



# The Position of Magic in Selected Medieval Spanish Texts

*Jr. Francis Tobienne*

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It is difficult to assess an explanation of a belief, or a belief system in words, Tobienne begins, and harder still to assign signification to such inexplicable conviction[s]. This book addresses the often blurred line[s] between magic, religion, and science within Spanish literature and history, and is divided into three parts. The first section offers a brief overview of Spanish history from the fifth century through the seventh century and looks at the divide between white and black magic. White magic is often attributed to a divine agency, whereas black magic is the result of dark or demonic influences. The second part of the book looks at Alfonso X (also known as el Sabio, or the Wise) and his *Las Siete Partidas* and *Lapidario*, and the role of how magic was received in the Spanish university system and translating centers and spaces within Alfonso's court. The final section examines two poems: *Auto de Los Reyes Magos* and the *Vida de Santa María Egipciaca* in terms of the white magic concepts of *mirabilia* and *miracula*. Collectively, these poems alongside Bishop Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* contribute to the discourse of a Medieval Spain and its rich, intellectual history and moreover, provides a launching pad into this discussion regarding a small window of quasi-tolerance in Spain amidst Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

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