

Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X, el Sabio

A Performing Edition

Volume 1 - Prologo to CSM 100

Sample only

**This document contains the Preface, Introduction,
bibliography and CSM 0, 1, 2, 9 & 10 only.**

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Preface

I recently completed a set of transcriptions of the Cantigas d'amigo by Martin Codax and the Llibre Vermell as I felt that there was no readily available set of transcriptions of either group of songs and wanted to fill that gap. I have been persuaded that there is also a gap in transcriptions of the Cantigas de Santa Maria. The only complete edition is that of Anglés (3 volumes with facsimile and commentary) but it is not in print, is prohibitively expensive if it can be found, and is found in very few libraries. This is my attempt to present the Cantigas in an affordable published form to those interested in performing more than the handful of transcriptions readily available.

This booklet covers the first 101 cantigas from the Prologue to CSM 100. The numbering and most transcriptions are based on the Escorial manuscript (E₁); the same basis used by Anglés in his edition. Time and energy permitting I hope to produce another three volumes of approximately 100 transcriptions to complete the set of over 400 cantigas from E₁.

I have produced these transcriptions as a performer and for other performers. It is not intended to be a Critical Edition nor a work of exhaustive scholarship. As a performer I do not feel tied to one musical theory concerning the cantiga notation or period style and I believe performers are in the best position to explore different approaches to performance. This approach can be open to extremes but, if we keep in mind a clear distinction between what is known and what is speculation, then it is also useful tool for questioning (and supporting) conventional thinking.

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The transcriptions of melodies and texts are taken from the facsimiles of the manuscripts. These facsimiles have been made available to a wider public thanks to Greg Lindahl who has created a website with scans from the Anglés edition of *E₁* and the Ribera edition of *To*. (and to many other links). Many thanks to him for providing the resources allowing me to get started.

Chris Elmes
Edinburgh, 2004

Permission is given to use these musical transcriptions as a basis for performance or recordings on the condition that the author's contribution is clearly identified for each performance or recording.

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Introduction

The Cantigas de Santa Maria

The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* are a group of over 400 songs praising, and recounting miracles performed by, the Virgin Mary. These have been preserved in four remarkable manuscripts dating from c.1270-84. They were compiled under the patronage of Alfonso X, el Sabio (the Wise), king of Castille and León and are written in Galician-Portuguese, the literary language of the court of Alfonso.

The Prologue, CSM 1 and every tenth cantiga is a song of praise to the Virgin Mary or *Cantiga de Loor*. All the others narrate the miracles associated with Mary. There are also two small groups of cantigas added later called the *Cantigas das Fiestas de Santa Maria* and *Cantigas das Festas de Nostro Sennor*.

The Transcriptions

No one as yet has put forward a generally accepted theory explaining the notation system used in the cantigas manuscripts. The complete edition by Anglés remains the benchmark both for academics and performers and is by far the most common source for performance – not surprising as it currently is the only complete source of transcriptions. More recently Ferreira, van der Werf and Cunningham have written on the subject with a more systematic approach. Of the three, only Cunningham has applied his ideas to create commercially available transcriptions and he has only covered the cantigas de loor (40 in all) but, in my opinion, his approach does not always produce viable and satisfying results.

Following Anglés I have used the Escorial manuscript (E₁) as the basis of the set of transcriptions. Ferreira argues, quite convincingly, that the Toledo manuscript (To.) is the earlier and more accurate but as it contains only around 120 of the cantigas I have decided to use the more complete source and use To. as a cross-reference.

This collection is not meant to be an authoritative edition. I have decided to take a pragmatic approach and have tried to give transcriptions of all cantigas that balance ‘performability’ with an attempt to stay as close as possible to the set of literal values for the symbols in the manuscript that I have outlined below. There is also the matter of producing a musically satisfying result. This raises the thorny issue of whether “musically satisfying” to the modern ear is a valid gauge for transcriptions of medieval music. Inevitably there will be an element of subjectivity in any transcription of medieval music and, though I would love to reproduce medieval music as it was performed originally, we can never really know what it was like. We can use what information we have but the music is filtered through our own perceptions and ultimately through those of our audiences.

A number of different approaches have been used to produce these transcriptions and sometimes two similarly notated cantigas have been transcribed with different rhythms (cf. CSM 10 and 41). I do not assume that all the cantigas are in some form of ternary rhythm. I have explored the possibilities for binary rhythms and larger groupings of rhythms more common outside the closed world of Parisian music theory of the medieval period.¹ Some of the cantigas clearly are in a modal rhythm (see below) but very few adhere strictly to the rules. Even where a song clearly starts in a modal rhythm there are often irregularities in heading towards cadences.

