

PRAYER AS A LITERARY DEVICE  
IN *THE BATTLE OF MALDON*  
AND IN *THE POEM OF THE CID*

The first common feature we find in *The Battle of Maldon* and in *The Poem of the Cid* is that they are, in some respects, more instructive than French, Germanic or the primitive Old English epic in that in these two poems the historical events and the Christian atmosphere were much closer in time to their creation; and both heroes, Byrhtnoth and Mio Cid, are real Christian characters with common religious sentiments as can be seen in the Christian allusions and prayers which are presented in both epics.

*The Battle of Maldon*<sup>1</sup> presents the army of the East Saxons fighting in 991 against a Viking fleet which had plundered the coast of Kent and had established a base near Maldon. The English army was defeated and his commander, the noble Byrhtnoth was killed. The real event was not of great historical importance, or at least in the *Chronicles* it is reported very laconically and it is difficult to understand why an insignificant defeat was celebrated in an epic poem, undoubtedly one of the most outstanding works in Old English literature.

Some critics felt that the author must have been an eyewitness to the battle, he knows most of the English leaders by name and from

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<sup>1</sup>. - See *The Battle of Maldon A. D. 991* Manchester, 1991, eds. D. Scragg and M. Deegan; the latest edition and collection of essays on the battle, the poem and its background.

this it may be inferred that he must either have been a participant in the battle or else have derived his information directly from someone who fought in Byrhtnoth's army; basing themselves on this fact, many scholars have suggested that the poem follows the historical reality closely. The hero, Byrhtnoth, and several of his followers who are mentioned in this epic can be identified, such as Wulfstan, Wulfmær and Æfwine. Obviously, many of the details cannot be checked, but the poem gives the impression of being the work of a man, in our opinion a learned monk of Ely, Ramsey or some other abbey in East Anglia who was well acquainted with the topography of the battle-field. He also probably knew the character and history of the East-Saxon nobles who died at Maldon with their lord, and who very well might have known Byrhtnoth himself if we accept that the epic was written about two decades after the hero's death.<sup>1</sup>

*The Battle of Maldon* is reported very briefly in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 991<sup>2</sup> and with more details in the *Parker Chronicle* for 993<sup>3</sup> where the Viking leader Olaf, the great Olaf Tryggvason (956-1000) who later became king of Norway, is mentioned:

Her on thissum geare com Unlaf mid thrim ond hundnig-entigon  
scipum to Stane, ond forhergedon thæt on ytan, ond for tha  
thanon to Sandwic, ond swa thanon to Gipeswic, ond thæt eall

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<sup>1</sup>.- Though some scholars would date the poem shortly after the battle, we prefer the theories of J. McKinnell "On the date of the *Battle of Maldon*" *MÆ* 44 (1975) pp. 131-6, and N. Blake "The Genesis of *The Battle of Maldon*" *ASE* 7 (1978) pp. 119-29 who argue for a date as late as 1020; but see D. Scragg. 1991.

<sup>2</sup>.- *The Battle of Maldon* is reported in *Chronicles C, D, E, F* under 991. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ed. B. Thorpe R. S. 238-240. See also C. Plummer *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*. Oxford, 1892-99. vol. I pp. 126-7.

<sup>3</sup>.- Some editors and critics, such as F. Lieberman, C. Plummer and M. Ashdown, suggest that 993 is an amalgam of events belonging to 991-994.

ofereode, ond swa to Mældune; ond him thærcum togeanes  
Byrhtnoth ealdorman mid his fyrde, ond him with gefeaht. Ond hy  
thone ealdorman thær ofslogon, ond wælstowe gewæld ahtan.

“In this year came Anlaf (Olaf) with ninety three ships to Folke-  
stone, and devastated it, and sailed thence to Sandwich, and  
thence to Ipswich, overrunning all the countryside, and so on to  
Maldon. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth came to meet them with his levies  
and fought them, but they slew the ealdorman there and took  
possession of the place of slaughter.”

Another account of Byrhtnoth’s death and the East Saxon defeat  
at Maldon is in Byrhtferth of Ramsey’s *Vita Oswaldi* written about  
1000. In this Latin text the author gives us a vivid picture of Byrht-  
noth; probably the hero was known by the monk Byrhtferth who due  
to his desire to glorify the patron of his monastery introduced an in-  
terpolation in the *Vita Oswaldi* about the East Anglian ealdorman.<sup>1</sup>  
This text is very important in the light of a tomb cult related to the ge-  
nesis and the presence of Christian allusions and prayers in the poem.  
Another very important account of Byrhtnoth and his death is found in  
*Liber Eliensis*, though this history is less accurate, as it belongs to a  
considerably later date this account reflects better the oral and written  
religious tradition of Byrhtnoth’s life and death in the following cen-  
turies. This chronicle was written about 1170 by a monk of Ely who  
drew his information from older “historiae” in the English language. In  
this text it is said that Byrhtnoth’s body was taken from the battle-field  
by the monks of Ely and buried in their church.

