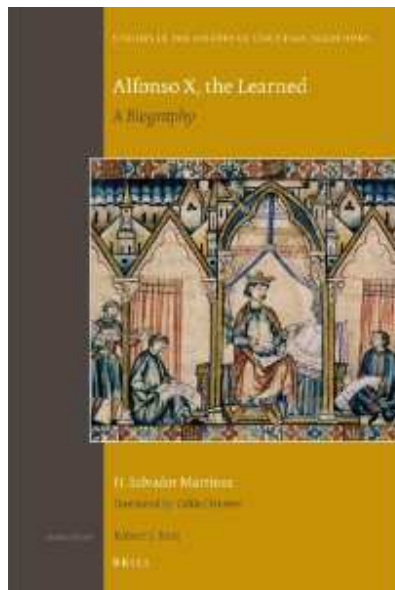


H. Salvador Martínez. Trans. Odile Cisneros. *Alfonso X, the Learned. A Biography*. Brill: Leiden - Boston, 2010. 589 pags. ISBN: 978-90-04-18147-2.

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Alfonso X, the Learned é uma biografia dedicada ao rei Afonso X de Leão e Castela, da autoria de H. Salvador Martínez e traduzida para inglês por Odile Cisneros. Como se sabe, Afonso X é hoje reconhecido, entre outras coisas, como figura de saber enciclopédico, modelo de rei medieval e responsável pela implementação do saber ao elevar os *Estudios Generales* de Salamanca à categoria de *Universidad*. Ao ser comanditário de obras de carácter jurídico (por exemplo, o *Fuero Real*), histórico (*Estoria de España*), literário (*Cantigas de Santa Maria*), lexical (*Lapidario*), lúdico (*Libro de los Juegos*) e científico (*Libro de las Cruces*) em romance castelhano, Afonso dirigiu o *scriptorium* real cujos textos começaram a ser escritos continuamente naquela língua face ao uso secular do latim, promovendo-a como língua de uso comum.

Na capa vê-se o detalhe de uma miniatura que ilustra Afonso no seu *scriptorium*, extraída do f. 5v do ms. T.I.1 da Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo El Escorial. O livro abre de forma eloquente e reveladora do fascínio que o autor tem pelo rei castelhano: começa, pois, com um elogio a Afonso baseado na sua fama enquanto rei, tal como atestam as *Tablas Alfonsíes* em 1252 (ou seja, 31 anos após o nascimento de Afonso): “This is the kingdom of the lord king don Alfonso, who, in his knowledge, good judgment and intelligence, righteousness, kindness, piety, and nobility, surpassed all learned kings. And therefore we deemed it fitting to set as the beginning of the era the year this noble king began to reign so that this era may be known and proclaimed, as were other eras before, so that it may last and the name of the noble king may endure forever. And we determined that the beginning would be the year 1252 and we called it the “Alfonsine era”” (1).

Encontramos enunciada a intenção do livro na contracapa: “Recent publications about King Alfonso X have tended to focus on his role as monarch in the context of the institutions of the realm. This book, however, emphasizes the human dimension of this extraordinary figure. Drawing on King Alfonso’s own works and on extensive archival sources, both well-known and neglected, Salvador Martínez brings to life a king who valued the possession of knowledge above all earthly riches. The ‘Learned King’ left a vast legacy of work, which would influence developments in both Spain

and Europe, most significantly in the transfer of knowledge from the Arabs to the Christian West. With this intellectual curiosity and his pursuit of wisdom, Alfonso X is a towering figure at the origins of modernity.”

E explicita-nos o próprio autor as razões do interesse pela biografia do rei: “On the occasion of the celebration of the seven hundred years of his death, the publications around the life and works of Alfonso X have multiplied exponentially. So much so, that more titles have appeared in the last 18 years than in the seven centuries before. Why then a new biography of Alfonso X? Simply because Alfonso X is still a largely unknown figure, and even after this one, he will continue to be one. But this should surprise no one. The period that goes from his accession to the throne in 1253 until the death of his great-grandchild, Alfonso XI, in 1355 has been one of the most ignored by historical research in the past. Therefore, there is still a long way to go, although it is also true that in the last years the period has been revisited by many studies, perhaps because it is believed that the 13th century is the starting point of many aspects of the modern state” (6).

