

### The Fernán González Epic: In Search of a Definitive Text\*

**I**N A SEMINAL ARTICLE on the distinctiveness of the *Poema de mio Cid* which appeared in 1977, the British scholar Colin Smith called attention to the paucity of surviving written epic texts from Spain and the problems inherent in the definition and delimitation of Spanish epic in general:

In Spanish, epic texts have been lost and to some extent one must proceed by hypothesis and by comparisons with what is not strictly comparable, that is with epic stories known to us only in the prose of the chronicles and in the fragmented and adapted form of the ballads. Moreover, the possible degree of such comparability must be argued and justified, not simply assumed as it too often has been.<sup>1</sup>

Among the surviving texts recorded by Smith is the *Poema de Fernán González*, composed by an anonymous thirteenth-century poet who conceivably reworked in the new metrical style of the *cuaderna vía* an existing epic poem about the liberator of Castile, the count Fernán

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<sup>1</sup> "On the Distinctiveness of the Poema de mio Cid," in "Mio Cid" Studies, ed. A. D. Deyermond (London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1977), pp. 161-194; quotation, p. 161. For a systematic approach to the problem, see the summary of Deyermond's paper in Jean-Paul Carton, "Société Rencesvals Discussion Session on Tradition and Creation in the Castilian Epic: Trends in Contemporary Research, December 29, 1978," *Olifant*, 7. n° 2 (Winter 1979), pp. 154-161, at pp. 154-156.

González.<sup>2</sup> It has been suggested by such eminent scholars as Pedro Henríquez Ureña and Ramón Menéndez Pidal that the metrical irregularity reflected in numerous lines of the *Poema* may be the result of the poet's attempt to impose monorhyme and alexandrine verse upon jongleuresque models of assonance and irregular line length.<sup>3</sup> As Beverly West notes in her recently published dissertation on epic, folk, and Christian traditions in the poem,

the result is an interesting combination of learned technique and popular content which preserves the vivacious breath of the epic *cantar*, novelesque scenes and folk motifs, together with a hint of priestly didacticism and hagiographical inclination.<sup>4</sup>

Most scholars concur that the poem was composed circa 1250 by a monk from the Monastery of San Pedro de Arlanza. The extant manuscript is a fifteenth-century copy and is preserved in a codex with four other manuscripts in the library of the Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. The content of missing parts of the damaged manuscript, including lacunae and numerous unreadable lines, has been reconstructed via comparison of the prosified versions of the thirteenth-century *Primera crónica general* (=PCG) and the *Crónica general de 1344*.

The difficulties in editing the manuscript are perhaps best summarized by Carroll Marden in his 1904 paleographic-critical edition of the poem<sup>5</sup> and Ramón Menéndez Pidal, whose lengthy review of Marden's

<sup>2</sup>The other texts listed, by Smith are the *Cantar de Roncesvalles*, an early fourteenth-century (?) fragment; the *Siete Infantes de Lara* or *de Salas*, an extensive, reconstructed fragment from about 1320 (?); the *Mocedades de Rodrigo*, an incomplete account from about 1360; and, of course, the *Poema de mio Cid* (1207?).

<sup>3</sup>See Pedro Henríquez Ureña, *Estudios de versificación española* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1961); Menéndez Pidal's statements in this regard are found in his *Reliquias de la poesía épica española* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1951), p. 173 (in the "Observaciones a la edición del poema") and in *Poesía juglaresca y orígenes de las literaturas románicas. Problemas de historia literaria y cultural*, 6th ed. [of *Poesía juglaresca y juglares*] (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1957), p. 280.

<sup>4</sup>See Beverly West, *Epic, Folk, and Christian Traditions in the "Poema de Fernán González"* (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, S.A., 1983), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>*Poema de Fernán González. Texto crítico con introducción, notas y glosario por C. Carroll Marden* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1904).

edition provides keen insights into the nature and degree of scribal emendations.<sup>6</sup>

In the Introduction to his edition, Marden comments on the deplorable state of the manuscript:

