

EPOS AND ANTHROPONYM: THE POEMA DE MIO CID

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The Poema de mio Cid represents the first major monument of medieval Spanish literature, composed approximately 1140. Once considered an isolated work of epic pretensions in a literature thought to lack even an epic tradition (as was believed by nineteenth century critics, championed by Gaston Paris¹), the Poema has been viewed since the mid 1870's as a first rate example of the heroic popular tradition which undoubtedly produced other thematic cycles whose texts have been lost with the passage of time.² Their content is known, nonetheless, through prosifications in the royal histories and chronicles, as for example, the Primera Crónica General, prepared under the aegis of Alphonse the Wise.³ In literature likewise have these epic materials been preserved for posterity, in the fragmentary romances, whose origin is in the prior long epic poems, with those remnants of greatest dramatism and interest being retained in the oral tradition by the juglares or itinerant minstrels.

While the Poema is unquestionably an epic poem, its characteristics differ considerably from those of other

European epic poems like the Chanson de Roland and the Nibelungenlied in that it depicts not a long distant epoch or a world of supernatural gods, but rather a more immediate yesteryear of peninsular history, focusing on the heroic feats of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (1043?-1099), more commonly referred to as the Cid, the epithet appended by his Saracen adversaries.

This Spanish epic depicts a world of antagonistic forces engaged in struggle, and hence an abundance of onomastic nomenclature is to be found. The anthroponyms encountered reflect the historical reality of the period of the Spanish Reconquest during the eleventh century and offer examples of personal names from the three cultures present in the Iberian peninsula: Christian, Jewish and Arabic. Since the Poema is an historical epic based primarily on the lives of real people, the role of the poet is not so much an inventor of names as a recorder for posterity of the names of the protagonist and his circle of friends and family. As critics have demonstrated, the overwhelming number of forenames and surnames mentioned corresponds to correct, actual anthroponyms.⁴ But this predominance does not mean that the anonymous poet was a slave of historical accuracy; in this work of 'literature' the creator did invent, create

names of characters whose existence has not been proven documentally. Yet these names fit perfectly in the context of the work and have an authentic 'ring' to them, an acoustic verisimilitude.

I shall examine the names found in the Poema and attempt to categorize them, and then analyze the frequency with which they appear in the three sections of the poem in order to ascertain whether any, and what onomastical conclusions can be drawn.

Most of the names mentioned by the unknown poet are Christian, corresponding to the lower and middle ranks of a nobility whose ongoing endeavor constituted the essence of the Reconquest. These nobles were the descendants of the Visigothic aristocracy and monarchy which in the fifth century had been superimposed on this westernmost colony of the Roman empire on the continent. It is not surprising, therefore, that an elevated percentage of both anthroponyms and patronyms gives evidence of this Germanic influence in the process of nomination.

The protagonist's given name is Rodrigo (or Ruy in its apocopated form resulting from syntactical positioning). The origin of this name is in the two roots 'hroth'-fame and 'riks'-powerful, both qualities well suited to the figure of the hero.⁵ Likewise, the name of the monarch, Alfonso, derives from 'hilds'-struggle, and

'funs'-prepared. Other names evincing the same origin are quite numerous:

Alvaro	('all'-all; 'waran'-shelter)
Beltrán	('bert'-brilliant; 'ram'-crow)
Berenguer	('ber'-bear; 'gari'-lance)
Bermudo	('ber'-bear; 'mund'-protection)
Elvira	('gails'-lance; 'vers'-friendly)
Enrique	('ehne'-honor; 'riks'-powerful)
Fernando	('firthu'-peace; 'nands'-firm)
Fruela	('fraujs'-lord)
Gómez	('goma'-man)
Gonzalo	('gundis'-combat; 'alv'-elf)
Remón	('rad'-counselor; 'mund'-protection)
Rogel	('hroud'-fame; 'gar'-lance)

Since Germanic elements constituted a superposition upon a prior Roman civilization, examples of Latin and earlier Greek names are also present, though to a lesser degree:

Félez	('felix'-happy)
Muño	('moenius'-fortified)
Sancho	('sanctus'-holy)
Téllez	('tellus'-earth)
Yñigo	('ignatius'-burning)
Antolínez	('anthos'-flower-like)