In many of the cantigas I have assumed, like Anglés, that the notation is basically mensural (each note or ligature has a fixed duration irrespective of context) but, unlike Anglés, have accepted that there are some ambiguous symbols. I have interpreted these symbols flexibly where I feel it would otherwise break the flow of the melody, but the flow may not necessarily follow an even rhythm. Much of the difficulty in understanding the rhythm of the cantigas I believe stems from the

¹ Some possibilities are discussed by Ferreira in ‘Andalusian Music and the Cantigas de Santa Maria’.

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possibility that uneven, or irregular, rhythms were present but without a notation system suited to recording them.

Rhythmic Modes

1 st	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 21 (with occasional 2 nd)
2 nd	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 8
3 rd	♪. ♪ ♪ ♪. ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 17
4 th	♪ ♪ ♪. ♪ ♪ ♪. ...	
5 th	♪. ♪. ♪. ♪. ...	
6 th	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ...	

In effect the 4th and 5th modes are not used in the cantigas and the 6th used only rarely.

Other rhythmic patterns used in transcriptions

Binary	♪ ♪ ... or ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 25, 26
3+2	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 5, 10
3+3+2+2	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 9
3+3+2+2+3+3	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ...	e.g. CSM 15 (variant in note)

Most of the cantigas seem to be in some form of ternary or binary rhythm with ‘building blocks’ of long and short notes or ligatures (longs or L, and breves or B). These blocks can be further subdivided (breves can be divided into semibreves or S) but for rhythmic purposes L and B are the basic elements. L can be thought of as 2 tempora (or beats) and B as one. A ‘perfection’ is a group of three tempora, e.g. LB or BL. L can also be ‘perfected’, that is, increased to a value of 3 tempora (indicated as L+).

The one-note and most of the two-note symbols have a clear mensural value. Below is a table with the values I have assumed for most of the ligatures used in the manuscripts in terms of duration – L or B.

L	♪	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	??	♩	♩
B	♪	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	??	♩	♩

The problems occur mostly with the value of ♩ and ♩ which appear to be used inconsistently between cantigas for both L and B, though they usually have the same value within a particular cantiga. In some cantigas they seem to be used indiscriminately (and possibly interchangeably) with ♩ and ♩. My initial assumptions when transcribing ♩ and ♩ is to assign them a value of B though as often as not in the finished transcription they are given as L.

Three-note ligatures are generally transcribed as L or perfected to L+. My initial assumptions were:

L	♪	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩
L+	♪.	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩	♩

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The actual value of the component notes of a ligature is also a matter of conjecture. For example, many different ligatures are used for 3 falling notes – it is probable that they were performed in contrasting ways, e.g. , , . Practically it is not of great importance; the flow and pulse of the melody remains the same. The choice is largely a matter of performance style and taste.

Generally, plicated ligatures (rising or falling stem on the right side) are transcribed as a quaver with stroke through the stem and subtracts its value from the previous note, e.g.  = . The performance of plicated ligatures  and  is another open question. These have been transcribed as B-B with a cross bar on the stem of the lesser note, eg . They could be  or ; again it is matter of taste and context.

Where a cantiga naturally falls into ternary rhythm (with little use of perfection on longs) I generally have adopted it and have looked no further for other rhythmic solutions. These ternary rhythms are usually a mix of 1st and 2nd mode rhythms. In other cases, perfection has not always been applied to longs where, by not doing so, it produces a regular rhythm on a larger scale than those available to modal rhythms – usually mixtures of 3 and 2, e.g. 3+2, 3+3+2+2. Occasionally there appears to be no regular rhythm that fits the notation so I have given these in an unmeasured transcription. Where there appear to be other rhythmic options I have given notes as to possible other interpretations.

Generally, I have not followed the practice of alteration (altering the length of the second of a pair breves followed by a longa to make the pair of breves a perfection, eg BBL becomes [BL] L+) except when transcribing a melody into 3rd mode. As far as I can see, if you assume a ternary rhythm, using a combination of perfection and alteration allows any tune to be wedged into any of the modal rhythms, and therefore it is of no use to justify a choice of rhythm.