Hay en el Poema muchas abreviaturas, raspaduras y borrones y a veces quedan letras casi ilegibles por lo debilitada que está la tinta. Hacen falta palabras, versos y aun coplas enteras, o por descuido del copista o por el mal estado del manuscrito original. Muchas hojas no tienen margen ni superior ni inferior, en dos casos el encuadernador troncó el texto por la parte inferior (coplas 583 y 740), y en otro caso cortó las últimas palabras del verso por el margen vertical (copla 502). Queda interrumpido el Poema en el fol. 190v, terminándose con dos versos de una copla defectuosa ....<sup>7</sup>

Menéndez Pidal's assessment of Marden's editorial efforts is prefaced by a brief observation about the nature of the task at hand: "El poema de clerecía más estropeado y más difícil de publicar, es el que primero logra una edición crítica."<sup>8</sup> The problems posed by any copy of an earlier manuscript are in the case of the *PFG* exacerbated by extreme scribal bungling and haphazard efforts to update the language of the text. As Menéndez Pidal notes,

Este era un período de transición en el idioma, sumamente perjudicial para la fidelidad de la transmisión de la obra literaria; así piden continua atención las formas gramaticales que los dos copistas emplean en lugar de las viejas del siglo XIII . . . ; estorba también la extravagante ortografía del siglo XV, tan caprichosa en el uso de rr, la y, la u, la s. Además uno de los copistas ofrece

<sup>6</sup>See *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 114 (1905), pp. 243-256. Other reviews of Marden's edition include J. D. M. Ford, *MLN [Modern Language Notes]*, 20 (1905), pp. 51-54; J. A. Geddes, *Die Neueren Sprachen*, 12 (1904), p. 446; E. Martinenche, *Revue des Langues romanes*, 47 (1904), p. 381; E. Merimée, *Bulletin hispanique*, 6 (1904), p. 92; A. Morel-Fatio, *Romania*, 33 (1904), pp. 628-629; W. von Wurzbach, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 30 (1906), pp. 93-97; A. Zauner, *Literaturblatt für Germanische und Romanische Philologie*, 26 (1905), pp. 28-30; P. de Múgica, *España y America*, 8 (1907), pp. 350-351.

<sup>7</sup>Marden, p. xv.

<sup>8</sup>*Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 114 (1905), p. 243.

resabios galaico-portugueses en la m y z finales . . . y en alguna forma gramatical . . . . Añádase que ninguno de los dos amanuenses tiene la menor idea del metro ni el menor instinto de fidelidad, y se comprenderá el sinnúmero de dificultades con que continuamente ha tenido que bregar el moderno editor.<sup>9</sup>

The Escorial manuscript has been utilized for several editions of the *Poema*. The earliest is that of Bartolomé José Gallardo who, in 1863, attempted to produce a faithful transcription of the manuscript.<sup>10</sup> As subsequent editors have noted, however, Gallardo fell short of the task. Another edition by Florencio Janer," published a year later, proved no more rigorous than its predecessor and, in fact, was judged by Marden to be slightly less useful:

Las pocas correcciones que introdujo Gallardo se hallan en notas al pie de las páginas, pero las lecciones falsas que ocurren en su texto son muchas y variadas. A pesar de sus muchos errores, el texto es probablemente algo mejor que el de Janer.<sup>12</sup>

In an earlier piece of correspondence directed to the editors of *MLN* [*Modern Language Notes*], Marden had taken the liberty to scrutinize and comment judiciously upon the two editions which were to precede his own. In that same note he officially made known, for the first time as far as I can tell, his intention to publish a paléographie edition of the poem:

Janer, in speaking of his text, remarks: "Conservamos con la mayor escrupulosidad el carácter y la ortografía del códice que contiene esta preciosa composición," but in spite of his statement, his text contains over five hundred false readings, among which are numerous omissions of letters, words and in one case of an entire verse, . . . Gallardo's edition is by no means a careful copy of the original, for it is too rich in misreadings, including omissions of letters, words and, in seventeen cases, of entire verses. The above facts make it evident that statistics and conclu-

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, p. 244.

<sup>10</sup>See his *Ensayo de una biblioteca española de libros raros y curiosos*, I (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1863), pp. 763-804.

<sup>11</sup>See *Poetas castellanos anteriores al siglo XV*, Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 57 (Madrid 1864), pp. 387-411.

