

‘Cinco somos los qe aquí moramos’: Exorcism and Apocalyptic Battle in Berceo’s *Vida de San Millán*

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1. Introduction

Although studies on exorcism have flourished recently, there remains a gap in academic literature analyzing the phenomenon throughout the Middle Ages. This void becomes even more evident when searching for studies unique to the Iberian Peninsula and, particularly, for representations of exorcism in medieval Iberian literature.¹ Although we have precious exorcistic material in two hagiographical works by Gonzalo de Berceo, who was born around 1196 and died circa 1259 as Anthony Lappin suggests (2008b, 16), *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* (c. 1230) and *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* (c. 1236), neither work has received the deserved critical attention in regard to these events.

In the early 1970s, Henry Mendeloff offered a descriptive account of exorcism in Berceo’s works by comparing both *Vida de San Millán* and *Vida de Santo Domingo* to William Blatty’s bestseller novel *The Exorcist* (1971). Even though his detailed description of every single episode of exorcism and possession within the medieval poems is useful, his explanation does not really offer insightful critical analysis on the function of exorcism in the texts. Several years later Espí Forcén and Espí Forcén identified the demoniacs’ behaviors, as described in Berceo’s works, as being similar to certain mental illnesses that may fit into contemporary patterns of psychiatric diagnosis. From a more innovative perspective of literary studies, Erik Alder offers an interpretation of *Vida de San Millán* in which he relates exorcism to Castilian politics of expansion. Explicitly, the critic links exorcism within the work to the attempts made to “purify” religious difference or, better said, to obliterate the other in a context where a pious saint, such as San Millán, could also be a bloody warrior against Islam (34-37).

Based on the relationship between exorcism and politics of expansion, as proposed by Alder, this article aims to study the discourse of exorcism in Berceo’s *Vida de San Millán* and its relation to apocalypticism, evaluated from a political perspective. I consider that this obliterating effort for the purification of the enemy through exorcism, mentioned by Alder, can be better understood if we assess it from an apocalyptic point of view for two reasons. First, the proliferation of exorcistic practices tends to increase in contexts in which the apocalyptic expectations are high and critical, and the ritual itself contains an impressive number of apocalyptic elements (Levack, 65-70; Young, 2; Caciola, 264-67). Furthermore, an increase in the number of cases of demonic possession indicates the progression of human history in terms of its three main elements, that is, Creation, Christ’s life, and Last Judgement. Henceforth, this progression leads to an outcome, that is known in advance to humanity (Christ’s victory), but also the abundance of demoniacs was a sign that “the End Times were drawing near” (Caciola, 265).

This apocalyptic aspect can be found in Berceo’s conscious manipulation of his Latin source in passages concerning the devil. Berceo represents the devil as a more defined figure (Koch 18-30), whose agency in the Castilian poem is notoriously more influential than in the Latin version. Second, the events prior to the battle between Muslims and Christians, where San Millán appeared to favor the Castilians, show several apocalyptic elements portrayed as meaningful, natural phenomena better known as *signa iudicii*, which belong to an Iberian apocalyptic tradition

¹ For the practice of exorcism in the Spanish Golden Age, see Lisón Tolosana.

starting with Beatus of Liébana (c. 730-800) and developing around the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla and, finally, reaching Berceo's literature (Saugnieux, 165).² As I will show, the practice of exorcism and the Christian battle against the Muslims are tightly related due to the fact that the former element, that is, the combat of the forces of good and evil in the demoniac's body, is a microcosmic reflection of the continuous fight between God and the Devil in the cosmos. The latter aspect is apparent in Berceo's poem through the portrayal of the battle against the Muslim King Abderraman, which in turn may be understood as a figure of the Devil (Koch, 43-47). Therefore, there is a close link between *Vida de San Millán*'s first three books that deal with the saint's life, that are based on Braulius's *Vita Beati Emiliani*, and the narrative on the Christian war deeds taken from, among other sources, the *Privilegium votorum*. Thus, Berceo updates old material contained in Braulius's account and pairs it with the elaborate discourse of San Millán's vows in such a way that Berceo's strategy relates to politics, ultimately understood as the fulfillment of the prophecies of the end of times. Therefore, the apocalyptic content constitutes a crucial part of the justification for the war against the Muslims.

For this purpose, I will examine how Berceo strategically modifies the figure of the devil in order to construct a discourse in which he participates. Berceo presents the devil, not only as the tempter of San Millán, whom he openly defies during his time in the wilderness, as a portrayal of the symbolic battle between good and evil, but more importantly, however, as a character whose action and influence are seen through the demoniacs' suffering in the possession process. To emphasize the apocalyptic dimension, then, Berceo adds specific features to reinforce the character of the Devil. Ultimately, his goal is to highlight the devil's actions among Christians and prepare the audience for an apocalyptic battle to regain Christian territories. Then, my overarching argument is that the final part of *Vida de San Millán*, that is, the Christian victorious campaign against Muslim King Abderraman is strictly related to the exorcistic part of the poem as long as the both of them are defined by the apocalyptic. The battle in the field is the macrocosmic projection of the battle taking place inside demoniacs' bodies. The latter combat is the prefiguration of the Muslims' defeat.

To support this argument, I will take into consideration the fact that medieval exorcism can be seen as a cosmic battle between good and evil or, in other words, as a "spiritual warfare" (Young, 67), which is reproduced at a microcosmic level in the struggles experienced in the energumen's body (Caciola, 262-65). This element should be considered as a point of departure for the analysis of the war between Christians and Muslims in Berceo's work. Consequently, an eschatological discourse serves as a means to support and justify the political ideology of the expansion of Castile, which can also be found in later *clerecía* poems such as the *Libro de Fernán Gonçález*.