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<sup>1</sup>.- *The Vita Oswaldi* is an important source for tenth century Anglo-Saxon history as was  
suggested by M. Lapidge. “The Hermeneutic Style in tenth century Anglo-Latin  
Literature” *ASE* 4 (1975).

We know through different sources that Byrhtnoth was a protector of the monasteries; according to the historian Florence of Worcester the hero of Maldon and his sister's son Æthelwine, who also died in the battle, gathered their men to protect the monasteries under their patronage. The monasteries of Ramsey and Ely received benefactions from Byrhtnoth, and his widow Ælflæd indicates in a document that her husband made grants to other communities, and he probably was a benefactor of the New Minster in Winchester which recorded the day of his death in a Calendar. Therefore we have to accept that Byrhtnoth had a close relationship with the monasteries of his possessions and chiefly Ely where he was buried, and this is why we have Christian allusions in the poem *The Battle of Maldon*.<sup>1</sup>

*The Poem of the Cid*, like *The Battle of Maldon*, is basically an historical epic poem; it is the greatest and earliest surviving literary epic of Castile, the first extensive verse-text written in the Spanish language and one of the greatest epic poems of the European culture in the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup>

The hero Ruiz Diaz was born c.1043, that is, about fifty years after Byrhtnoth's death at Maldon, into the rank of baronet in a small village near Burgos, the capital of Castile. By his exploits he became known as *Campidoctor* in Latin Chronicles, and *Mio Cid*, that is, my lord, in arabic sources. The poem consists of 3730 lines and in these verses an unknown poet wrote only about the last ten years of his life, when Rodrigo was banished by his king Alfonso VI of Castile. Rodrigo spent most of his exile fighting the moors until he began the siege of the city of Valencia in 1092 which finally fell to him in 1094. *Mio Cid*

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<sup>1</sup>.- See E. V. Gordon. *The Battle of Maldon*. Manchester, 1937. rpt. 1971. pp. 18-20.

<sup>2</sup>.- *The Poem of the Cid* is preserved in a manuscript dated 1307. The copyist was a certain Per Abad; all modern Cidian scholars agree that the poem is earlier than Per Abad's manuscript. However since Menéndez Pidal dated the original circa 1140 arguments supporting a later date have been advanced by others.

died in Valencia in 1099 and according to the *Historia Roderici*,<sup>1</sup> a reliable account of the Cid's life written about a decade after his death, his wife, Doña Jimena Diaz brought his remains to Castile three years later in order to bury them in the monastery of San Pedro de Cardena, five miles to the east of Burgos.

The first Christian literary document about the Cid is *The Carmen Campidoctoris* written by a cleric, and it is an excellent beginning for the hero's literary career. The next reference to the Cid's tomb at Cardena is found in a version of the Latin Chronicle the *Liber Regum*, written about 1220.<sup>2</sup> We also possess a remarkable biography of the Cid in the *Primera Crónica General*, where in the opening sentence of chapter 961 we read: *Estoria del noble varon el Cid Ruiz Diaz el Campeador, señor que fue de Valencia*. In this Chronicle it is reported that the Cid's body remained incorruptible and was placed in a seated position to the right of St. Peter's altar in the monastery church at Cardena in full view of the public. Associated with this tradition is an attempt to suggest that the Cid before his death ordered that his body should be taken to Cardena for burial. This medieval cult at Cardena was not unique in Castile and similar tomb cults existed in other Castilian monasteries which possessed the tombs of other heroes, kings and nobles. In fact, several of the Spanish epics in Latin or the vernacular, in poetry or prose, dealing with events from the 10th. century to the 14th. century in Castile, appear to have some sort of connection with the Benedictine monasteries of Old Castile.<sup>3</sup>

We must consider the Christian references in *Maldon* and *Mio Cid* in terms of their apparent relationships to the Anglo-Saxon and the

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<sup>1</sup>.- See R. Menéndez Pidal ed. *Primera Crónica General*. Madrid, 1955.