<sup>12</sup>Marden, p. xxv; a reasonable assessment of other early efforts to edit the *PFG* is found on pp. xxiv-xxvii.

sions based on such texts cannot be considered trustworthy and it is this condition of affairs that has led me to undertake the preparation of a paleographic text of the poem.<sup>13</sup>

I find it rather curious, in light of Marden's apparent emphasis that his was to be a paleographic edition, that he should subsequently have published what is in essence a critical text, paleographic references being relegated to the footnotes. Moreover, given our current understanding of the term "paleographic," one is forced to concede that Marden's edition is not really paleographic at all. Whereas his intentions and choice of editorial standards must clearly be considered and judged within the context of tendencies and tastes prevailing in earlier twentieth-century academic circles, one is nevertheless disappointed that Marden opted to focus primarily on reconstruction of the text rather than on the task of producing a complete and faithful transcription of the manuscript. This is especially disconcerting in light of his own admission of reluctance to publish a critical edition. With regard to the "autor de esta obra," Marden himself notes:

Tan grandes han sido las dificultades de su tarea, tantos los yerros que habrá cometido, y tan larga la lista de los problemas que aun quedan por resolverse, que la impresa actual no deja de ser algo atrevidilla.<sup>14</sup>

Fortunately, the scant attention paid to paleographic detail by Marden was later rectified to some degree by R. Menéndez Pidal in his own paleographic-critical edition of the *Poema*, published in 1951.<sup>15</sup> Although Menéndez Pidal produces a transcript of the manuscript in its entirety directly below the critical text, a format which represents a considerable improvement over Marden's otiose practice of incorporating paleographic references and manuscript variants together in footnote form,<sup>16</sup> his copy is not as punctilious as one might have expected: capitalization in the manuscript is not always respected; no effort is made to preserve word division; all scribal contractions and abbreviations are expanded without the editor's identifying a mnemonic to indicate them.

<sup>13</sup>*MLN* [*Modern Language Notes*], 10 (1895), pp. 252-253.

<sup>14</sup>Marden, p. viii.

<sup>15</sup>See the *Reliquias*, pp. 34-180.

<sup>16</sup>Fragments of the Fernán González epic have survived in several manuscripts. These are discussed by Marden, pp. xiv-xxiv.

Menéndez Pidal frequently fails to distinguish between certain graphemes (particularly between /u/ and /v/ and long and short i, j); he does not print the calderons which often begin verse lines, nor does he indicate scribal emendations of any kind. In short, his is not an accurate paleographic edition. Subsequent editors of the poem have generally disregarded the manuscript as a linguistic document and have tended to reconstruct, somewhat arbitrarily, the "lost" *Poema*. It is to this problem, that of textual reconstruction, that I should now like to turn.

In a recent review of Dana A. Nelson's reconstruction of the *Libro de Alixandre* (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1979), Raymond Willis notes that

the great virtue of the text [as reconstructed by Nelson] is that it has not been tailored to suit the ideas of the editor by radical alterations of the MSS, as was true of H. R. Lang's reconstruction of the *Poema del Cid* and C. C. Marden's *Poema de Fernán González*.<sup>17</sup>

A glance at Menéndez Pidal's review of Marden's edition reveals some eight pages of alterations to which Willis no doubt was referring. A few examples will suffice to illustrate that a great many of Marden's readings were based largely on whim and conjecture rather than on solid textual evidence. Line 149d of the manuscript reads: "e otras muchas . . . de que fazen la sal." Marden emends the line to read: "e otras muchas [más fuertes] de que fazen la sal." Menéndez Pidal, finding support for his reconstruction in the PCG, emends Marden's text as follows: "e otras muchas [mineras] de que fazen la sal."

Line 45b of the manuscript reads: "faré al rrey don Rrodrigo sus cavaleros juntar." Marden substitutes *vasallos* for *cavaleros* in an effort to reduce the octosyllabic hemistich to seven syllables. Menéndez Pidal comments on Marden's infelicitous choice of the word *vasallos* in his review:

La métrica nos asegura que el autor del *PFG* usaba regularmente la voz *cavero* donde el copista pone *caballero*. Marden no quiso sacar esta conclusión, sin duda por ser poco usada la voz *cavero*. Sin embargo en el mismo *PFG*, el copista la dejó pasar cuatro veces y si una vez pone *caveros castellanos* y otra *caballeros cas-*

<sup>17</sup> "In Search of the Lost *Libra de Alexandre* and its Author," *Hispanic Review*, 51 (1983), pp. 63-88; quotation, p. 79.