In this article, I will use the term exorcism as a practice, based on and regulated by the theological, political, and legal doctrine of Christianity, involving two elements. The first is

² The most famous manuscript *Aemilianensis* 60 contains apocalyptic fragments on a dialogue between Aristotle and Alexander the Great on the end of times. We know that text for its incipit *Interrogatio de nobissimo* (sic) and offers the signs taking place before the Final Judgement as well as a brief biography on the Anrichrist (Guadalajara Medina, 261-63). Now, Anthony Lappin sets forth that there are "a whole series of mythifications regarding Gonçálvo's relationship to the monastery" of San Millán de la Cogolla and that his secular priestly duties were devoted to his parish in the town of Berceo, whose church lays "outside San Millán's possessions (2008b, 9, 11-12). Nonetheless, the town of Berceo is 1.1 miles away from the monastery, therefore, we cannot discard a relationship between the cleric and the cenobium even more because, as Lappin states later in his study, at the time of Berceo's death, "it was natural that the monastery would inherit the codices, but not because Gonçálvo was working for it" (2008b, 43). If he did not have a tight relationship with San Millán, why did the cloister inherit his books?

comprised of one or more trained and ordained individuals, known as exorcists, who perform a religious ceremony. This liturgical exorcistic ceremonies, which are often accompanied by apotropaic elements, “are rife with apocalyptic themes” (Caciola, 264), but, more importantly, their apocalyptic character lies, for instance, in the fact that “the imagery of demonic submission is drawn largely from the Revelation of John” (Caciola, 264). The exorcistic ceremonies are performed, in most circumstances, to expel an alleged demon from a human being, and to a lesser extent, from objects or places as well as from animals as seen in the fifth-century work known as *Vita Sancti Hilarii*. The exorcistic power of clergy can also be extended to shrines and relics. One or more demoniacs comprise the second element, that is, individuals who are allegedly possessed by one or more demons and who show, because of demonic interference, a set of identifiable behaviors that deviate from the norm. These behaviors may involve both psychological, verbal, and physical afflictions, which are to be alleviated or even healed by the intervention of the exorcist who is ultimately inspired by God’s grace or by the proximity to an exorcistic relic or shrine.³

I have also mentioned that the proliferation of exorcistic practices tends to be more common in apocalyptic contexts, as portrayed in medieval texts. I will use the term apocalyptic as part of a larger picture, that is, apocalypticism which is a subset of eschatology, in other words, the array of notions concerned with the beginning and “the end of history and what lies beyond it” (McGinn 1998, xviii, 3-4). Apocalypticism is as a symbolic discourse rooted in “the consciousness of living in the last stage of history and a conviction that the last age itself is about to end” (McGinn 1998, 4). In the same vein, this concept concerned with themes such as the revelation of specific secret knowledge on the ending through a heavenly mediator to a particular individual. This process in which writing plays a crucial role also involves a particular form of teaching about history (understood, in fact, from a deterministic standpoint) and a set of concrete events announcing the impending end, which, in turn, will be a new beginning sent by God (1984, 3-4, 10-12; 1998, 4). In recent years, literary criticism has pointed out the role played by apocalyptic discourse in thirteenth century *cuaderna vía* poems such as *Libro de Alexandre* (c. 1220) and *Libro de Fernán González* (c.1250).⁴ In addition to this, there is agreement among critics that the set of relations between the *clerecía* poems is significant at various levels, comprising linguistic, structural, and thematic features.⁵ I am convinced that one of the most relevant aspects shared by these poems at a thematic level is their apocalyptic dimension.

This aspect is a reflection of several changes experienced in medieval European society since the end of the twelfth century such as Saladino’s conquer of Jerusalem in 1187; the Christian defeat at Alarcos in 1195; and, among others, the circulation of a letter, known as the Letter of Toledo, which disseminated a great deal of apocalyptic thought from the late 12th until the first third of the following century (Giles 2017, 70-72; Riva 2019b, 63-64; Whalen 2009, 66-71). Thus, the *cuaderna vía* authors attempted to highlight and reinforce these apocalyptic aspects via solid passages belonging to this tradition. For example, the episodes of the enclosure of the Ten Tribes by Alexander the Great in the *Libro de Alexandre*, as well as the function of specific aspects of Daniel, Isaiah, and Ezekiel in the *Libro de Fernán González*, are part of this dimension (Riva 2019a, 388-393; 2019b 45-47). To these aspects, I would like to add the practice of exorcism and

³ For a definition of both exorcism and possession, see Chave-Mahir, 13-26; Levack 2013, 15-19; Young, 4-5, 15-16; Nicolotti, 31.

⁴ For this aspect, see Duque, 220-223; Nepaulsingh, 77-90; Giles 2017, 62-73; Riva 2019c, 85-92, 101-115.

⁵ Some of the most relevant works for the connections and similarities within the *cuaderna vía* corpus are Ancos 2002, 2014; Lappin 2008a; Nelson 1975-1976, 1976; Rodríguez Molina 2008; Uría 2000, 126-170.

the derived relationship with the ideology of crusade in the final part of the poem in Berceo's *Vida de San Millán*⁶

The *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* is a work mainly based on Braulio de Zaragoza's (c. 590-651) *Vita Beati Emiliani*, written in Latin in the seventh century. However, most of what is considered by modern editors as the third book (stanzas 320-489), comes from a monastic document called *Privilegium votorum*. Therefore, for the composition of the Castilian work, Berceo calculatedly put together two works that can provide different but complementary material. Thus, he extracts exorcistic passages from Braulio's *Vita Beati Emiliani* and from the *Privilegium*, the prophetic-political content. By conjoining these two Latin works, the Castilian author will render a poem with an effective and persuasive apocalyptic content.

2. Exorcism

Berceo tells that San Millán was a virtuous Christian shepherd who “una cítara trayé siempre consigo” (7b).⁷ After a dream inspired by God, he decided to “partirse del mundo” (11d) to become a hermit. However, to carry out his new venture, he realized that he needed a more substantial doctrinal background. For this purpose, then, he decided to seek religious education with another hermit, “sant Felices” who lived “in Billivio” (13c). Berceo writes that Millán found Felices while he was praying “en somo del otero, / plus umildosamientre que un monge claustrero” (15d). With hermit Felices's guidance, he was capable of learning the psalter and the doctrine in a short period of time. Thereafter, he decided to return to La Cogolla's wilderness, which Berceo describes as a “fiero matarral, / serpientes e culebras avién en él ostal” (27d), which constitutes an addition to his source (“*Vita Beati Emiliani*” 213). This addition was likely intended to emphasize the traditional equivalence between the snake (“serpientes e culebras”) and the devil who appears next. It is precisely in this context, while he was living “en las cuevas” surrounded by “bestias fieras” (30a), where he faced the devil for the first time.

Berceo writes that the saint “fizo muchos ensayos la bestia maleíta / por estorvar la vida del sancto eremita” (52ab). These lines should be analyzed in light of Saint Braulius's *Vita*. In this case, Berceo closely follows his source, but, at the same time, he bestows more importance upon the devil's figure by characterizing him as “bestia maleíta”. In the Latin work, however, Braulius writes that the saint experienced “antiquissimi ludificationes” about the devil's tricks (“*Vita Beati Emiliani*” 213), in other words, the “ensayos” mentioned by Berceo.⁸ Indeed, Braulius chooses a widely used term (*antiquus*) to refer to the devil. Moreover, its apparition in the Book of Revelation gives the word an essential apocalyptic dimension of which Braulius might be aware (Apc. 12:9, Apc. 20:2, Alcatena 2018).⁹ However, Berceo builds on the reference's apocalyptic potential and opts for “bestia maleíta” as the subject of the sentence, thus conferring a distinctive agent for the action, that is, someone who can be identified by name, function, and character.

