der Musikalische Nachlass der Troubadours*, Summa Musicae Medii Aevi, III, IV, XV, Darmstadt: [the author], 1958-1960, and Langen bei Frankfurt: [the author], 1965. Convincing argument to the contrary leading to a significant reappraisal favouring declamatory performance was published by H. van der Werf in *The Chansons of the Troubadours and Trouvères*, Utrecht: Oosthoek, 1972. Van der Werf established a view that has become widely accepted among scholars and performers. Non-metrical editions were subsequently published by Van der Werf, *The Extant Troubadour Melodies: Transcriptions and Essays for Scholars and Performers*, Rochester, NY: the author, 1984, and Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, *Las Cançons dels Trobadors*, Toulouse: Institut d'Estudis Occitans, 1979.
5. Higinio Anglés, *La Música de las Cantigas de Santa Maria del Rey Alfonso el Sabio*, Facsimil, transcripción y estudio crítico por Higinio Anglés, Barcelona: Diputación Provincial de Barcelona, 1943. For a more recent evaluation, see Manuel Pedro Ferreira, 'Bases para la transcripción: el canto gregoriano y la notación de las Cantigas de Santa Maria/ Bases for Transcription: Gregorian Chant and the Notation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria,' *Los instrumentos del Pórtico de la Gloria: Su reconstrucción y la música de su tiempo*, 2 vols, ed. José López-Caló, La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 1993, vol. 2, 573-94 (Spanish) and 595-622 (English).
6. Christopher Page explored these areas extensively in his influential monographs *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Song in France 1100-1300*, London: Dent, 1987; *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France, 1100-1300*, London: Dent, 1989, and other studies gathered together as *Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1997. Among more recent writings, see Ross W. Duffin, *A Performer's Guide to Medieval Music*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The modern invention of medieval music: scholarship, ideology, performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; Timothy J. McGee, ed., *Improvisation in the Arts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2003; and Leo Treitler, *With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How it was Made*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. For an excellent critical review of these last works, see Sam Barrett, 'Performing Medieval Music', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 130 (2005), 119-35.

7. Victoria de los Angeles' first recording of *Cantigas 10 (Rosa das rosas)* and 129 (*Maravillosos e piadosos*) were made in April 1967 in Barcelona for EMI with *Ars Antiquae* of Barcelona directed by Enric Gispert on an LP entitled *Andalusian Songs* (HMV SAN 194). Teresa Berganza recorded *Cantigas 10* and 100, *Santa Maria strela do dia*, in 1974 on *Old Spanish Songs – Spanish Songs from the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Deutsche Gramophon 2530 504 [LP]. The inclusion of *Rosa das rosas* in both these performances is an echo of the fame achieved by that song in the preceding century in Spain. See note 2 above.
8. *Studio der Frühen Musik, Musica Iberica I*, EMI Odeon J 063-20.114, containing *Cantigas 4* and 11, recorded in 1968, and their two volume set entitled *Camino de Santiago* issued in 1973 on EMI Reflexe, 1C 063-30 107 and 1C 063-30 108, containing *Cantigas 26, 49, 103, 166, 184, 253, and 421*.
9. For a general perspective on Alfonso and the his court, see Robert I. Burns, ed., *The Worlds of Alfonso The Learned and James The Conqueror*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985 and *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X The Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.
10. For detailed descriptions see 'Sources, §III:Secular Monophony, 6. Galego-Portuguese', *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>, accessed 31 October 2008.
11. See Walter Mettmann, 'Algunas observaciones sobre la génesis de la colección de las CSM y sobre el problema del autor', *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, 355-366.
12. For a concise account, see Jack Sage, 'Cantiga', *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>, accessed 31 October 2008. An extremely comprehensive bibliography is included in *The Oxford Cantigas de Santa Maria Database*, <http://csm.mml.ox.ac.uk/?p=welcome>
- 13 For a multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory appraisal see John E. Keller, 'The Threefold Impact of the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Visual, Verbal, and Musical', *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, 7-34.
14. See Walter Mettmann, *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, Madrid: Castalia, 1986-89, vol. 1, 53. In the Toledo manuscript, line 25 of the prologue originally read 'fez c! cantares e sões' (made one hundred songs and tunes), but was later revised to 'fezo câtares cõ sões' (made songs with tunes).
15. Jack Sage, 'Cantiga', *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/>
16. Quoted here from manuscript El Escorial TL.1, fol. 1.
17. Mettmann, *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, vol. 1, 9.
18. Higinio Anglés, *La Música de las Cantigas de Santa Maria*, vol. 2, 11 'el repertorio más importante de Europa por lo que se refiere a la lírica medieval' and ix 'Ninguna nación ha podido hasta aquí ofrecer una colección tan rica en consecuencias prácticas para la investigación científica del folklore europeo musical.'
19. Katz, 'Melodic Survivals?'. See note 2 above.
20. On modality, melodic characteristics and rhythm in the *Cantigas*, see Gerardo V. Huseby, 'The "Cantigas de Santa Maria" and the Medieval Theory of Modes', PhD diss., Stanford University, 1982; Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, 'La interpretación melódica de las *Cantigas de Santa Maria*', *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, 155-88; chapters in the same book by Hendrik van der Werf and José María Llorens cited above in note 3. Concerning provenance see Israel J. Katz, 'Higinio Anglés and the Melodic Origins of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*', *Alfonso X the Learned King – An International Symposium, Harvard University, 17 November 1984*, ed., Francisco Márquez Villanueva, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1989, 46-75.
21. See Sage 'Cantiga' in *New Grove Online*.
22. Concordances from Mettmann, *The Cantigas de Santa Maria*, vol. 1, 38.
23. Rosario Álvarez Martínez, 'Los instrumentos musicales en los códigos alfonsinos: su tipología, su uso y su origen. Algunos problemas iconográficos,' *Revista de Musicología* 10 (1987): 67-104. A full set of the illustrations is reproduced in black and white on the *Cantigas* site <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cantigas/> from Julián Ribera, *La música de la Cantigas*, Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1922. Many are also available from <http://commons.wikimedia.org>
24. Joseph T. Snow, 'Alfonso as Troubadour: the Fact and the Fiction', *Emperor of Culture: Alfonso X The Learned of Castile and his Thirteenth-Century Renaissance*, 126-140.

See Maricarmen Gómez Muntané, *La música medieval en España*, Kassel: Reichenberger, 200, 176-180.
25. Manuel González Jiménez, *Diplomatario andaluz de Alfonso X*, Seville: El Monte, Caja de Huelva y Sevilla, 1991, 559-560: 'Otrosí mandamos que todos los libros de los Cantares de los Miraglos e de Loor de Sancta Maria sean todos en aquella iglesia ó el nuestro cuerpo fuere enterrado, e que los fagan cantar en las fiesta de Sancta Maria e de Nuestro Sennor. Et si aquél que lo nuestro heredare con derecho e por nos quisiere auer estos libros de lo Cantares de Sancta Maria mandamos que faga bien e algo por end a la iglesia dont los tomare, porque los aya con merced e sin pecado.'