<sup>2</sup>.- See R. Menéndez Pidal, *La España del Cid*. Madrid, 1947.

<sup>3</sup>.- See P. M. Russell. "San Pedro de Cardena and the Heroic History of the Cid" *MÆ* 27, 2 (1958).

Spanish culture at that time. In England and in Spain there was a tradition of liturgical and private prayers as those Christians believed prayer necessary because God deserves man's prayers and also because man himself benefits from prayer.<sup>1</sup>

Directly or indirectly, the primary purpose of all prayers is communication with God and generally they have the same basic structure: invocation, comment, petition and closing, and in some cases there is also introduced a phrase of thanksgiving or a plea for intercession. Most narrative prayers are based on liturgical Latin texts, but they are not always literal translations, and the writers often made minor changes to adopt the prayer to the context, changing a mere religious text into a literary device which, according to the idea of that period, served to *delectare et docere*. The prayers and religious allusions we find in both epics are fictional passages and quite probably they were not pronounced by the characters in real life; therefore, the narrative prayers and religious phrases written in direct or indirect speech may have an artistic function. The poets used the prayers for characterization, to provide unity in the complex structure of the text, to give rhetorical emphasis, to introduce suspense or to express a dramatic tone; but also the writers may introduce the prayers with a didactic purpose as a devotional model of how and when to pray, a method of teaching Christian doctrines and traditions. Moreover we think that these prayers were introduced in the poems we are dealing with to inform indirectly of the relationship of the poems with the tomb cult of the heroes.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>.- See A. Bravo. "Una Taxonomía de la Plegaria en el inglés antiguo" *Proceedings of the II International Conference of SELIM*. Córdoba, 1989. (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup>.- *The Battle of Maldon and the Poem of Mio Cid: Two tomb cult epic poems*. Unpublished paper read by A. Bravo at the ESSE Inaugural Conference. Norwich, Sept. 1991.

In the early Middle Ages, Anglo-Saxon and Spanish scholars, nearly all of them monks and clerks, were obviously influenced by Christian sentiments and principles, and the narratives written at that time in prose or poetry, in Latin or the vernacular, show this fact; therefore, it is frequent to find prayers at the origin of the English and Spanish languages. In the Anglo-Saxon culture the writers used a variety of reasons to explain the need for prayer, but the most important is because God deserves man's prayer as He is so much better than men and yet has still generously helped them. In his homily for Christmas Ælfric says that:

We sceolon geefenlæcan thisum hyrdum, ond wuldrian and herian  
urne Dryhten on eallum tham thingum the he for ure lufe gefre-  
mode, us to alysednysse ond to ecere blisse.<sup>1</sup>

According to this, man has been created just so that he can pray to God; prayer here is seen as the very essence of man's life. But, on the other hand, man also prays because he himself benefits by his prayer. Ælfric in another homily wrote: *Swa theah ne magon manna herunga Godes mærtha gemicclian, ac tha halgan lofsangas fremath us to ecere haelthe.*<sup>2</sup> That is, through his prayers, man does not increase God's glory, but rather gains eternal salvation for himself. It is man, not God, who benefits.

For many decades the *Battle of Maldon* was analyzed as an expression of the ancient Germanic heroic code and the religious references were ignored.<sup>3</sup> Some critics, such as C.Clark<sup>4</sup> and J.E.Cross<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>.- See *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*. ed. B. Thorpe. 2 vols. London, 1844-46.

<sup>2</sup>.- Ibid. *CH. II*. p. 584.

<sup>3</sup>.- C. Clark "The Battle of Maldon: A Heroic Poem" *Speculum* 43 (1968) pp. 52-71.

<sup>4</sup>.- C. Clark. "Byrhtnoth and Roland: A Contrast". *Neophilologus* 51 (1967) pp. 288-93.

suggest that the prayer we have in the poem marks Byrhtnoth as a Christian, but this religious text does not modify the secular hero.: *In itself the last speech does not modify the shape of Byrhtnoth's secular figure towards that of a martyr, this prayer indeed is selfish, though human.*<sup>2</sup> Other critics see in the *Battle of Maldon* and in the hero a combination of heroic and religious features and they have stressed the pious sentiments which are introduced in the poem emphasizing the idea that Byrhtnoth is a kind of mirror of Christian leaders; Blake has argued that the hero of Maldon is like a Christian martyr and that the battle is significant as a spiritual struggle of good against evil.<sup>3</sup>

Byrhtnoth's prayer in only eight lines, but we think that this text marks Byrhtnoth as a Christian and, at the same time, reveals a learned and religious author, plausibly a monk and poet.