*tellanos*, ¿por qué no hemos de corregir estos dos hemistiquios defectuosos en vista del primero?<sup>18</sup>

There are yet other instances in which Marden's emendations are based on an apparently faulty understanding of the text. Line 161d reads: "Posyeron qui podiessen los canes referir." Here the poet refers to a group of shepherds who select as their leader one able to ward off the wild dogs seeking to harm the flock. The idea?: the Castilians elected men of great valor to be their spiritual and political advisors. Marden evidently did not understand the meaning of the verb *referir* in this context and emended the line to read: "Posyeron quien podiessen [las cosas] referir." Menéndez Pidal's reading, which parallels that of the manuscript, is based on a similar use of the verb *referir* in the *Libro de A lixandre*.

One could cite at length other dubious readings on Marden's part. My point is that the methods applied by the editor in establishing his critical text are not always trustworthy, and the text itself therefore cannot be accepted with absolute confidence.

The celebration of the millenium of Castile in 1943 inspired three new editions of the epic. In that same year Father Luciano Serrano published an edition in which he modernized the orthography of the manuscript and resisted any form of textual criticism.<sup>19</sup> Serrano's edition, as one might expect, was not favorably received by those few hard-line critics who even bothered to pass judgment on his efforts to produce "the most acceptable of the many published editions."<sup>20</sup> In a harsh critical review of this edition, María Rosa Lida de Malkiel reprimanded the editor for, among other things, his lack of editorial rigor.<sup>21</sup> She also contended that Serrano's edition suffered from an excessive number of errata in the prologue, in the preliminary study, in the indices, and generally throughout the text itself.

<sup>18</sup>*Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 114 (1905), p. 249.

<sup>19</sup>*Poema de Fernán González*, por el R. P. Luciano Serrano, O.S.B. (Madrid: Junta del milenario de Castilla, 1943).

<sup>20</sup>Serrano, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup>See her review in *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 3 (1949), pp. 179-182.

Three years after this so-called popular edition appeared, two new editions were published. One of these, *La leyenda de Fernán González*,<sup>22</sup> is of little or no interest, regarding the question of textual reconstruction; it is at least a modest contribution to the existing corpus of materials about the *Poema* and the historical personage who inspired it. In this eight-hundred-page volume, Evaristo Correa Calderón assembles a popular anthology which includes, among other things, several ballads about the Castilian count, two Golden Age comedies and one from the nineteenth century in which the count is a major character,<sup>23</sup> and segments from the PCG as well as the complete text of the *PFG* taken from Marden's edition. There is nothing new or particularly commendable about the "edition" of the poem, for as Agapito Rey notes: "se reproduce el texto sin notas ni vocabulario, aunque el editor pone al pie de la página el equivalente moderno de algunas voces antiguas; todo trivial."<sup>24</sup>

Correa Calderón's anthology, moreover, is clearly inferior to another scholarly edition of the poem, also published in 1946.<sup>25</sup> This new edition by the well-known philologist and then professor of the University of Salamanca, Alonso Zamora Vicente merits comparison to Marden's 1904 edition for at least one major reason: this editor bases his text on Marden's reading of the manuscript and his reconstruction of the original *clerecía* version; at the same time he incorporates the major corrections suggested by Menéndez Pidal in his 1905 review. Whereas Marden had attempted to regularize the isometric scansion of the lines, Zamora Vicente made no effort in this direction. Neither did he seek to restore consonantal rhyme to those hemistichs which show assonance, since he evidently proceeded

<sup>22</sup>*La leyenda de Fernán González (ciclo poético del Conde castellano)*. Selección, prólogo y notas de E. Correa Calderón (Madrid: Colección Crisol, 1946).

<sup>23</sup>The two Golden Age comedies are *El Conde Fernán González* by Lope de Vega and Rojas Zorilla's *La más humilde kermosura. El Conde Fernán González y la Exención de Castilla* was written by Mariano José de Larra in the nineteenth century.