The devil continues tempting and confronting the saint. In this case, Berceo amplifies the Latin passage by creating several stanzas (from number 52 to 56) based on the sentence found in the Latin version that I mentioned above. These additions give the stanzas a distinct status in the

⁶ For an extensive treatment of the relationship between Crusade and apocalyptic thought, see Whalen (42-71)

⁷ All of the citations from *Vida de San Millán de la Cogolla* come from Brian Dutton's edition.

⁸ Quas ille ibi invisibiles, quasque pugnas visibiles, quas vario callidoque modo temptations, quasque nebulonis antiquissimi ludificationes fuerit expertus, hii soli optime norunt qui ea in semetipsis experiri contendunt (Braulius, 213).

⁹ The first allusion occurs in the context of the battle between the archangel Michael and the devil: “et proiectus est draco ille magnus serpens antiquus qui vocatur Diabolus et Satanas” (Apc. 12:9). The second occurs when the angel comes down from heaven to restrain the devil: “et vidi angelum descendentem de caelo...et apprehendit draconem serpentem antiquum qui est diabolus et Satanas” (Apc. 20:1-2).

Castilian poem, since they contain several warlike expressions used to highlight San Millán's encounters with the devil such as "guerreávalo mucho por muchas de maneras, / a qual parte que iva teniéli las fronteras; / dávali a menudo salto por las carreras" (53abc). Furthermore, when San Millán reached San Lorenzo's summit, Berceo tells that, by insisting in the warlike metaphors, the saint "sufrió grand guerra...de fuertes temporales e del mortal guerrero" (56cd).

Therefore, according to the Castilian text and due to Berceo's additions and modification of his primary material, Satan wages war against San Millán, which, in consequence, stresses the two distinct characters, whose next battlefield will be the demoniacs' bodies. However, despite the war between both characters, the devil's efforts were useless because of San Millán's virtue and piety. For this reason, the author says that the saint built "un oratorio" which, at the time of Berceo's composition of *Vida de San Millán*, still remained in good condition (57ab). Nevertheless, the most relevant element described in the Castilian poem can be found in the mention of the forty years that San Millán spent in the wilderness where he faced the tricks of the "bestia maleíta" (70ab). This fact clearly mirrors, in a typological correlation, the forty days that Christ spent in the desert where he was tempted by the Devil (Mt. 4: 1-11, Mc. 1: 12-13, Lc. 4: 1-13).

This correlation with Christ also extends to the practice of exorcism, the most critical attribute given by God to San Millán. As it is customary in Christian tradition, Jesus performed several exorcisms, such as the one at the synagogue of Capernaum (Mc 1: 21-28, Lc. 4: 31-37), being the most influential, however, the exorcism of the Gerasene energumen (Mc 5: 1-20, Mt. 8: 28-34, Lc. 8: 26-39), which ultimately set the tone for the construction of exorcist practices and discourses for the following centuries. Thus, San Millán's main activity is rooted in the exorcistic tradition based on the Bible as it is Berceo's allusion to him spending forty years in the wilderness of La Cogolla and fighting the devil in the same manner as Christ did in the desert, reinforcing thus the idea of an *imitatio Christi* portrayed in the figure of San Millán (Rubio Moirón 30). For this reason, these facts not only stress the usual correspondence between Jesus and the saints in late medieval hagiography but also establish a point of departure to analyze the figure of San Millán as a saint with exclusive authority and power bestowed upon him by Christ to overcome Satan. Then, his Christly victories over the Devil, and the power and effectiveness of the fashion in which he performs exorcisms, are San Millán's distinctive features.

The most significant encounter San Millán had with the Devil occurs later in the poem. The second book of the *Vida* is concerned with "unos pocos miraglos" performed by the saint (109c). Berceo begins this narrative with a miracle involving the presence of "Belzebup, el que ovo ad Adám decevido" (111a). In Braulius's account, we only distinguish a generic allusion to the Devil as "ostis generis humanis" (Braulius, 216). In this case, Berceo turned to his former strategy consisting of defining the Devil by a real name and an action. Then, "Belzebup" and the Devil's deceitful acts in the Garden of Eden that led to the concept of original sin, are elements that were purposely added by Berceo to clearly establish the Devil's actions over humanity. Berceo's additions and modifications of the Latin contributes to preparing his audience for the apocalyptic content foreshadowed in the battle between San Millán and the Devil. Furthermore, to deceive San Millán, Berceo says that the Devil has "forma de carne e umanal figura" (112b).

Nevertheless, the most significant feature of San Millán's encounter with the Devil is that the latter speaks to the saint with hopes of tempting him: "Millán...aves mala costumne, / eres muy cambiadiço, non traes firmedumbre" (113ab). Moreover, Berceo, wholly based on additional material not present in Braulius's text, mentions that the devil challenges the saint to fight over the dominion of San Millán de Suso, a sacred place that the saint had founded near the mentioned

“oratorio,” as a sign of his contempt for the urban life after spending some time in the towns of “Verceo” and “Santa Olalia” (115c, 116a). Thus, the Devil tells him that they should fight to determine “quál terrá la posada...finqe en paz el otro, la guerra destajada” (117d). The saint responds to his aggression with a prayer, as he does several times during exorcistic performances: “Sennor, qe por tos siervos dennest prender passión, / tú me defendi oy d’esti tan fuert bestión” (119c). As a consequence, the Devil, metonymically portrayed through pride, falls onto the ground: “fue la sue grand soberbia en el polvo caída” (120c).¹⁰ After his direct encounters with the devil and his victory over him, San Millán is finally ready to perform exorcisms.

After the miraculous healings of Armentero and Bárbara, a monk suffering from a severe illness and a paralytic woman, respectively, a group of people brought “un clérigo del demonio dannado” (157b) to be healed by the saint. Berceo describes the demoniac’s behavior in detail: “Faziéli el demonio dezir grandes locuras, / avueltas de los dichos fazié otras orruras; / avié la maletía muchas malas naturas, / ont facié el enfermo muchas malas figuras” (st. 158). First, during his demonic trance, he speaks “grandes locuras”, which likely refer to the tendency of demoniacs to speak blasphemy (Levack, 14), since “locura” means *vice, perversion* or *folly* (Kasten and Cody, 421). In Braulius’s case, we find a most unclean demon, but in Berceo’s adaptation, we see the stress in the figure of the demon making the energumen utter “grandes locuras”. This fact emphasizes the demonic *action* instead of the demonic *nature* itself.