Ic gethancie the, theoda waldend,  
ealra thæra wynta the ic on worulde gebad.  
Nu ic ah, milde metod, mæste thearfe  
thæt thu minum gaste godes geunne,  
thæt min sawul to the sithian mote  
on thin geweald, theoden engla,  
mid frithe ferian. Ic eom frymde to the  
thæt hi helseathan hynan ne moton. (ll.173-180)

“I thank you, Lord of the nations for all  
those joys which I have experienced in the world.

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<sup>1</sup>.- J. E. Cross. “Oswald and Byrhtnoth: A Christian Saint and a Hero who is Christian”. *ES*. 46 (1965).

<sup>2</sup>.- Ibid. p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>.- N. Blake. “The Battle of Maldon”. *Neophilologus* 49 (1965) p. 339.

*Prayer as a Literary Device ...*

Now, merciful God, I have the greatest need  
that you should grant my spirit the benefit  
that my soul be allowed to journey to you,  
into your keeping, Prince of the angels,  
to pass in peace. I beseech you that hellish  
assailants be not allowed to harm it.”

It seems to me that this prayer is a literary device perfectly organized in three sections. In the prayer, Byrhtnoth acknowledges God's greatness, later his own meanness, and finally God's generosity. The beginning of the prayer, the two first lines, stresses the notion of God's power and generosity as the hero thanks God for granting him joys in the world. God is implicitly recognized as the One who can control all the benefits man can attain in the world and his generosity is emphasized as Byrhtnoth, when thanking Him, refers to the fact that God has helped him in the past. The epithet used to refer to God calls forth the aspect of God contemplated by the one praying at that instant. Thus, God is the Ruler of peoples, *theoda waldend*, because Byrhtnoth is referring to God's influence on the material world of benefits to man. In the following lines, 3-7b, Byrhtnoth talks about his *mæste thearfe*, *great need*, and here the hero invokes the merciful God *milde metod* because Byrhtnoth is now aware of his own imperfections as a man; in this second section the poet is referring to God as *theoda engla*, Prince of angels, this invocation is very appropriate to God considered in light of the final section of the prayer asking protection against devils, the proud fallen angels, and also considering the first section in which God's might is being appealed to. Then we interpret this section as a balance between God's power and God's generosity. In the last three hemistiches, the third section, we find one of the elements which can appear in narrative prayers, the petition for salvation. Byrhtnoth recognizes that he has been sinful in his life and for his pride and arrogance before the battle he is going to

be defeated and finally dead; it was the same sin committed by the fallen angels, so he prays God to forgive him so *thæt hi helsceathan hynan ne moton*.

These lines suggest the struggle between the good and the bad angels over man's soul, this is a topic which can be found in other liturgical prayers written in Latin: *Ut cum mihi dies extrema evenerit, angeli pacis me suscipiant et de potestate diaboli eripiant, quatinus in consortio sanctorum tuorum merear beata requie perfrui*.<sup>1</sup> In the Missal of Robert of Jumieges we also find a dying prayer with an allusion to the angel of peace: *et reple cum omnio gaudio et letitia et timore expelle omnes inimici insidias, mitte et domine anagem pacis qui hanc domum pace perpetua custodiat*.<sup>2</sup>

Byrhtnoth's prayer is perfectly organized and is used as a literary feature in the narrative; the prayer gives a great emphasis to the text as it is introduced in the midst of the battle, suddenly all seems to fade as the poet focuses on Byrhtnoth turning his eyes to heaven. It is an extremely dramatic moment as the audience wants to hear what will happen next, and the poet introduces the prayer to create dramatic suspense. The prayer is also used to express a dramatic irony; the hero is nearly a saint fighting the heathens, those Vikings who were enemies of God, however Byrhtnoth is dying with most of his retainers; in fact, only the cowards will survive. This irony, here a remarkable literary figure, is resolved by means of the prayer. The paradox is explained to the audience through the Christian faith because only the true God has the power to grant Byrhtnoth the final victory, and thus this death in a Christian context becomes eternal life. Therefore, the poet has introduced the prayer artistically in harmony

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<sup>1</sup>.- Cit. by F. Holthausen in "Altenglische Interlinear-versionen lateinischer Gebete und Beichte" *Anglia* 65 (1941) p. 232.

<sup>2</sup>.- *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*. ed. H. A. Wilson. London, 1896. Pp. 289-90.

*Prayer as a Literary Device ...*

with the Christian view of the universe according to the religious conception of the time.