<sup>24</sup>See his review in *Hispania*, 32 (1948), p. 107. The anthology is also discussed by Maria Rosa Lida de Malkiel in *Nueva revista de filología hispánica*, 3 (1949), pp. 186-189.

<sup>25</sup>*Poema de Fernán González*, ed. Alonso Zamora Vicente (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1946). This edition was reviewed by the following: J. M. Aida Tesán, *Universidad*, 24 (1947), pp. 761-763; Samuel Gili Gaya, *Boletín de la Biblioteca Menéndez y Pelayo*, 22 (1946), pp. 184-185; G. Moldenhauer, *Anales del Institute de Lingüística de la Universidad de Cuyo*, 4 (1950), pp. 259-262; M. Muñoz Cortés, *Revista de Filología Española*, 30 (1946), pp. 211-214; Ingeborg Panhke, *Cuadernos de Historia de España*, 12 (1949), pp. 192-193; A. Rey, *Hispania*, 31 (1948), pp. 106-107.

from the assumption that the language of the text reflects that of a primitive epic.<sup>26</sup>

Between the publication of Menéndez Pidal's edition of the *PFG* in the *Reliquias* and the latest edition of the poem (1983),<sup>27</sup> two British Hispanists, Colin Smith and Ian Michael, introduced a set of editorial standards which challenged the methods of all previous editors of the *Poema de mio Cid* but which also bears on future attempts to edit the *PFG*.<sup>28</sup> In the Introductions to their respective editions of the *PMC*, both scholars address the question of editorial intervention on the text, stressing the desirability to shun personal guesswork and corrections which are not defensible in terms of general principle. The editorial criteria accepted by Smith are worth noting. Speaking of the *PMC*, he writes:

The extent to which editors have felt free — or inspired — to emend and adjust the unique text is a matter for amazement. One can dismiss those editors whose rearrangements depend on a firm prejudice — natural enough in their day — about the regular nature of the verse in its original state, though occasionally their ideas are useful. One must differ respectfully from Pidal when he introduces many corrections designed to achieve absolute uniformity of assonance and to ensure that lines are not too short or too long. . . . One must differ again, now with less respect, from Pidal on matters of language. He said openly that his critical text contained "letras introducidas por mí para anticuar el lenguaje", i.e., to restore to the fourteenth-century MS what he thought was the usage of about 1140; it will be obvious from our whole approach that this is completely unacceptable.<sup>29</sup>

With regard to restoration of the text, Smith points out that

<sup>26</sup>A particularly instructive overview of the question of assonantal versus consonantal rhyme in *clerecía* poetry is Giovanni B. DeCesare's "Per una edizione critica del Libro de Apolonio." *Cultura Neolatina*, 33 (1973), pp. 331-356.

<sup>27</sup>*Poema de Fernán González*, ed., introd., and notes by John Lihani (Zaragoza: Ebro, 1983). See also *Poema de Fernán González*, ed. Juan Victorio (Madrid: Ediciones Càtedra, S.A., 1981).

<sup>28</sup>*Poema de mio Cid*, ed. Colin Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); *The Poem of the Cid*, ed. Ian Michael, prose translation by Rita Hamilton and Janet Perry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975). Michael subsequently published a critical edition of the Spanish text: *Poema de mio Cid* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1976).

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.* pp. xcii-xciii.

we do not know when or where the poem originated with any certainty, or what lies behind the unique MS, so our criteria for correcting its language are too shaky to allow us to do more than put obvious errors right.<sup>30</sup>

Smith also makes a case for ultraconservatism in matters of orthography out of respect both for the manuscript itself and for those who might wish to speculate on its transmission.