Apesar das inúmeras publicações dedicadas à vida e ao reinado de Afonso, o autor considera fundamental procurar indícios e pistas oferecidas não só pelos documentos e pela correspondência do rei, mas também –e numa linha menos tradicional– por outras fontes (por exemplo, textos poéticos e outros ‘unsuspected documents’ (9)). Todos eles são testemunhos que escondem práticas, decisões e preocupações humanas do reinado de Afonso, e cabe ao medievalista colocá-las ao serviço de outros críticos. O autor tem, no entanto, consciência das limitações das suas fontes e da sua biografia, e por isso vale a pena ler o que diz a esse respeito: ‘Understandably, introducing source of this nature, in a biography that pretends to be historical has been frowned upon by ‘purist’ historians; but we should not forget that Alfonso was very conscious of all he wrote and there is no personal allusion whether through myth or directly, which had not been meticulously weighed by the Learned King in regards to its content as well as its form. [...] For this reason, the use of his work, where he left along with his personality the imprint of his style, seems to me one of the most logical paths to reconstructing his life. However, given the size of his literary corpus, it is practically impossible to illustrate all aspects of his biography in this way, hence the need of use his works selectively in reconstructing the various periods of his life. [...] from the historiographic perspective of today, it is difficult for us to understand the unitary concept of culture medieval people had, hence the effort of modern scholars to separate the field of history from that of fiction, poetry, mythology, etc. But when such fields prove inseparable, as is the case frequently in Alfonsine works, the genre that suffers is most is history, which, as a result of our modern criteria and prejudices, must appear always as an objective and smooth narrative devoid of all the obstacles of subjectivity, expository commentary, rhetorical amplification, and, above all, mythology and legend. Alfonso X’s historical oeuvre, as in general the work of all medieval historians, which obviously does not fulfill such conditions of “purity,” has had to withstand Renaissance and all the way up to our days. However, we must

recognize that this too was a legitimate way to write history, regardless of how much it may bother us nowadays” (10-11).

A documentação consultada nesta biografia inclui comentários, glosas, notas e prólogos que Afonso deixou escrito nos seus trabalhos e que, segundo Salvador Martínez, têm sido quase ignorados: “However, nowadays we know, to our great satisfaction that the Learned King left an imprint of both his public and private personality on his works in many of his commentaries and glosses. We thus find his profile unexpectedly in historical works and in the *Cantigas* as well as in his letters and the many prologues he wrote for his scientific translations. In order to write a relatively adequate biography of Alfonso X it would be necessary, therefore, to take into account not only the abundant documentation in his archive and his rich correspondence, which has been almost completely ignored.” (7-8) E prossegue: “All in all, however, our intention was not to compose a virtual biography of Alfonso on the basis of the numerous personal observations the Learned King made directly and more frequently indirectly and in the third person, in his lyric poetry, and his two historical works and in the mentioned prologues in such a way it would result in an autobiography such as Benvenuto Cellini’s *Vita* or Saint Augustine’s *Confessions*. What we have tried to do is illustrate, starting from the postulate of the king’s direct participation in the composition of a great part of his oeuvre, something that today is beyond all doubt, namely, how his participation makes his biographical allusions valid, regardless of how veiled they may be under a poetic or allegoric guise” (9-10).