This emphasis in the demonic actions fulfilled through certain possessed individuals might constitute Berceo’s will to effectively situate his audience in the discourse of the end of history. In addition to blasphemies, the Riojan cleric continues, the demoniac made “orruras”, that is, vile or filthy things (Alonso, 1457; Kasten and Cody, 515). We can explain these “orruras” by giving attention to two different elements. First, as Brian Dutton has pointed out, Berceo omits the details of the cure rendered by Braulio and also some of the symptoms experienced by the demoniac such as the “ore lymphatico” or foaming mouth (Braulius, 218). Consequently, the “orruras” in the *Vida de San Millán* have a clear, indirect source in the physical phenomenology of possession described by Braulius. Second, Berceo, using a strategy analogous to the one deployed in “locuras”, resorts to the nature of the demon in the Latin version. According to Braulius, the saint cast out a “spiritus inmundus” from the cleric (Braulius, 218), which is consistent with the meaning *filthy* commented on above. Once more, Berceo prefers to displace the qualifying term “inmundus” into the actions performed by the energumen, who, due to the power of the demon possessing him, is capable of doing “orruras”, thus emphasizing the operation of the demon, not its nature.

In consequence, Berceo’s efforts to portray demonic possession lies in the individuals through whom evil is manifested. Since the demoniac is considered sick (“enfermo”), which is common in the medieval and early modern discourses of possession (Levack, 26-29), it is not surprising that Berceo continues the description of the energumen’s condition by choosing the word “maletía”, which corresponds with the symptoms and procedures described in the Latin source. Then, this illness is characterized by “malas naturas”, in other words, Berceo informs us that this illness is inherently evil and manifests itself accordingly through the demoniac’s physical appearance and body language (“ont facié el enfermo muchas malas figuras”). Even though the *Vita Beati Emiliani* Braulius does not refer to the illness’ evil nature (“malas naturas”), Berceo does so once more to accentuate how the possession is manifested in the body according to a causal process that originated from the power of the demon itself. To continue emphasizing this fact, the

¹⁰ For an extensive analysis of pride in the *clerecía* poems, see Arizaleta; Riva 2019c, 45-49, 171-175, 181-185, 193-210; 2019a, 405-406; Uría Maqua 1996.

Riojan cleric even adds an element that is not present in his Latin source, that is, the strange figure or forms he makes with his body.

This fact may be related to the tendency to partake in immodest behavior and to speak blasphemy in demoniacs as I mentioned. To cast out the vexing demon, San Millán performed an exorcism based on prayer. As soon as the saint sees the demoniac, he prays to God: “¡Aí, Reí glorioso, / empiada est clérigo ca eres piadoso, / qe non sea posada de uéspet tan sannoso!” (159bd). In this case, Berceo closely follows his source by maintaining the reference to an unwelcomed and evil guest at a house, which corresponds to the cleric’s body: “Nec mora, inobediens discit obedire...a subrepto suo domicilio efficitur alienus” (Braulius, 218). Still, Braulius does not mention a prayer delivered by the saint, but a command to abandon the energumen: “indicitur a beatissimo viro ut resiliat ab eo” (218). As a consequence, the Castilian version of this particular case, turns the attention to San Millán’s exorcistic power, which “non podió el demonio sufrir la oración” (160a) and, therefore, the demon abandoned the body.

The second exorcism is as effective as the first one, although it offers more complexity for analysis. In this case, we know that a servant of a man named Tuencio was “duramientre premido” by a demon (161d). Berceo not only omits the demoniac’s name, Sybila, from his Latin source, which Dutton has pointed out (Braulius, 218), but he also describes this demoniac as sick (162a). However, he does not give a detailed account of his suffering. Instead, the author emphasizes the ceremony of the exorcism itself, which also involves a prayer, which is not included in the Latin version: “Rogó a Dios por *elli* como so uso era...la santa oración de voluntat sincera / máes lo facié arder qe una grand foguera” (163a). Berceo’s amplification of Braulius’s account for this part is noteworthy. While the Latin fragment is remarkably succinct, Berceo chooses five stanzas, that is, twenty lines, to describe the interaction between the saint and the demons. He even amplifies what Braulius has shortened through the use of the passive voice and *orationes obliquae* (Dutton, ed. 218).¹¹ Interestingly, Berceo points out that San Millán started a dialogue by asking “quántos podrién seer, / ca qeríe la noticia e los nomnes saber” (164b).

Contrarily to what we find in Braulius’s account, Berceo uses the direct discourse to portray the demons’ voices: “Cinco somos los qe aquí moramos, / avemos tales nomnes, tal sennor aguardamos; / ave tanto de tiempo qe aquí nos juntamos, / mas tú nos has movidos secundo qe dubdamos” (165). The number of demons dwelling in Tuencio’s servant is the same as that indicated by Braulius, although the rhetorical strategy is strikingly different. Berceo follows his Latin source and tells that they identify themselves by name, albeit neither Braulius nor Berceo specify them. Nevertheless, the Riojan cleric indicates that “tal sennor aguardamos”, in other words, they state that they are protecting, watching, or in the service of a higher demon or even Satan himself (Kasten and Cody, 28), a feature quite common in narratives on exorcism, which comes from the pyramidal feudal structure transposed to the spirit world. The addition of Satan or a higher entity and their lordship over these demons may be due to the tendency of *clerecía* poems to amplify and add material related to the devil and his sins (pride, envy, the temptation in the Garden of Eden) to stress the importance of this character and his role at the end of history. However, the five demons recognize San Millán’s authority as an exorcist and his power to cast them out: “mas tú nos has movidos secundo qe dubdamos” (165d). The saint responds directly to the demons: “cosa es desguisada, / seer tan malos uéspedes en tan buena posada; / casa es de Dios ésta...estido violada” (166).

¹¹ “Ad virum Dei a suis est adtractus, quem ut vidit, sciscitatur a *quantis esset obsessus*. Illi *se esse indicant quinque* singuli quinque suis se nominibus product” (Braulius, 218; emphasis mine).

Still, the most significant apocalyptic feature in the performing of Tuencio's servant exorcism lies in the fact that San Millán "puso en el enfermo la sue donosa mano" and "signólo en la fruent" (167ab), which is an addition in the Castilian version (Braulius, 218). Although forehead marks, such as the sign of the cross, are common in exorcistic ceremonies, they are traditionally related to crucial biblical episodes (Ez 9:4-6 and Apc 7:2-8, Apc 9:2-4, Apc 14:1) but these marks have had an apocalyptic component in the Christian tradition. For example, they have been reinterpreted in some *cuadernavía* poems such as the *Libro de Alexandre* (c. 1220), as has been discussed by criticism (Riva 2020, 56-59; 2019b). According to these biblical passages, those with the mark *thau* on their foreheads, which is a typus of the cross, will be among the chosen whose lives will be spared by the angel (Ez 9:2-6).