While trying to remain as close as possible to the manuscript occasionally I have changed explicit note values where these have an analogous note elsewhere in the cantiga or where the rhythm in To. implies the change. I have noted these in each cantiga. For a few cantigas I have used To. as the basis where it seems to have a clearer indication of the rhythm.

The Texts

The texts given with the transcriptions are literal readings of the first stanzas in E₁ and allowances must be made for my limited knowledge of palaeography and Old Galician-Portuguese. I have made no attempt to edit these apart from expanding scribal shorthand notations, e.g. per, que, nn, deus. I have given sources for complete editions of the lyrics and translations in the bibliography. Often the full texts are also available on the internet – the best way to find them is to search on the first two or three words.

The Cantigas

Prologo – Por que trobar e cousa

Por que tro - bar e cou - sa en que iaz
en - ten - di - men - to po - ren que - no faz
a - o d'a - ver e de ra - zon as - saz,
per que en - ten - da'e sa - bi - a di - zer
o que en - ten - de de di - zer lle praz,
ca ben tro - bar as - si s'a de ffa - zer.

The musical score is written in a single system with six staves. Each staff contains a line of music in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The music is through-composed, meaning it is not divided into separate sections by a refrain. The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a focus on the lyrics.

This piece is an introduction to the collection of songs in praise of, and miracles about, the Virgin. It is unusual in the cantigas because it is through-composed in the manner often used by the troubadours (the only other through-composed cantiga in the first 100 is CSM 1). A rhythmically free interpretation stressing the lyrics would appear to be justified.

Cantiga 1 – Des oge mais

Des o - ge mais quer eu tro - bar
po - la Se - nnor on - rra - da,
en que Deus quis car - ne fi - llar,
be - ey - ta e sa - gra - da,
por nos dar gran sol - da - da
no seu Rey - no e nos er - dar
por seus de sa mas - na - da
de vi - da per - lon - ga - da,

sen a - ver - mos pois a pas - sar

per mort' ou - tra ve - ga - da.

The first of the Cantigas de Loor in praise of the Virgin. These occur every tenth cantiga after the first (10, 20, etc.). Unusual in being through-composed song with no refrain .

Both Anglés and Cunningham (and therefore nearly all performers) transcribe this cantiga in D mode with a B \flat throughout. E₁ though has a \square clef (with no B \flat) except in the line in the manuscript 'Deus quis carne fillar beeyta' where it changes to $\square \flat$ and therefore should only effect the B at 3.6 and probably, by analogy, 6.6. To. has no occurrences of B \flat . It was acceptable medieval practice to flatten a B when it is between two As which covers most of the occurrences.

Cantiga 2 – Muito devemos

Refrain



Mui-to de - ve - mos, va - rão - es,
lo - ar a San - ta Ma - ri - a,
que sas gra - cas et seus do - es
da a quen por e - la fi - a.

Stanza



Sen mui - ta de bõ - a ma - nna
que deu a un seu pre - la - do,
que pri - ma - do foi d'Es - pa - nna
et Af - fons' e - ra cha - ma - do,