Jerónimo ('Ieronymos'-he who has holy name)
 Pelayo ('pelagio'-good sailor)
 Ysidro ('Isidoro'-gift of Isis)

While almost all of the Christian names present offer both forename and surname, those of apparent Jewish or Arabic origin feature only one word, either the anthroponym or the patronym, perhaps because the poet saw no need for further differentiation for the sake of clarity. Of the six Arabic anthroponyms (five corresponding to adversaries, one to a sympathizer), three have been documented:

Abengalbón (Aben Galbún)
 Búcar (Abu Bēkar, who attacked Valencia in 1093)
 Yūsuf (Yusuf ben Texufin, the first emperor of the Almoravide dynasty, who wreaked havoc on Christian held lands from 1086 onward)

The remaining three, Fáriz, Galve and Tamin, are not historically documented, but they do bear similarity to recognized Arabic names: Hariz, Gálib (father-in-law of Almanzor the Victorious) and Mutamin, respectively.⁶

The names of the two Jewish moneylenders, Raquel and Vidas, require some explanation. The first is no doubt a scribal error in the extant manuscript and ought

to read 'Rogel ' (Roger), which derives not from a Hebrew root, but from the Germanic (see listing on page 4). The other anthroponym, Vidas, is simply the Spanish translation of the plural Hebrew noun "Hayyim," meaning 'lives.'

Several names reveal the influence of the Basque language on nomination. The anthroponym Ansur and its corresponding patronymic Ansúrez have their origin in the Basque form for Sancho. Likewise, three other patronyms derive from this tongue:

García	('hartzea'-bear)
Ordóñez	('ordo'-brave, manly)
Ojarra	('otsoarra'-wolflike) ⁷

The term Minaya, often used in apposition to the name of the Cid's most loyal friend, Alvar Fáñez, on occasion even substituting for it, has been determined to comprise the agglutination of the Romance possessive 'mi'-my and the Basque noun 'anai'-brother.⁸

Of all the names included in the Poema only a few have been viewed as fictitious: count Beltrán, Martín Antolínez, Félez Muñoz, Malanda, Ojarra, the two money-lenders and three of the Moorish kings. Hence, the majority of names possesses no special connotation, nor are they imbued with any deeper significance by the poet, who merely incorporated them into the poetic narration.

What does stand out is the multiplicity of names for the protagonist: don Rodrigo, Ruy Díaz, and the epithets El Cid and Campeador,⁹ all of which reveal etymologically the three influences present in Spanish nomination: Germanic, Latin and Arabic. No doubt this variety of names serves to reduce monotony, but also aids in maintaining the assonant rhyme scheme in many of the series of verses. This variation in naming is also found, though to a lesser degree, in designating the Cid's faithful friend Alvar Fáñez; he is frequently called Minaya Alvar Fáñez, Alvar Fáñez Minaya or just Minaya. Of all the personages mentioned in the poem, this deuteragonist is the only one (besides the hero) who is ever referred to by more than one name, and one may conclude that this nomination reflects the particular significance accorded him by the poet.

The second aspect of these observations on names in the Poema comprises a study of the frequency with which these anthroponyms appear.¹⁰ For each of the three divisions there follows a separate table of names, the sum total of which is 1271. Of these one finds that the name of the protagonist (or his epithets) appears 648 times, constituting slightly more than half of all names mentioned: 51.34%. If we view the tallies from left to

right, we perceive a rise in the number of times his name is utilized as the work progresses, which parallels the ascendancy in his fame and feats. If the percentages diminish somewhat, it is because the total number of names mentioned increases in the subsequent sections.

Alvar Fáñez, on the basis of frequency of mention, may be considered the second most important character in the poem, his name comprising more than 11% of the total. This is especially true in the second part, where Minaya serves as ambassador to the King. Together with that of the Cid, his name accounts for just under two thirds of all anthroponyms present. After these two names, the percentages drop off dramatically. The name of King Alphonse appears approximately 6%, increasing in absolute numbers in the second and third divisions, where he rescinds his order of banishment, and then convokes the trial against the princes of Carrión.