This same theme will appear once more in the passages of Revelation mentioned above when, for example, John the Divine sees four angels from the four corners of the world and hears one hundred and forty-four thousand individuals with a mark on their foreheads. It also appears when John sees the lamb on top of mount Zion accompanied by those one hundred and forty-four thousand "habentes nomen eius" (Apc 14:1). These chosen people marked with the cross on their foreheads, or with the name of God, constitute the opposite side of those appearing in Apc 16:2 and Apc 19:20 "qui habent caracterem bestiae" and "qui acceperunt caracterem bestiae" respectively. Therefore, when San Millán marks the energumen with the signal of the cross, he is alluding to the significance of the apocalyptic dimension of the chosen ones. In fact, Berceo is emphasizing the sign of the cross, which does not appear in the Latin original. Moreover, he is casting out demons by inscribing this demoniac among the ones marked with the *thau* as a cross as different from those having the "caracterem bestiae".

As soon as he "signólo en la fruent...issió mal confundido el concejuelo vano" and, consequently, "el siervo de Tüencio remaneció bien sano" (167bcd). Hence, the power of the signal of the cross in the ceremony emphasizes San Millán's effectiveness as an exorcist. However, the dialogue maintained between San Millán and the five demons provides us with more information. Berceo's use of the direct discourse in a precise modification and amplification of the Latin passage shows us the poet's intention to accentuate San Millán's authority through language, which should be used in a specialized fashion that fits into the procedures of the exorcistic ceremony. Then, Berceo is willing to demonstrate the power of language over demons, specifically, in the case of San Millán.

In contrast, the next exorcism in the Castilian poem is described very briefly, as it is in the Latin version. The demoniac's name is unknown to us, but, as in the former case, we know that he is the servant of an "omne valiado" named Eugenio (169b). San Millán's procedure follows a similar pattern: he says a prayer ("rogó por elli al Sennor spirital" [170a]) to liberate the demoniac and, again, makes the signal of the cross on the energumen's forehead: "fizoli en la fruent la sagrada sennal" (170b). Strikingly, as in the episode of Tuencio's servant, this mark is addressed in Berceo's addition. As a consequence of both the prayer and the signal of the cross, "guareció el enfermo, fue purgado del mal, / tornó a Dios laudando sano a su ostal" (170cd). The additions concerning the signal of the cross, that can also be understood as the *thau* mark, aim to reinforce the apocalyptic aspect in the poem.

An exorcism that stands out due to its unusual characteristics is the one performed on Proseria and her husband Nepociano. Berceo notoriously amplified Braulius's narrative by employing the use of six stanzas. Dutton pointed out the similarities and differences between the two versions. In addition to the fact that Berceo confers two demons to each member of the couple ("de fuertes dos demonios era mal embargada...avié doble demonio por ent non era sano" [171b,

172b]), unlike Braulius, who mentions that only one demon possessed either of them, Dutton refers to the meaningful addition of one of the devil's names, "Belzebúb" (174b, "Vita Beati Emiliani" 219). Thus, in Berceo's account, that two demons possessed both Proseria and Nepociano and that the devil is mentioned by one of his names indicates the cleric intention to stress the devil's action in the world through possession. Moreover, the demonic intervention on the couple is prolonged and aggressive. Berceo tells us that they lived "en grand lazerio i vierno e verano" (172b) and that the demons' behavior in both of them was identical ("semejavan ermanos" [173b]).

Nonetheless, they were able to seek assistance from the "confessor" who "a Belzebúb venció en el torneo" (174b), which was also added by the Riojan poet earlier in the work: "Belzebup, el qe obo ad Adám decevido" (111a). This verse is useful to stress the notion of the identification between Christ and San Millán, since it is in the context of the saint's temptation by the Devil in the wilderness, where the devil's name appears first. Then, as a result of these allusions, San Millán's exorcistic power is corroborated, because he realized the unusual double nature of this possession: "entedió cómo eran los demonios doblados / cómo se semejavan los sucios enconados" (175ab). Once more, the saint resorts to the same strategy and says a prayer to cast out the demons. After the prayer, "fue de Dios otorgada la salud manamano" (176b).

The fifth exorcism described by Berceo concerns the story of Máximo's daughter, a woman who is referred to as Colomba. In this case, the Castilian poet offers a more detailed narrative than Braulius. As the other demoniacs, Berceo tells that she took "grand lazerio, vivié vida laçrada" and was brought to the monastery (177c). This reference constitutes an addition that may situate the audience in a more familiar place, given the context of the composition of the work. It is there that she told San Millán "so lazerio" and asked him to pray to the psalter in order for her to be liberated from "tan manno fazerio" (178d). In Braulius's account, there is no allusion to San Millán's preparation for the mass nor a mention of his sacred vestments that should be worn during the ceremony: "Vistió el omne bueno los pannos del altar, / con los quales es lei de la missa cantar, / cantó la santa missa por la salud li ganar" (179abc).

The additional Bercean material in regard to the mass constitutes a switch in his strategy to describe exorcistic procedures. Tellingly, in the Latin original there is a reference to the signal of the cross ("in frontis illius limen cruces impressisset vestigia" [Braulius, 219]), which the poet adapts indirectly ("dióli sue bendición con sue mano sagrada" [180c]). As a result, "fue el mal enemigo fuera de la posada" (180b). The reference to the celebration of the mass may be explained as a preparatory element for doctrinal manuals such as Berceo's *Sacrificio de la misa* (c. 1240). Criticism has proposed that the importance of the IV Lateran Council of 1215 in the formation of a new religious context was motivated by profound changes in Christian society and its impact in Berceo's work. This impact, in turn, is the result of Berceo's proximity with circles close to the reformers such as Tello Téllez de Meneses (circa 1170-1246) (Andrachuck, 15-25; Lappin 2008b, 14-15, 43, 81).

Along with the increasing presence of the devil through several portrayals in thirteenth-century Castilian literature, the Iberian Peninsula experienced an episode that caused deep concern among the ecclesiastical authorities: the ignorance of the clergy. For the ecclesiastical authorities, this situation required a solution for which it was crucial that the clergy be educated according to the new conciliar dictates. These unique circumstances regarding the education of the clergy were part of a broader context that included the reflection of the Devil's nature as well as the growing apocalyptic expectations brought, for example, by Joachinist movements in the thirteenth century and as a response to the "dualistic theology of the Cathars" (Caciola, 12-13).