Besides this prayer, we also find in the *Battle of Maldon* two other religious allusions, in lines 94b-95 we read:

God ana wat  
hwa thære wælstowe wealdan mote.

“God alone knows who will be allowed  
to control the place of slaughter.”

Later, in the midst of the clash of the weapons, the poet expresses again his Christian sentiment in these lines:

Se eorl wæs the blithra:  
hlöh tha modi man, sæde metode thanc  
thæs dægweorces the him dryhten forgeaf. (ll.146b-48)

“The noble was all the happier, he laughed then,  
a brave man, and said thanks to God for the  
day’s work the Lord had granted him.”

In the light of the prayer and these religious allusions it seems to me that the author cannot be a layman or minstrel, but a learned and pious monk probably dwelling in the monastery where the tomb of Byrhtnoth was venerated.

In the Spanish epic, the *Poem of the Cid*, there are many religious allusions and some prayers. Most references are constituted only by a hemistich or a line and very frequently can be considered epic formulas. Many Christian references express thanksgiving as *gradéscolo a Dios* l. 246, “Thanks be to God”; *grado al Creador e al Padre*

*espiritual* l. 1633, “Thanks be to the Creator and Father in Heaven”; *grado al Criador e a vos, rrey señor*, l. 3200, “Thanks be to the Creator and to you my king and lord”. In some verses there are allusions to God and the Holy Virgin: *Plega a Dios e a Santa María* l.281, “May it please to God and the Holy Mary”; or to God and one of his saints: *Grado al Criador e al señor Sant Esidro el de León* l.1867, “Thanks be to the Creator and to St.Isidore of Leon”. Some Christians references are in an indirect style and cover two or three lines:

Quando despertó el Cid la cara se santigó  
sinava la cara, a Dios se acomendó. (ll.410-11)

“When the Cid awoke he made the sign of the cross on his forehead, he crossed himself and commended himself to God.”

In other cases, the poet introduces a prayer or a religious allusion formed with some lines:

El rrey don Alfonso a Toledo es entrado,  
Mio Cid Rruy Diaz en San Serván posado.  
Mucho fazer candelas e poner en el altar,  
sabor á de velar en esa santidad,  
al Criador rrogando e fablando en poridad. (ll.3053-7)

“King Alfonso then went back to Toledo, while the Cid Ruy Diaz retired to San Servando. He requested that candles be placed on the altar, for he desired to keep vigil in that holy place, praying to God and communing in secret”.

The poet also introduces in the narrative some prayers, mainly in the most dramatic moments, for example, when the hero has to leave to go into exile:

A ti lo gradesco, Dios, que cielo e tierra guias,  
¡Válanme tus vertudes, gloriosa Santa María!  
Dáquí quito Castiella, pues que el rrey he en ira,  
non sé si entraré i más en todos los míos días.  
Vuestra virtud me vala, Gloriosa, en mi exida  
e me ayude e me acorra de noch e de día!  
Si vos assí lo fiziérides e la ventura me fuere complida,  
mando al vuestro altar buenas donas e rricas,  
esto é yo en debdo que faga i cantar mill missas. (ll.217-25)

“I thank Thee, Oh God, Ruler of Heaven and Earth. May the power of the Blessed Virgin protect me. Now I must leave Castile, for I have incurred the king’s wrath. I do not know whether I shall return to it in all my life. Oh Glorious Virgin, protect me as I depart, and help me night and day. If you will do this and my good fortune holds, I shall adorn your altar with rich gifts, and I make a solemn promise to have a thousand masses sung there.”

This is not a long prayer, but we can find in it all the characteristics which constitute a narrative prayer: invocation, thanksgiving, comment, petition and closing; all of it forms a plea for intercession. The most extensive prayer in the *Poem of the Mio Cid*, and the most elaborated from a literary point of view is that one recited by Doña Jimena in lines 330 and ff.

Ya Señor glorioso, Padre que en el cielo estás,  
fezist cielo e tierra, el tercero el mar,

*Antonio Bravo*

fezist estrellas e luna e el sol pora escalar;  
prisist encarnación en Santa María madre  
en Belem aparecist como fue tu voluntad,  
pastores te glorificaron, oviéronte a laudare  
tres rreyes de Arabia te vinieron adorar,  
Melchor e Gaspar e Baltasar;  
oro e tus e mirra te ofrecieron como fue tu voluntad,  
salvaste a Jonás quando cayó en la mar,  
salvest a Daniel con los leones en la mala cárcel,  
salvest dentro en Rome al señor San Sebastián,  
salvest a Sancta Susanna del falso criminal  
(...)