The Cid's other ally, Martín Antolínez, the 'good citizen of Burgos,' who donates provisions to the hero (thereby cleverly circumventing the King's prohibition against anything being sold to the exiled hero) is mentioned in 5% of the cases. This mainly occurs in the first section, where he aids the Cid, and then in the third part, where he participates in the juridical

proceedings against the two felons.

Mention of the name of the Cid's wife, Ximena, is surprisingly infrequent. In the first section her presence serves to emphasize the sense of personal loss occasioned by exile. Her name reappears in the second division, as the hero invites his wife to contemplate the view of the conquered city of Valencia from the fortress. In the last section it appears but three times.

The Cid's horse is named Babieca, perhaps derived from 'baba,' the onomatopoeic word for spittle. In the second section in particular, its name appears quite frequently as the horse spirits its rider in charges against the infidel; indeed, in the defense of Valencia against the attack of the Saracen king, Yūsuf, horse and rider become a unified force pitted against the enemy.

The name of the bishop, Jerome, is mentioned often in part two, after the conquest of Valencia. It is significant that his name comes directly from the French, based on the historical figure Jérôme de Périgord, of the Cluny order. Precisely the arrival of members of this order, at the invitation of Bernardo, archbishop of Toledo, to assist in the reform of the Mozarabic rite, along with the discovery of the tomb of Santiago in northwestern Spain, served to initiate the great

pilgrimage routes across northern Spain and bring to the country the influence of its northern neighbors.¹¹

The greatest diversity of naming occurs in the last division of the poem with the celebration of the court at Toledo and then at Carrión. Eleven of the names listed in the table appear only in this section; they correspond to characters who serve as mediators (Anrich, don Remón, Fruela and Beltrán) or represent allies of the Cid or members of the González band.

Besides the frequency with which the unknown poet utilizes anthroponyms, mention ought to be made of the curious instance of juxtaposition of the names of two characters, a duality observed in the following examples: Raquel and Vidas, Diego and Fernando, Elvira and Sol, Ojarra and Yñigo Siméñez, Fáriz and Galve, and even the two swords, Tizón and Colada. As one can see from the tables, these pairings cause the two names to appear with almost the same frequency.

In conclusion I would affirm that nomination in this epic composition serves to perpetuate the memory of historical personages through the integration of actual anthroponyms into the tapestry of the poetic fabric. In this process the poet does not alter or distort personal names; rather, what he fictionalizes

are the actions of these characters. The names of characters assumed by critics to be fictional are created with a sense of appropriateness, that is, they sound right. The specific anthroponyms mentioned in the text mirror the bodies of people inhabiting the Iberian peninsula (Visigothic and Arabic) whose belic actions the poet recreates in such vivid terms in his glorification of the protagonist on one hand and of the epic emergence of the Spanish nation as a collective organism on the other.

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TABLE OF FREQUENCY

NAME	CANTAR I	CANTAR II	CANTAR III
Abengalbón		9 (2.05%)	6 (1.25%)
Alfonso VI	10 (2.83%)	35 (7.97%)	31 (6.47%)
Alvar Alvarez	2 (.57%)	2 (.46%)	1 (.21%)
Anrich			5 (1.04%)
Gonzalo Ansúrez			1 (.21%)
Martín Antolínez	20 (5.67%)	3 (.68%)	11 (2.30%)
Babieca		8 (1.82%)	3 (.63%)
Banigómez			1 (.21%)
don Beltrán			1 (.21%)
Búcar			11 (2.30%)
Cid	128 (40.25%)	151 (34.40%)	134 (27.98%)
Campeador	42 (11.90%)	50 (11.39%)	92 (19.21%)
Cid Ruy Díaz	17 (4.82%)	4 (.91%)	4 (.84%)
don Rodrigo	6 (1.70%)	9 (2.05%)	3 (.63%)
Ruy Díaz	3 (.85%)	4 (.91%)	4 (.84%)
(subtotal)	196 (55.52%)	218 (49.66%)	234 (48.85%)
Alvar Díaz		1 (.23%)	
doña Elvira		6 (1.37%)	18 (3.76%)
San Esidro		2 (.46%)	3 (.63%)
Alvar Fáñez	8 (2.27%)	14 (3.19%)	6 (1.25%)
Alvar Fáñez			
Minaya	1 (.28%)		