Ian Michael's remarks on what he considers acceptable methods of intervention are also insightful in this regard. Like his colleague, Michael takes issue with the practice of heavy-handed editorial emendation. Repudiating the reconstructive approach, Michael has remarked:

This nineteenth-century method has long been discarded in European editorial practice, yet it is still undertaken at times in medieval Spanish studies. The reconstructive method goes far beyond correction of scribal error and it will supply missing hemistichs, lines, even a whole folio, usually on the basis of some other work (the chronicles, in the case of our poem [*PMC*]), but sometimes quite arbitrarily; it will also "archaize" the language and "correct" the syllables to conform to the editors' notions of metrical rules. The net result of the method is to provide us with texts we have not got.<sup>31</sup>

It follows that Michael's aim is "to allow the poem to be read in the faulty state in which it has survived, with its difficulties exposed to view."<sup>32</sup>

The conservative editorial methods espoused by both Smith and Michael have been welcomed by many American and British Hispanists as a type of counterbalance to the historico-traditionalist theory which has dominated Cidian scholarship in the twentieth century. They have not, however, sat well with many medievalists from the continent who seem to have rejected certain critical opinions which differ markedly from established canons. Juan Victorio's edition of the *PFG*, for example, fails to consider the line of reasoning suggested by his two British colleagues; in-

<sup>30</sup>Smith, p. xciii.

<sup>31</sup>*The Poem of the Cid*, p. 17.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

deed he does not even recognize (at least not in print) the need to address the polemical questions raised by their respective editions. Instead he attempts to justify his own style of textual reconstruction by granting assumed status to matters which have in actuality yet to be resolved. In the Introduction to his edition, Juan Victorio comments briefly on the originality of his efforts which, in his view, have yielded two principal modifications to the language of the text. Speaking of previous editors of the *Poema* (specifically Menéndez Pidal and Zamora Vicente), Victorio notes:

. . . ninguno de ellos se esfuerza ni poco ni mucho en restituir el isosilabismo, destrozado por la labor descuidada de los copistas, pero existente sin duda alguna en el texto copiado por ellos. El carácter de la obra, su escuela, así lo hacen presumir, independientemente de que los versos regulares son, en definitiva, mucho más numerosos que los irregulares en la copia conservada.<sup>33</sup>

In his stance on the isometric structure of the original *PFG* and the need to restore it to the fifteenth-century version, Victorio not only disregards the conservative standards of Smith and Michael; he fails to consider the possibility that the irregular versification of the extant manuscript may show the effect of diffusion by *juglares*.<sup>34</sup> Neither does he suggest that the original poet was simply not as adept at composing perfect alexandrine lines as, say, Gonzalo de Berceo, the recognized master of the art.

In an effort then to force a normative pattern on the language of the *Poema*, a practice with which many editors would vehemently disagree, Victorio modifies the extant manuscript to fit his preconceived notion of isometric structure. In so doing, he substitutes the monosyllabic morpheme *-ié* for the bisyllabic *-ía* when convenient<sup>35</sup> and arbitrarily establishes a rule for apocope and synalepha, despite our faulty knowledge of poetic practice in this regard:

<sup>33</sup>*ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup>See above, note 3; further implications of this possibility are discussed by A. D. Deyermond in *Epic Poetry and the Clergy: Studies on the "Mocedades de Rodrigo"* (London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1969), pp. 202-207.

<sup>35</sup>As a marker of the imperfect tense in both Old and Modern Spanish, *-ía* closely reflects the Latin prototype. The irruption of *-ié* into the imperfect has long been the subject of heated debate. For a complete discussion of the controversy, see Yakov Malkiel's "Toward a Reconsideration of the Old Spanish Imperfect in *-ía/-ié*," *Hispanic Review*, 27 (1959), pp. 435-479.

Se entiende que se da apócope cuando la palabra siguiente empieza por consonante. Si empieza por vocal, se ha de considerar que se produce la sinalefa, aunque no haya que considerar que se da en cada ocasión. El ritmo aclara perfectamente en cada caso. MP [Menéndez Pidal] y Z [Zamora Vicente] apocopan (siga vocal o consonante) o tienen en cuenta la sinalefa sin norma alguna.<sup>36</sup>

Although Victorio's penchant for metrical regularization sets him apart from his compatriots, in his bold attempt to reconstruct lengthy sections of missing text based on chronical accounts, he returns to the fold:

El otro aspecto, quizá más arriesgado, que presento como novedad es la reconstrucción en verso de las estrofas perdidas, basándome para ello, obviamente, en la prosa de la *Primera Crónica General*. . . . No creo, por otra parte, haberme aventurado demasiado peligrosamente si se tiene en cuenta que se trata de realizar pequeños remiendos, empresa menos considerable que las de otros ilustres antecedentes que se dedicaron a reconstruir todo un poema.<sup>37</sup>