*Prayer as a Literary Device ...*

Tú eres rrey de rreyes e de tod'el mundo padre,  
a ti adoro e creo de toda voluntad  
e rruego a San Peidro que me ayude a rrogar  
por Mio Cid el Campeador que Dios le curie de mal;  
quando oy nos partimos, en vida nos faz juntar. (ll.330-60)

“O Glorious Lord, our Father in Heaven. You did create Heaven and Earth and after them the sea. You did create the stars and the moon and the sun to give us warmth. You did become incarnate in Your mother, Holy Mary, and was born in Bethlehem according to Your will. The shepherds worshipped and praised You. Three kings from Arabia came to do you homage, Melchior, Caspar and Balthazar, who offered You gold, frankincense and myrrh, as was Your holy Will. You did save Jonah when he fell into the sea and Daniel in the evil's den. In Rome You did save St. Sebastian, and You did save Susanna when she was falsely accused ... You are the king of kings and Father of the world. I worship You and believe in You with all my heart and soul. I pray to St. Peter and help me to intercede for the Cid Campeador that God may keep him from harm. Though we must part today; may He reunite us in life.”

This literary prayer seems not to have any specific Latin source, in my opinion it is simply another example of the freedom used in handling a prayer. If we divide this text the three following sections occur: ll.1, ll.2-60 and ll.61-5. The first line is an invocation formed by an oral formula frequently used in the poem. The second section is a kind of hymn and the poet describes the great glory and power of God by means of a description of the creation and the many wonders that the Almighty has made and which are narrated in the Old and New Testament. In these lines we find continuous rhetorical figures such as anaphoras, variations, enumerations, antithesis, etc. which reveal the literary tone of these verses. In the last section, the last five lines, we

see the strategy of juxtaposing God's greatness with his benevolence towards man; here the poet uses a plea for intercession to San Pedro, the saint patron of the monastery of Cardeña.

We might take this prayer as a summary of the important principles governing the creation of vernacular prayers as literary devices. In fact, after reading this prayer it seems to me that the writer who composed this epic in its last stage might be a monk. All the religious passages when studied in connection with the context show a very religious and learned author. Therefore, we do not agree with professor Colin Smith when he writes *It does not seem likely that he was a priest or a monk, the Christian sentiments of the poem are those normal for the time; and details of Christian observances, though frequent, are no more than any Observant layman would have known*.<sup>1</sup> and we do not agree with Deyermond's eclectic position either when he suggests that:

If a cleric did compose the poem it would have had to be one turned public entertainer. This would not have been impossible. Such clerics, to be sure, were not generally true juglares but, for the most part, persons who, having left their Order, became vulgar goliardic jesters and minstrels ... we think this could be possible but not probable.<sup>2</sup>

We think that all the Christian allusions and prayers written in the Poem of the Mio Cid reveal a poet and a religious man, a cleric or monk who wished to show an almost saintly hero guided and protected by God as Hart pointed out<sup>3</sup> who suggested that every victory won by

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<sup>1</sup>.- Colin Smith. ed. *Poema de Mio Cid*. Oxford, 1972. p. xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup>.- A. D. Deyermond. ed. *The Poem of the Cid*. London, 1969. p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>.- T. R. Hart "Hierarchal Patterns in *The Cantar de Mio Cid* " *Romanic Review* 53 (1962) pp. 161-73.

the Campeador and his men is always acknowledged to have been made possible by God's help as we can read in lines 792-3, 1102-3, 1118, 1157-8 and in the following verses:

Grandes son las ganancias quel' dio el Criador  
fevos aquí las señas, verdad vos digo yo. (ll. 1334-5)  
"God gave him rich gains, and here is proof that I am speaking  
nothing but the truth."

The Old English poem *The Battle of Maldon* and the Spanish epic *The Poem of the Cid* are "historical" epics and both were developed through a process of creation and recreation until a monk, who knew the art of composing poetry, wrote these poems in their present form. We suggest that the prayers introduced in these poems reflect a religious author and though they were written in different countries and in very different historical context, still present the same cultural origin as they were influenced by Benedictine monasteries in a period when Europe was ruled by the same religious principles and sentiments. And in the light of literary analysis we think that both poems were composed by learned poets of remarkable sensibility, mainly if we consider the importance of the prayers in the midst of the narrative as literary devices which cannot possibly be used by itinerant minstrels.

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