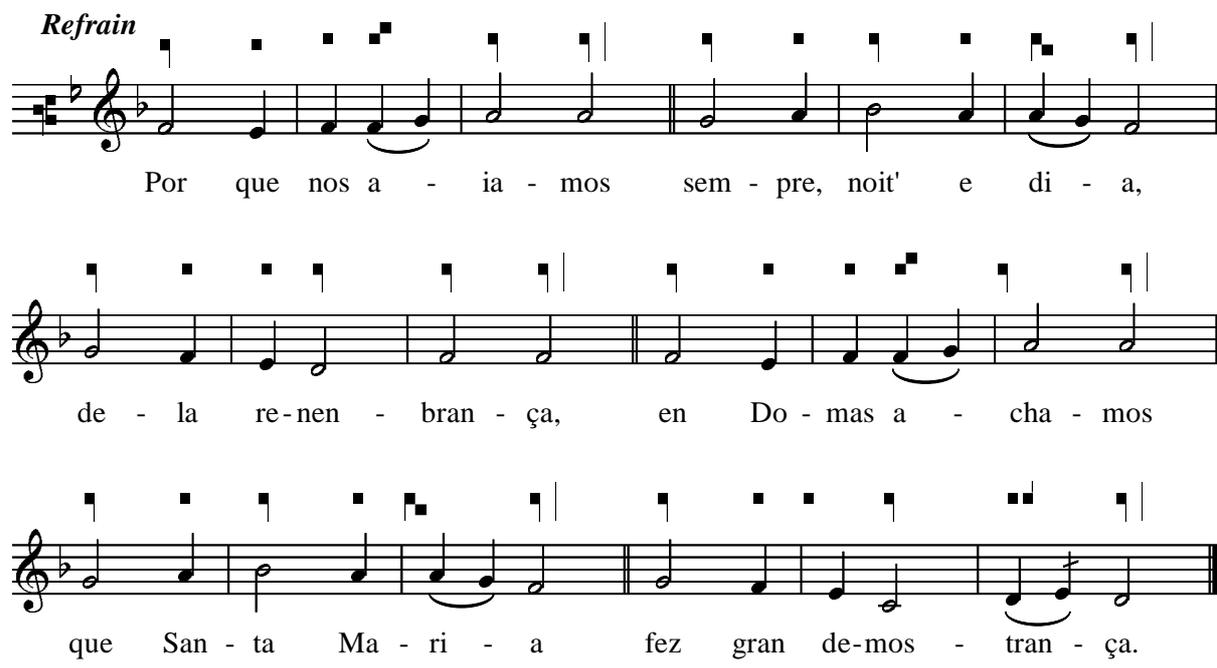
deull hú - a tal ves - ti - du - ra
que trou - xe de pa - ra - ý - so,
ben feý - ta a ssa me - su - ra,
por que me - te - ra seu si - so
en a lo - ar noý - t'e di - a.

The first of the cantigas recounting miracles of the Virgin.

If a ternary rhythm is implied in the notation, it appears to use the ligature \blacktriangleright as S-S at 3.5, 5.5, 7.5 and 12.5, and as B-B at 4.6, 6.6, 8.6 and 13.6.

Cantiga 9 – Por que nos aiamos

Refrain



Por que nos a - ia - mos sem - pre, noit' e di - a,
de - la re-nen - bran - ça, en Do - mas a - cha - mos
que San - ta Ma - ri - a fez gran de-mos - tran - ça.

Stanza



En es - ta ci - da - de, que vos ei ia di - ta,
ouv' y hú - a do - na de mui san - ta vi - da,
mui fa - ze - dor d'al - gu'e de to - do mal qui - ta,
ri - ca e mui no - bre e de ben com - pri - da.

Mas, por que sa - biá - mos co - mo non que - ri - a
do mun - do ga - ban - ça, co - mo fez di - ga - mos
hú' al - ber - ga - ri - a, u fi - llou mo - ran - ça.

This cantiga is given with a literal transcription (with unperfected long). The rhythm can be seen as phrases of 3+3+2+2.

Cantiga 10 – Rosa das rosas

Refrain

Ro - sa das ro - sas e Fror das fro-res,
Do - na das do - nas, Se - nnor das se - nno-res.

Stanza

Ro - sa de bel - dad e de pa - re - cer
e Fror d'a - le - gri - a e de pra - zer,
Do - na en mui pi - a - do - sa se - er,
Se - nnor en to - ller coi - tas e do - o - res.

This cantiga is normally given in 3rd rhythmic mode. This is a literal transcription which produces a 5/4 rhythm (7/4 at ends of phrases) or could be performed freely. To perform in 3rd mode lengthen the first note or ligature of each measure to L+. For the first line this would be:

| d. . d. | | d. . d. | (???) |

List of Incipits

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|--|
| 86 | A correr nos pode e de mal guardar | 27 | Non devemos por maravilla teer |
| 65 | A creer devemos que todo pecado | 50 | Non deve null ome desto per ren dultar |
| 68 | A Groriosa grandes faz | 26 | Non e gran cousa se sabe |
| 51 | A Madre de Deus devemos teer | 78 | Non pode prender nunca |
| 89 | A Madre de Deus onrrada | 93 | Nulla enfermidade non é de sãar |
| 4 | A Madre do que livrou | 75 | Omildade con pobreça |
| 83 | Aos seus acomendados | 35 | O que a Santa Maria der algo ou prometer |
| 6 | A que do bon rey Davi | 12 | O que a Santa Maria mais despraz |
| 67 | A Reýnna groriosa | 84 | O que en Santa Maria |
| 82 | A Santa Maria mui bon servir faz | 25 | Pagar ben pod o que dever |
| 13 | Assi como Jesu-Cristo estand ena cruz | 14 | Par Deus, mui é gran razon |
| 96 | Atal Sennor é bõa que faz salvalo pecador | 81 | Par Deus tal sennor muito val |
| 55 | A tant e Santa Maria | 85 | Pera toller gran perfia |
| 41 | A Virgen, Madre de Nostro Sennor | 38 | Pois que Deus quis da Virgen fillo |
| 42 | A Virgen mui groriosa Reya espirital | 18 | Por nos de dulta tirar |
| 91 | A Virgen nos da saude tolle mal | 46 | Por que aian de seer |
| 45 | A Virgen Santa Maria tant e de gran piedade | 43 | Por que e Santa Maria |
| 8 | A Virgen Santa Maria todos a loar devemos | 9 | Por que nos aiamos |
| 97 | A Virgen sempr' acorrer acorrer | *0 | Porque trobar e cousa |
| 79 | Ay Santa Maria quen se per vos guya | 66 | Quantos en Santa Maria |
| 49 | Ben com' aos que van per mar | 72 | Quem diz mal da Reýna Espirital |
| 73 | Ben pod as cousas feas remosas tornar | 95 | Quen aos servos da Virgen |
| 23 | Como Deus fez vynno d'agua | 5 | Quen as coitas deste mundo |
| 53 | Como pod a Groriosa mui ben enfermos saar | 76 | Quen a sas figuras da Virgen partir |
| 80 | De graça chéa e damor | 59 | Quena Virgen ben servir nunca podera falir |
| 77 | Da que Deus mamou leite do seu peito | 63 | Quen ben serv' a Madre |
| 58 | De muitas guysas nos guarda de mal | 16 | Quen dona fremosa e boa quiser amar |
| 1 | Des oge mais quer eu trobar | 44 | Quen fiar na Madre do Salvador |
| 40 | Deus te salve groriosa Reya Maria | 32 | Quen loar podia com ela quera |
| 94 | De vergonna nos guardar | 64 | Quen mui ben quiser |
| 70 | Eno nome de Maria | 74 | Quen Santa Maria quiser deffender |
| 60 | Entre ave Eva | 88 | Quen servir a Madre |
| 61 | Fol é o que cuyda | 10 | Rosa das rosas e Fror das frores |
| 56 | Gran dereit é de seer | 7 | Santa Maria amar |
| 34 | Gran dereit e que fill'o | 69 | Santa Maria os enfermos sãa |
| 33 | Gran poder a de mandar | 21 | Santa Maria pod' enfermos guarir |
| 19 | Gran sandece faz | 92 | Santa Maria poder á |
| 11 | Macar ome per folia | 62 | Santa Maria sempros seus ajuda |
| 24 | Madre de Deus non pod' errar | 100 | Santa Maria Stela do dia |
| 3 | Mais nos faz Santa Maria | 17 | Sempre seja beeita e loada |
| 37 | Miragres fremosos faz por nos Santa Maria | 71 | Se muito non amamos |
| 52 | Mui gran dereit é das bestias | 90 | Sola fusti senlleira |
| 57 | Mui grandes noit e dia | 31 | Tanto se Deus me perdon |
| 22 | Mui gran poder á a Madre de Deus | 48 | Tanto son da Groriosa |
| 36 | Muit' amar devemos en nossas voontades | 54 | Toda saude de Santa Reýa |
| 2 | Muito devemos varões | 28 | Todo logar mui ben pode sseer defendudo |
| 87 | Muito punna dos seus onrrar | 15 | Todo los Santos que son Ceo |
| 99 | Muito sse deven téer | 39 | Torto seria grand e desmesura |
| 30 | Muito valvera mais, se Deus manpar | 20 | Virga de Jesse |
| 29 | Nas mentes senpre teer | 47 | Virgen Santa Maria guarda nos se te praz |
| 98 | Non deva Santa Maria mercée pedir | | |

*0 = Prologo

Cross-reference of E₁ with To.