At the same time, these expectations were reinforced by the presence of heretic groups such as the Waldensians, the Cathars, and the Aristotelian thinkers of the Iberian Peninsula.¹² In Rome Pope, Innocent III condemned both Waldensians and Cathars (Menéndez Peláez, 28-35; Franchini 1997, 35-41) as part of the orthodox reaction. In the same vein, the Leonese canon regular Lucas de Tuy harshly reprimanded the actions of both Cathars and Aristotelian philosophers in his *De altera vita* (c. 1230). Berceo's *Sacrificio de la misa* and *Vida de San Millán* may have been used as a tool designed for the education of the clergy, in particular, as a way to deter heresy (Andrachuck, 15-30; Bower, 176; Rubio Moirón, 2019, 23). Tellingly, Anthony Lappin proposes that Berceo might have been familiar with the Kingdom of León due to his inclusion of Leonese material in his *Milagros de Nuestra señora* (c. 1246-1252) of the miracle-tale "La iglesia robada" (2008b, 86-91). Thus, this poem may belong to a larger group of *cuaderna vía* poems such as the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de Apolonio* (c. 1250) which also potentially served to discourage heresies, specifically with respect to movements that were related to Aristotelian thought (Riva 2019c, 141-148; Curtis 2016). These heretic movements involved an apocalyptic dimension in 13th-century Iberia. Furthermore, the Council's dispositions went beyond the *cuaderna vía* poetry and had a significant impact on thirteenth-century Iberian vernacular literature (Lomax, 302).

In the same vein, ignorance, illiteracy, and apocalyptic expectation cannot be considered separately, and their impact began even before the composition of these vernacular works. For instance, the Castilian chancellor Diego García de Campos, who authored a theological treatise entitled *Planeta* (c. 1218), complained in the work's prologue, which is characterized by a strong apocalyptic accent shown in a lengthy *contemptus mundi*: "Scribo...Quando iuxta apostolum fines seculi devenerunt" (182). Later, in the same prologue, Diego denounced the clergy's ignorance by referring that God and, in general, humanity, may dislike any "prelatus miserabiliter hydiota" (185). Even a generation later, the Church has not completely overcome clergy's ignorance, as can be seen in the *Milagros*, particularly, in "El clérigo simple".¹³

The Council efforts, nonetheless, were not only concerned with the education of the clergy, and the fight against heresies. I have also pointed out the growing process of intellectualization of the figure of the Devil and his nature thanks to the Lateran Council. In fact, in its first constitution known as *Firmiter*, which has to be understood as a new profession of faith, the Council reinforced the idea that God created the devil and demons and that they became evil by their own will (Quay, 20-21). Thus, Lateran dispositions involved clerical education through the significance of the mass, the reflection of the nature of the Devil and the demons, and the fight against heresy. All of these elements are strung together and appeared in Berceo's works.

In particular, *Vida de San Millán* offers two of these Lateran elements. The first is the reflection of the Devil's actions through the construction of his figure from a doctrinal perspective and also by portraying him as a crucial agent for the development of the narrative action. The second lies in the particular case of Colomba's exorcism and its relation to the mass. The third, the apocalyptic dimension, will appear in the final battle depicted in this work, and concerns the practices of exorcism and the nature of evil, which I will analyze later.

As criticism has set forth, Berceo has likely used several elements to spread Lateran dictates through his work. However, it is worth considering another aspect that can be traced back to two centuries earlier at a time when the Mozarabic rite, which flourished in the Peninsula since

¹² For the heretic movements in Iberia and their particular characteristics, see Martínez Casado and Fernández Conde.

¹³ The problem of the clergy's ignorance is analyzed, among others, by Andrachuk 1986; Beltrán de Heredia, 336-337 n35; Márquez Villanueva (59-63).

its conversion to Christianity (Férotin, XI-XII), was about to be replaced by the Roman rite in the Spanish Church. The *Liber ordinum* was composed around the end of the eleventh century to be presented to Pope Alexander II as an effort for the preservation of the old rite and is preserved in a manuscript from Santo Domingo de Silos (Férotin, IX-XII). The *Liber* served as a manual containing liturgical practices regarding the celebration of the mass according to the ancient rite, which was replaced by the Roman liturgy from the eleventh century onwards (IX-XII). Understanding this, one of the main concerns of the Lateran Council was the imposition of the latter liturgical practice over the old rite.

The *Liber ordinum* also contains exorcistic procedures mentioned by criticism as part of the old ritual (Chave-Mahir, 345). Under the entry “Ordo celebrandus super eum qui ab spiritu immundo vexatur”, which as several other exorcistic manuals contains utilitarian procedures based on several Christian sources (Kallendorf, 209), we find many exorcistic formulas that are to be pronounced in front of the altar by either deans or priests in two separate choirs “in diem Ramos palmarum” (Férotin, ed. 73). In preparation for the ceremony, the dean stands in front of the suffering victim, who had been anointed after the mass dismissal, and makes “manu crucem” (73). Therefore, the liturgy of the mass can be related to exorcistic practices that date back to the first millennium in Spain. Moreover, according to the apocalyptic thought found in the *Liber ordinum*, the mass and exorcism are related, as can be seen in the first exorcism from the “Ordo celebrandus super eum”: “Recordare, Satanas, que tibi maneat pena...confusus fugias et recedas. Quod si fallaciter gesseris, erit tibi ipse Christus in preparato iudicio” (74). The compilers of the *Liber* continue with the description of the procedures by using more aggressive and specific formulas. Berceo may be aware of this tradition since in his *Vida de San Millán* he privileges the performance of exorcistic ceremonies over the portrayal of the demoniacs themselves (Rubio Moirón, 30). Importantly, this same formula (“Recordare, Satanas, que tibi”) was used by the author of the Hispanicized Latin exorcisms preceding the thirteenth century *Razón de amor con los denuestos del agua y el vino* in Paris Ms Lat 3576, which were designed to assuage hail, and which contain a great deal of references to the Book of Revelation (Giles 2015, 119-121 and 124-128; Franchini 1991, 78, 81-83).