Um bom representativo do método usado diz respeito ao nascimento e infância de Afonso: Salvador Martínez recorre não só à tradição (i.e. às anteriores biografias de Afonso X), mas também ao que a documentação dá a conhecer (p. ex. um privilégio de 21-2-1253; uma carta de concessão de 25 de Maio de 1254; o primeiro testamento de Afonso X, de 8-11-1283; os *Anales Toledanos*; um diploma de 22-3-1222; a *Segunda Partida*; as CSM 122 e 256 (à falta de textos e outras fontes acerca da infância de Afonso, o autor serve-se de informações extraídas de episódios ocorridos durante a infância que recolheu nas cantigas 122 (ressurreição da irmã Berenguela) e 256 (cura da mãe Beatriz)); e ainda outros documentos que permitem reconstruir a geografia do seu reinado (p. ex. “During the fall of 1275, Alfonso was finally able to return to Castile after crossing the Pyrenees and passing through Lérida and Aragón. On December 10 he was in Brihuega and on the 22nd in Alcalá de Henares, as is evidenced by the privileges issued in both cities”(255).)

O livro contém quinze capítulos que acompanham a vida do rei desde o nascimento, a 23 de Novembro de 1221, até à morte, a 4 de Abril de 1284, e está organizado do seguinte modo:

Contents (pp. v-viii); *Acknowledgements* (ix); *Abbreviations* (xi-xii); *List of Illustrations* (xiii-xiv); *Colour Plates*; *Introduction. The “Alfonsine Era”* (1-15);

- capítulo I: *The Apprenticeship of a Great King* (16-44). 1. "Birth and Ancestors;" 2. "His Grandmother: Berenguela, the Great." 3. "Berenguela, Creator of the Castile-León Union;" 4. "His Parents: Fernando and Beatriz;"

- cap. II: *A Prince's Education* (45-87). 1. "Teachers and Books;" 2. "*Curriculum Artium*: The Liberal Arts (*Trivio*; His Teachers; *Quadruiuio*: Continuity and Change; Beyond the *Artes*. The Goal of the Wise Man);" 3. "Languages;" 4. "The "Mirrors of Princes" in Alfonso's Education;" 5. "The Art of War;" 6. "New Horizons;"

- cap. III: *Alfonso King* (88-120). 1. "Alfonso and the Conquest of Murcia and Seville;" 2. "Marriage;" 3. "Acclamation;" 4. "Pending Business;" 5. "The First Cortes: Seville 1252-1253;"

- cap. IV: *The Quest for the Imperial Crown* (121-47). 1. "Background on the "Claim to the Empire";" 2. "The "Holy Roman-Germanic Empire". The Idea of Europe;" 3. "Pisan Support;" 4. "Christina of Norway;"

- cap. V: *Alfonso, King of the Romans* (148-88). 1. "The Election;" 2. "Alfonso's Return to Seville: Culture and Diplomacy;" 3. "The Overseas Crusade: From Salé to Niebla;" 4. "General Uprising in the South;" 5. "Waiting Period in the Imperial Election. New Directives in Papal Politics;" 6. "The 1268 Jerez Cortes;" 7. "Unexpected Family Complications;" 8. "New International Perspectives;"

- cap. VI: *Gregory X and the End of the Imperial Ambitions* (189-212). 1. "Alfonso X and Gregory X"; 2. "A New Candidate;" 3. "The 1274 Cortes;" 4. "Cultural Interlude: Excavation of King's Wamba Tomb;" 5. "The Journey to the Empire: Beaucaire;" 6. "The Great Meeting;" 7. "The Return;"

cap. VII: *Illness and Intellectual Pursuits* (213-50). 1. "Illness and Literary Creation;" 2. "The Testimony of the *Cantigas*;" 3. "Marian Devotion and the *Cantigas*;" 4. "Illness and the Miracle;" 5. "Fitero in Navarra;" 6. "Alfonso X in the *Cantiga* 235 (a. The Illness at Ávila, b. Requena);" 7. "Cultural Activities;"

- cap. VIII: *The Black Decade (1269-1279)* (251-93). 1. "Montpellier;" 2. "The Illness of Vitoria and *Cantiga* 209;" 3. "The Miracle at

Valladolid;" 4. "Cantigas 279, 366, and 367;" 5. "Alfonso's Madness and the *Setenario*;" 6. "Diagnosis;" 7. "Cultural Parenthesis;"

