



# The Scope of History: Studies in the Historiography of Alfonso el Sabio

Charles F. Fraker



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Charles F. Fraker

*The Scope of History* brings together a selection of classic and new articles in the field of Spanish and specifically Castilian history, focusing on the historiography of Alfonso X, King of Castile. The volume shows how the Alfonsine histories became well-fashioned and independent works of literature, having begun as simple compilations of preexisting texts. The author seeks to point out that the editors of the Alfonsine histories amplify and alter their sources, rejoin them with artistic skill, and generally arrange the elements into an ordered system. In so doing, Fraker explains, the final text speaks uniquely, giving voice to themes alien to the original texts. Fraker also aims to illustrate the scope of the editorial labor which set Alfonso's *General Estoria* and his *Estoria de Espana* apart from their contemporary histories. In his introduction the author addresses the place of Alfonso's work in its own time, giving the reader a notion of what other works in the genre were like and how they differ. The connecting thread running through these chapters is a continuing focus on the art of the compiler. Medieval historical compilations are by definition scissors-and-paste jobs, stringing older texts together to tell new, different stories. But the Alfonsine editors bend the rules: in the short run they make their work yield the themes they think important, and in the long run they build a literary monument of impressive architecture. Charles F. Fraker is Professor Emeritus in Romance Languages, University of Michigan."



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