Victorio's method in general points to the dangers of the reconstructive approach itself. To supply a missing hemistich referring to the Goths, for example, the editor introduces the heptasyllabic phrase *esta gent combatiente*. One wonders how such a phrase is justifiable when there are no other occurrences of this hemistich throughout the poem. It is worth noting that Marden fared no better in this particular instance when he evidently attempted to reconstruct the missing half-line on the basis of the internal formulaic system of the poem. He resorted to the phrase *est pueblo descreyente*, a formula repeated some eight times throughout the work. This reconstructed hemistich was later maintained by both Menéndez Pidal and Zamora Vicente in their respective editions. What does not sit well about this particular reconstruction, however, is the implausibility of the poet's choice of the phrase *pueblo descreyente* to describe the Goths. In fact, one finds that when the formula does occur in the poem, it is always in reference to the forces of the Moorish king Almanzor.<sup>38</sup> Thus, even

<sup>36</sup>Victorio, p. 32.

<sup>37</sup>Victorio, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup>The formula and its variants are found in the following lines: 15b, 82a, 109b, 117c, 165d, 185b, 252a, 509a. A similar formula, used to refer to the Moors, enjoys the same degree of frequency: *la gent descreyda*(60b,89b, 102d, 174a, 186b, 190c, 231c, 237a).

strict adherence to the diction of the poem does not always guarantee a plausible reading. Without going into further detail, one is forced to admit that Victorio's reconstructive methods often seem as capricious as those employed by Marden. What is most objectionable, however, about this late edition of the *Poema* is the lack of a complete and thoroughly documented critical apparatus.

In the last few years we have seen a renewed interest in the text under discussion. In 1977 Graciela Brededan studied the structure of the poem and its motifs.<sup>39</sup> In my own 1979 dissertation I attempted to isolate and inventory traditional formulaic expressions in the *Poema* and to evaluate the extent to which such expressions are employed by the poet.<sup>40</sup> Beverly West's dissertation examines the rôle of folklore and Christian traditions in the making of the text and the curious mixture of learned and popular elements which shape the poem.<sup>41</sup> Several articles, including Connie Scarborough's treatment of characterization in the poem, have also recently appeared.<sup>42</sup> Yet, in spite of this renewed interest, medievalists are still in search of a definitive edition — paléographie and/or critical — on which to base their analyses.<sup>43</sup>

The central issue must be the establishment of a critical text based on

<sup>39</sup>See her "Estudio Estructural del *Poema de Fernán González*," Diss. University of Kentucky, 1976.

<sup>40</sup>"Formulaic Diction in the *Poema de Fernán González* and the *Mocedades de Rodrigo*: A Computer-Aided Analysis," Diss. University of California at Berkeley, 1979. This study was subsequently published under the same title by José Porrúa Turanzas, S.A. (Potomac, Maryland, 1980).

<sup>41</sup>See above, note 4.

<sup>42</sup>See Connie Scarborough, "Characterization in the *Poema de Fernán González*: Portraits of the Hero and Heroine," *Proceedings of the 1981 SEMLA Meeting, Literary and Historical Perspectives of the Middle Ages* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1982), pp. 52-65. See also Manuel Márquez-Sterling's book-length study, *Fernán González, First Count of Castile: The Man and the Legend* (University Romance Monographs, 1980).

<sup>43</sup>In light of this situation, I am preparing a paleographic edition for the Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies. This edition will conform to the extremely conservative editorial standards espoused by the Seminary for all transcriptions submitted as part of the Old Spanish Dictionary Project. For a complete description of editorial criteria adopted by the Seminary, consult David Mackenzie, *A Manual of Manuscript Transcription for the "Dictionary of the Old Spanish Language," 2nd ed.* (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, Ltd., 1981).

the elimination of recognized errors, complete with glossary and full notes on textual and interpretative questions. Metrical considerations should be addressed in greater detail than in previous editions, and the practice of *emendatio* should be well argued and justified. The problems posed by the manuscript call for further commentary and intensive study. And while it seems unlikely that scholars will ever reach a consensus as to what constitutes a definitive edition, it is clear that much remains to be done to approximate more precisely the essence of the original text.

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