- Cap. IX: *The Nobles' Rebellion* (294-333). 1. "A New Concept of Royal Power;" 2. "Dissidence;" 3. "Unexpected Opposition;" 4. "The Promoters of the Conspiracy;" 5. "New Perspectives;" 6. "Murcian Sojourn;" 7. "On the Road to Castile: The Showdown with the Rebels;" 8. "The 1272 Cortes. Confrontation;"

- cap. X: *Desnaturación* (334-68). 1. "Alfonso's Reaction: The "Justice-Seeking" Letters;" 2. "Assemblies" at Almagro and Ávila;" 3. "Alfonso Writes to his Son;" 4. "Agreement in Seville;" 5. "The North African Moors in the Peninsula;" 6. "Don Sancho's Intervention;"

- cap. XI: *The Problems of Succession* (369-99). 1. "The Dilemma;" 2. "Alfonso Changes the Rules;" 3. "Civil War in Navarra;" 4. "Mysterious Executions;" 5. "New Marinid Invasion;"

- cap. XII: *Don Sancho is Declared Successor* (400-36). 1. "The Burgos and the Segovia Cortes;" 2. "The Queen's Flight;" 3. "The Siege of Algeciras;" 4. "New Initiatives against the North African Moors;" 5. "Don Çag de la Meleha;" 5. "The *Memoriale Secretum* and International Politics;" 6. "Negotiations with Philip III of France;" 7. "The Campillo Treaty;"

- cap. XIII: *Deposition and Civil War* (437-70). 1. "The Seville Cortes (1281);" 2. "The Conflict between Alfonso and Sancho Erupts;" 3. "Don Sancho's Rebellion;" 4. "Deposition of Alfonso X;" 5. "Causes of the Deposition;" 6. "Alfonso Defends Himself;"

- cap. XIV: *Don Sancho seeks the Consolidation of Power. The Curse* (471-503). 1. "Political Propaganda;" 2. "Alfonso Reacts;" 3. "Civil War;" 4. "Don Sancho Cursed and Disinherited;" 5. "The Rebellion Falts;" 6. "The Pope's Intervention;" 7. "Attempts at Reconciliation;"

- cap. XV: *The Last Wills of Alfonso X* (504-40). 1. "First Last Will. The Great Surprise;" 2. "Second Last Will;" 3. "Cultural Concerns until the End;" 4. "Alfonso Forgives Don Sancho. The end;" 5. "Alfonso's Portraits;"

Conclusion. In Praise of knowledge (541-65); *Bibliography* (567-73); *Index of Names* (575-89); uma lista de recentes títulos (56) da série

Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, na qual se inclui esta biografia (591-92).

Segundo o que nos diz o autor na introdução da obra, esta biografia foi construída em torno de seis núcleos narrativos: o primeiro trata da ascendência e nascimento (cap. 1), educação (cap. 2), preparação militar e diplomática e primeiros anos do reinado de Afonso até às cortes de Sevilha, em 1252-53 (cap. 3). As aspirações imperiais de Afonso e as conversações com o Papa Gregório X ocupam o segundo núcleo (cap. 4-6). O terceiro centra-se nos problemas de saúde de Afonso e da sua relação com a actividade criativa e intelectual (cap. 7-8). O tema do quarto núcleo são as tensões entre Afonso e a nobreza e a deserção desta face ao problema das invasões árabes no sul da Península (cap. 9-10), e o do quinto núcleo (cap. 11-12) o problema da sucessão de Afonso em consequência da morte, em 1275, do herdeiro Fernando de la Cerda. Finalmente, os últimos anos da vida de Afonso, desde a sua deposição até à ascensão do filho Sancho (futuro Sancho IV, o Bravo), passando pelos dois testamentos de Afonso (a primeira versão de 8-11-1283 e o codicilo de 24 de Janeiro de 1284), encerram o sexto núcleo (cap. 13-15).