According to the information about the relationship between Berceo and Santo Domingo de Silos (Dutton 1961), he might have been familiar with this manual, on whose eponymous founder, he wrote another hagiographic poem regarding exorcistic practices. I have also pointed out that some of Berceo’s work, such as the *Sacrificio de la misa*, “a work of a man with a profound knowledge of theology and liturgy” and that breathes the essence of Innocentine project” (Lappin 2008b, 97-98), were intended to fulfill the Lateran dispositions, and especially those related to the Latin education of the clergy and the combat against heresies which are similar, in a way, to some of the contents of the *Libro de Alexandre* and the *Libro de Apolonio*.¹⁴

Lateran reforms aimed at the definitive establishment of the Roman rite that had been gradually gaining momentum over the old tradition in the Iberian Peninsula since the eleventh century. Berceo’s familiarity with Lateran dictates and his consequent diffusion may appear as contradictory to what I posit in regard to the *Liber ordinum*. Yet this, to understand Berceo’s attitude it is worth considering that, due to the independent status that San Millán de la Cogolla once had as a result of its border location, his position might be a form of resistance against foreign religious policies such as those coming from French clergy (Sánchez-Jiménez, 538-47). For instance, if Berceo’s *Milagros* were aimed to demonstrate a more tolerant position towards the long-debated celibacy problem in the Spanish Church and the general ignorance of the clergy, then

¹⁴ See Andrachuck; Curtis; Franchini 1997, 35-43; Menéndez Peláez, 28-32; Riva 2019c, 136-148.

his motivation would have been rooted in San Millán de la Cogolla's spirit of independence. Thus, if we consider this more nuanced perspective, we could not judge Berceo's context in exclusory terms, but, contrarily, we should reflect from a viewpoint involving both tradition and innovation simultaneously.

An element that is not exclusively dependent on the Lateran reforms is apocalypticism. As I set forth earlier, this fact is crucial in the development of *cuaderna vía* poetry and is also reflected in Berceo's works, particularly in a work whose authorship cannot be positively attributed to the poet (Lappin 2008b, 237), *Los signos del juicio final* (c. 1240) or, indirectly, in the *Sacrificio de la misa*. Still, the Lateran Council itself is marked by apocalyptic traits since its foundation as can be seen in *Sermo VI* delivered by Pope Innocent III (reg. 1198-1216), which served as an official proclamation of the Council. In his sermon, the pontiff's perspective on the sign of the cross following Ez 9 contributes to understand apocalyptic content reflected, for example, in exorcistic procedures.¹⁵ Thus, these practices might be the product of the endorsement of the Crusade policy that Innocent himself had been trying to implement in the Iberian Peninsula since the beginning of his rule.¹⁶

2. The Apocalyptic

I have mentioned the importance of the apocalyptic accent in *Vida de San Millán*. Nonetheless, the ideology of Crusade, which is inherent to the Christian reality of the Iberian Peninsula and which is apocalyptic as long as it evokes, for example, the legend of the Last Emperor who would reconquest Jerusalem as one of the prophesied events prior to the coming of Antichrist (Whalen 46-56),¹⁷ is also reflected in *Vida de San Millán*. For the first two books and the initial part of the third, Berceo relied on the *Vita Beati Emiliani* which was his source for details of the saint's life, miracles, and the exorcisms he performs on demoniacs. After approximately forty stanzas on the saint's miracles in the third book, Berceo switches to a different matter, based on a group of separate but related sources both in Latin and in Castilian for the remaining of the work,¹⁸ that deals with certain vows allegedly conceded by Count Fernán González in a document to the monastery of San Millán in the tenth century, and that was, in reality, a forged record called the *Privilegium votorum* and preserved in the *Libro del Becerro de San Millán* (c. late twelfth century) (Azcarate et al., 377-382; Dutton, ed. 1-2, 185-186; García de Cortázar, 315-322).¹⁹

From this group of sources constituting the material for the story of the *votos*, I will focus my analysis on the combat between Christians and Muslims, which are part of the beginning text of the *Privilegium* and contain apocalyptic elements that Berceo utilizes. In turn, this battle is a literary reinterpretation of the cosmic war between good and evil. I have emphasized Nancy Caciola's idea that the struggle that takes place in the demoniac's body is a microcosmic reflection of the final universal confrontation between God and the Devil at the end of times (262, 265). This

¹⁵ The reference to Ezekiel is found in the Innocent III's mention of the tau cross: *Transi per mediam civitatem, et signa Thau super frontes virorum. . . Signatis enim nocendum non est*" (Innocentius III, "Sermo VI" 673-78).

¹⁶ This sermon's theme is *desiderio desideravi* taken from Lc 22:16.

¹⁷ For the function of the Last Emperor legend in clerecía poetry, see Riva 2019c, 175-181.

¹⁸ The final miracles (st. 482-492) come from a different source, Fernandus's *Liber miraculorum* (247).

¹⁹ Berceo refers to the vows (*votos*) in the following way: "De seiscientos e doize corrié entonz la era / quand murió sant Millán, esto es cosa vera, / mas aún *vent e ocho* menos de los mil era, / quando ganó el precio, rico de grand manera" (151). For a recent reevaluation of the forgeries related to San Millán and the *Privilegium*, see Lappin 100-114.

aspect links the two parts of the poem, that is, the hagiography, mainly based on his successful exorcistic practices, and the apocalyptic battle.

More than three hundred years after San Millán's death, the saint, and consequently the monastery, "ganó los Votos" (362d, 364d). Yet this, in the context of the war against Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, Berceo writes that, due to their sins, Christians "recibieron grand tiempo muchos malos sabores" (366d). The Castilian author turns to a strategy aiming to construct the redemptive narrative in order to explain the origins of the Muslim occupation (and the consequent regain of the territory) consisting of an initial Christian sin ("como pueblo que era de Dios desemperado" [367d]). This strategy is also present in the first stanzas of the *Libro de Fernán González* (Riva 2019a, 387-397). Not merely does the punishment consist of the Islamic presence in Christian territory, but also of a tribute the Christians have to pay to King Abderraman, "un mortal enemigo de todos los christianos" (369b), who asked the Christians to receive "cadanno tres vent duennas en renda" (370b). As a consequence, God demonstrated several celestial signs as a result of his anger. The most adequate manner for Berceo to express God's wrath was taking the description of three phenomena from the *Privilegium*, that is, the solar eclipse, the darkening of the sun, and the fire gate on the sky. Therefore, first, he tells that on a mid-July Friday "perdió el sol la lumne...de prima fasta tercia el sol non pareció" and again in September "murió otra vegada and "tornó plus amariello" (378c, 379b, 380bc). For this reason, "fueron todos los pueblos durament espantados" (381a). Later in the text, the signs appear again but more violently: "apareció en cielo una gran abertura, / ixién por ella flamas grandes sobre mesura" (382cd).