Minaya Alvar			
Fañez	10 (3.83%)	24 (5.47%)	6 (1.25%)
Minaya	22 (6.23%)	40 (9.11%)	10 (2.09%)
(subtotal)	41 (11.61%)	78 (17.77%)	22 (4.59%)
Fáriz	5 (1.42%)		
don Fruela			1 (.21%)
San Gabriel	1 (.28%)		
Galve	4 (1.13%)		
Galindo García	2 (.57%)	2 (.46%)	
Ansur González		1 (.23%)	5 (1.04%)
Diego González		3 (.68%)	11 (2.30%)
Fernando González		3 (.68%)	20 (4.18%)
Gonzalo González		1 (.23%)	1 (.21%)
Muño Gustioz	1 (.28%)	6 (1.37%)	14 (2.92%)
don Jerome		13 (2.96%)	4 (.84%)
Mahomat	1 (.28%)		
Malanda			1 (.21%)
Félez Muñoz	1 (.28%)		10 (2.09%)
Martín Muñoz	1 (.28%)	1 (.23%)	1 (.21%)
Ojarra			3 (.63%)
García Ordóñez		4 (.91%)	7 (1.46%)
Gómez Peláyez			1 (.21%)
Raquel	19 (5.38%)	3 (.68%)	
don Remón			7 (1.46%)

Alvar Salvadórez	2 (.57%)	3 (.68%)	1 (.21%)
Yñigo Siméñez			3 (.63%)
don Sancho	6 (1.70%)	1 (.23%)	
doña Sol		6 (1.37%)	20 (4.18%)
Tamin	1 (.28%)		
Diego Télliez			1 (.21%)
Remón Verengel	8 (2.27%)		1 (.21%)
Pero Vermúdez	5 (1.42%)	13 (2.96%)	15 (3.13%)
Vidas	17 (4.82%)	2 (.46%)	
Ximena	9 (2.55%)	2 (.46%)	
Sant Yague	1 (.28%)	2 (.46%)	
Yúsuf		3 (.68%)	
(totals)	<u>353</u>	<u>439</u>	<u>479</u>

NOTES

1. Gaston Paris, Histoire Poétique de Charlemagne (Paris, 1865), 203.
2. Manuel Milá y Fontanals, De la poesía heroicopopular castellana (Barcelona, 1874), 409.
3. Alonso el Sabio, Primera Crónica General, ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid, 1955), lxi and ff.
4. In addition to the findings of Ramón Menéndez Pidal, see Cesáreo Bandera, El 'Poema de mio Cid': poesía historia, mito (Madrid, 1969); Louis Chalon, L'Histoire et l'Epopée Castellane du Moyen Age (Paris, 1976); and Luis Rubio García, Realidad y fantasía en el 'Poema de mio Cid' (Murcia, 1972).
5. Name origins have been verified from the following: Farani Mansur, Diccionario Etimológico de Nomes e Sobrenomes (Curitiba, 1949); Luis López de Mesa, Rudimentos de Onomatología (Bogotá, 1961); Pedro L. Serdoch, Diccionario onomatológico (Mendoza, 1952); and Francisca Arana de Love, Nombres propios españoles (Barcelona, 1982).
6. Dawud Hakim, Arabic Names (Philadelphia, 1970).
7. Nicanor Narbarte, Diccionario de apellidos vascos (Pamplona, 1971).

8. Ramón Menéndez Pidal, op. cit., III, 1211.
9. The use of the epithet in the PMC has received considerable study. See Edmund de Chasca, "El epíteto," in El arte juglaresco en el 'Cantar de mio Cid' (Madrid, 1967), 173-193; Rita Hamilton, "Epic Epithets in the Poem of the Cid," Revue de Littérature Comparée, 36 (1962), 161-178; Thomas R. Hart, "The Rhetoric of Epic Fiction: narrative technique in the Cantar de mio Cid," Philological Quarterly, 51 (1972), 32-41; and Robert L. Hathaway, "The Art of the Epic Epithets in the Cantar de mio Cid," Hispanic Review, 42 (1974), 311-321.
10. See the appended table.
11. Luis Suárez Fernández, Historia de España. Edad Media (Madrid, 1970), 186.