É difícil destacar um ou outro momento da vida e do reinado de Afonso na biografia de Salvador Martínez, pois cada um deles é marcante por variadas razões, em menor ou maior escala, para todos os estudiosos. Para uns ou para outros pode ser mais ou menos importante a questão da confluência tricultural (latina, grega e árabe) no reinado de Afonso e já herdada da política sociocultural do pai, Fernando III; ou o papel da avó Berenguela na educação de Afonso e nos destinos de Castela; ou a análise dos retratos de Afonso; ou a política cultural de Afonso e a promoção institucional da língua, das ciências e das leis; ou as diferenças entre o primeiro testamento de 1283 e o codicilo de 1284 e suas implicações; ou a oposição do filho Sancho; ou a rebelião da Nobreza. Porém, a vantagem do trabalho de Salvador Martínez é oferecer, não só as descrições dos acontecimentos, mas também as circunstâncias e os condicionalismos em que se produziram esses acontecimentos assentes em extensa documentação funcionando, portanto, como um valioso instrumento de consulta para todos. Simultaneamente a obra traz novas luzes sobre o aspecto humano de Afonso, incidindo sobretudo nas vicissitudes, conflitos e problemas que viveu – e é isto precisamente que faz falta no trabalho dos muitos de nós que estudam o passado.

Na conclusão, de 24 páginas, podemos ler as eloquentes palavras de Salvador Martínez sobre Afonso: “Conclusions and epilogues usually contain the balance of the events of someone’s life presented in his or her biography. The balance of Alfonso’s life and his activities as king and man of letters has been done so many times, that it seems superfluous to repeat things that are well-known: a wise man, a patron of law, history, and astronomy, but poor ruler. That, with rare exceptions, has been the verdict. The preceding pages are witness to the fact that he was not such a poor ruler, but he neglected public relations because he thought that his generosity exempted him

from them. He unfortunately ended his days in misfortune, and after his death, a long anti-Alfonsine period followed, in which his life and works were derided (“a foolish king who devoted himself to astrology and magic, rather than to ruling”) a judgment that has not yet been overcome” (541).

Finalmente, duas felizes coincidências a propósito do ano da publicação do livro de Salvador Martínez. A primeira é a iniciativa da editora Brill que, no mesmo ano de 2010, publicou em língua inglesa dois importantes contributos para os estudos medievais românicos: esta biografia de Afonso X e dois volumes consagrados à crónica medieval (*Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, Ed. Graeme Dunphy, 2010).

A segunda é relativa à fortuna e recepção da figura de Afonso hoje em dia. Com efeito, o rei continua a protagonizar temas de congressos (p. ex. a comunicação que María del Rosario Delgado Suárez apresentou em 2011 no XIV Congresso da Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval sobre “El hermetismo en los textos de Alfonso X”) e outro tipo de iniciativas (tal como o Seminario Internacional “Alfonso X El Sabio”, em 2010, dirigido por José Luis Villacañas). Mas também encontramos ecos da sua recepção fora de Espanha. No caso das *Siete Partidas*, que são um importante marco na constituição de um código legislativo de origem peninsular com repercussões transnacionais considerando a sua adaptação em Portugal, na América Latina e nos Estados Unidos da América, foram descobertos mais três fragmentos: um, romance em português, da *Terceira Partida* descoberto por Pedro Pinto em 2010 (manuscrito BS 1-7-94, Biblioteca da Sociedade Martins Sarmento, em Guimarães, BITAGAP Manid 4617); outro, também em romance português, da *Primeira Partida* descoberto por Pedro Pinto e identificado por José Domingues (ms. alc. 381, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, em Lisboa, BITAGAP Manid 5599); e ainda outro, em romance galego, da *Quinta Partida* localizado em 2010 (encontrava-se perdido desde 1999) por María Jesús Fortes Alén (ms. A. General, 9-12, Biblioteca del Museo de Pontevedra, Pontevedra, BITAGAP Manid 3548).