These astronomical signs constitute apocalyptic motifs, also known as the *signa iudicii*, such eclipses or rare astronomical phenomena, that were used extensively in Christian literature and other works of the *cuaderna vía* poetry such as the *Libro de Alexandre* (Riva 2019c, 111-115, 181-185), including the Berceo's *Los signos del juicio final*, which, as Joël Saugnieux sets forth, along with *Vida de San Millán* and Beatus's works build a coherent apocalyptic tradition linked to the monastery of San Millán (167)²⁰. In the case of the *Vida de San Millán*, these *signa* bring forth the confrontation between the two armies, which is a literary reinterpretation of the historical battle of Simancas-Hacinas of 939, which is foreshadowed by stars flying "por el ayr, entre sí se feriendo" (383c). Berceo is aware of the apocalyptic aspect of these signs, which is ultimately the macrocosmic reproduction of the battle experienced by the energumens, when he states that "asmava la gent toda...qe la fin postremera podié seer venida" (385b).

After several fires that devastate numerous Castilian towns, the Christians accepted their sins, "qe por sue culpa eran tan porfaçados" (393b), and, as a result of this, God "quiso tornar en ellos, fazerlis caridat" (394d). In consequence, he sent "un sennor venturado" (395a), Count Fernán González (156-157). Criticism has also dealt with the apocalyptic role of the Castilian count (Nepaulsingh 1986, 85-87; Riva 2019a, 400-405), which is also present in *Vida de San Millán*, precisely because he is not merely God's emissary but also a crucial participant in the battle that is portrayed in Berceo's poem as a fight between good and evil. Again, after the fact that the Muslims interpreted the astronomical signs in a way favorable to them, their armies entered Christian territories defended by the Castilian Count Fernán González and the Leonese King

²⁰ Although we cannot positively prove that *Los signos* was, in fact, part of the Bercean corpus (Lappin 237), it is necessary to consider this work as long as it belongs to the same school of thought and uses the same poetic expression. On the signs at the time of the Last Judgement, this work alludes to darkness and chaos: "Será el día sexto negro e carboniento, / non fincará ninguna labor sobre cimientto, / nin castiellos, nin torres nin ningún cerramiento / que non sea destructo todo por fundamento" (st. 12). For Saugnieux, the *Votos de San Millán* and the first part of *Los signos* belong to the same apocalyptic context (170).

Ramiro. The latter invoked Santiago, “que yaz en Gallizia, de Espanna primado” (422d), while the former called on San Millán, who, Berceo says, is a precious confessor and “de Dios mucho amado” (430a). The Castilian saint would then act as a standard-bearer for Fernán González’s troops according to what he says to them: “Frontero es del regno...padrón de espannoles...onrrémoslo, varones, démosli esti dado...la batalla passada, sea bien afirmado, / metudo en escripto e privilegiado” (431abc, 432cd).

From a different narrative viewpoint, Berceo mentions the vows again to let the audience know their importance in the war and in the consequent Christian victory: “Sennores e amigos, quantos aquí seedes, / si escuchar quisiéredes, entenderlo podedes, quál acorro lis traxo el voto que sabedes” (435abc). The terrestrial battle between the joint Christian forces and the Muslim army became a macrocosmic confrontation. After the leaders’ invocation of the saints and beginning of the battle, the omens reflected in the *signa*, and particularly the omen describing a fire gate in the sky, came true. The soldiers “vidieron dues personas fermosas e luzientes...vinién en dos caballos plus blancos que cristal” (438a). Both Santiago and San Millán “avién caras angélicas e celstial figura...espadas sobre mano, un signo de pavura” (439ad). Inspired by this vision, the Christians “foron más esforzados, / fincarón los inojos en tierra apeados” and later “dieron entre los moros dando golpes certeros” (440b, 441b). Because the first part of Berceo’s poem emphasizes the relationship between Christ and San Millán, as I showed earlier, the cosmic reflection of the constant fight of good against evil and its apocalyptic resonances have been clearly demonstrated.

As a result of the Christian attack, “cayén a muy grand priessa los moros descreídos, / los unos desmembrados, los otros desmedridos” (443ab). Even Santiago and San Millán, “el qui la cruz tenié e el capiello plano” (447c), joined the army in the battlefield. Consequently, Abderraman “desamparó el campo todo so vassallage” and his soldiers “cadieron en desarro como pueblo vencido” (450a, 451d). Thus, the Muslims lost not only their banners, but also their religious leader (“obispo”) and their sacred book, where “era sue leñ debuxada” (455d). The final consequence of the Christian victory was the official oath made by Fernán González himself in front of religious and civil authorities: “pusieron e juraron de dar todas sazones, / a Sant Millán la casa estos tres pipiones” (461cd). After Berceo narrated the formal ceremony of the establishment of the vows, the author describes the towns and burgs that, according to the written document promulgated by Fernando, paid tribute to the monastery of San Millán.

Berceo’s particular use of sources constitutes a complex strategy to unify the liturgy of exorcism, the apocalyptic piety, and finally, the implications of these two aspects on the constitution of the discourse of the Christian war against Islam along with the economic survival of the monastery of San Millán.²¹ If we apply Adler’s idea of obliterating the other to this case, we understand the ‘other’ to be the Muslims. This argument is useful to better understand the *Vida de San Millán*, as it complements the fact that this obliteration of the enemy, in the context of an establishment of a discourse of war in Iberia expressed in the elaborated thirteenth-century ideology of Crusade (Bower, 176 n 6), may also be comprehended as a manifestation of an elaborate translation of exorcisms affecting demoniacs in a cosmic battle, which is, ultimately, a sign of the proximity to the end of history.

²¹ For this aspect, it is worth taking into consideration Gregory B. Kaplan’s ideas (2006) on the fact that Berceo tried to erase any reference to Braulio’s numerous mentions to the Cantabrian region where, the author claims, the cult of Aemilianus originated in the context of several eremitic initiatives which took place in the cave churches of Valderredible’s region in Visigothic times. Berceo’s intention was to privilege the region of La Cogolla in La Rioja over Cantabria as the cult’s epicenter in order to attract revenues to San Millán de la Cogolla.

Thus, Berceo is part of a collective effort in the construction of a literary system that aims to explain, but most importantly to codify, the changes experienced in the first half of the thirteenth century, such as the gradual theologization of evil and the consequent apocalyptic expectations derived from this process. In his elaborate terms, which simultaneously contemplate a strict defense of his monastery's independence, he advocates for the prevalence of the conciliar dispositions. Nonetheless, in this effort, Berceo successfully updated old material, such as a first-millennium Latin hagiography or the ancient Spanish liturgy, to match a new era. A complex continuum, then, begins with Berceo's efforts to establish an apocalyptic link between the suffering body of the energumen and its reflection in the Christian war against Islam in Iberia, which, in turn, becomes a specular manifestation of the macrocosmic combat between the forces of good and evil, and finishes with the economic wealth of his brethren of San Millán while waiting for the end.

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