E ₁ number	To.	
	Ribera's number	Codex number
(0)	1	Prologo
1	2	I
2	3	II
3	4	III
4	5	IV
5	20	XIX
6	6	V
7	7	VI
8	9	VIII
9	10	IX
10	11	X
11	12	XI
12	14	XIII
13	15	XIV
14	16	XV
15	34	XXXIII
16	13	XII
17	8	VII
18	17	XVI
19	19	XVIII
20	21	XX
21	27	XXVI
22	23	XXII
23	24	XXIII
24	18	XVII
25	39	XXXVIII
26	25	XXIV
27	26	XXV
28	28	XXVII
29	30	XXIX
30	41	XL

E ₁ number	To.	
	Ribera's number	Codex number
31	33	XXXII
32	35	XXXIV
33	36	XXXV
34	37	XXXVI
35	93	XCII
36	38	XXXVII
37	40	XXXIX
38	42	XLI
39	44	XLIII
40	31	XXX
41	45	XLIV
42	58	LVII
43	57 & 129	LVI 129 = no 57 from E ₂
44	59	LVIII
45	84	LXXXIII
46	60	LIX
47	62	LXI
48	63	LXII
49	64	LXIII
50	61	LX
51	65	LXIV
52	67	LXVI
53	68	LXVII
54	70	LXIX
55	87	LXXXVI
56	72	LXXI
57	73	LXXII
58	74	LXXIII
59	76	LXXV

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E ₁ number	To.	
	Ribera's number	Codex number
60	71	LXX
61	48	XLVII
62	50	XLIX
63	52	LI
64	53	LII
65	89	LXXXVIII
66	79	LXXVIII
67	66	LXVI
68	69	LXVIII
69	55	LIV
70	81	LXXX
71	92	XCI
72	127	XIII de otras
73	90	LXXXIX
74	88	LXXXVII
75	100	XLIX
76	-	-
77	-	-
78	54	LIV
79	43	XLII
80	91	XC
81	49	XLVIII

E ₁ number	To.	
	Ribera's number	Codex number
82	117	V de otras
83	128	XIV de otras
84	99	XCVIII
85	-	-
86	29	XXVIII
87	22	XXI
88	124	XI de otras
89	125	XII de otras
90	-	-
91	83	LXXXII
92	86	LXXXV
93	-	-
94	32	XXXI
95	-	-
96	-	-
97	120	VIII de otras
98	95	XCIV
99	-	-
100	123	X (sic) de loor

Select Bibliography

Manuscripts

Escorial	E ₁ = 'codice princeps' = MS. b.I.2 = B.J.2 = j.b.2
	E ₂ = 'codice rico' = MS. T.I.1 = T.J.1 = T.j.1
Toledo	To. Biblioteca Nacional MS. 10 069

Facsimiles and Editions

Anglés, Higinio, ed. *La musica de las cantigas de Santa Maria del Rey Alfonso El Sabio*, 3 vols (Barcelona, 1943-64)

Volume 1 has complete facsimiles; volume 2 has transcriptions; volume 3 has commentaries.

Cunningham, Martin G, *Alfonso X, el Sabio, Cantigas de Loor*, (UCD Press, Dublin 2000)
ISBN 1 900621 31 2

Critical edition of Cantigas de Loor (as an arbitrary subset) with study of notation and text. Transcriptions, complete texts and translations of cantigas de loor.

Mettmann, Walter, ed. *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, 4 vols (Coimbra: Acta Universitatis Conimbrigensis, 1959-72.) Reprinted 3 vols (Castalia, Madrid, 1984-89).

Complete edition of the lyrics (no translations)

The Cantigas de Santa Maria: Facsimilies. Maintained by Greg Lindahl at
<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cantigas/facsimiles/>

Complete facsimiles of all E₁ cantigas taken from Anglés (see above) and all To. from Ribera.

Translations

Kulp-Hill, Kathleen, *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A translation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, Tempe, Arizona 2000

English prose translations of all cantigas in E₁.

Musical Studies

Ferreira, Manuel Pedro, 'Andalusian Music and the Cantigas de Santa Maria', in *Cobras e Son. Papers from a Colloquium...*, edited by Parkinson, Stephen (Oxford, Julho de 1994), Oxford: Legenda, forthcoming.

Also maintained by Centro de Estudos de Sociologia e Estética Musical at
http://www.fcs.unl.pt/cesem/29_10_02/outraspublicacoes.html

Ferreira, Manuel Pedro, 'Bases for Transcription: Gregorian Chant and the Notation of the Cantigas de Santa Maria', in *Los Instrumentos del Pórtico de la Gloria: Su Reconstrucción y la Música de su Tiempo*, Vol II, edited by José López-Calo (Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, La Coruña, 1993.) ISBN 84-87819-72-9.

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Van der Werf, Hendrik, 'Accentuation and Duration in the Music of the Cantigas de Santa Maria', in *Studies on the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Art, Music and Poetry*, edited by Israel J. Katz and John E. Keller, (The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, Madison, 1987).