

## **1. The First Cry of Spanish Annotation of Monastery of St. Millán Glosas Emilianenses**

La Rioja State, located in the middle of northern Spain, is a small autonomous state famous for being a grape-producing area. Near Logroño, the center of the state, there is a village called Berceo, where the medieval poet Gonzalo de Berceo was born. A little further on from Berceo village, we can see the beautiful Monastery of St. Millán (Monasterio de San Millán) <picture 1><sup>1</sup>. I recommend climbing up to the “Monasterio de Suso” where you can enjoy the quiet rural scenery while reflecting on the history of Medieval Spain.



**【Picture 1: Monastery of St. Millán】**

This is one of the most important places for those who study the history of the Spanish language, because it was at this monastery (Monasterio de Yuso) that the oldest document in the history of the Spanish language, “Annotation of Monastery of St. Millán” (Glosas Emilianenses), was discovered. This document was written around the 10-11th century, and is referred to as “the first cry” (primer vagido) of Spanish.<sup>2</sup>

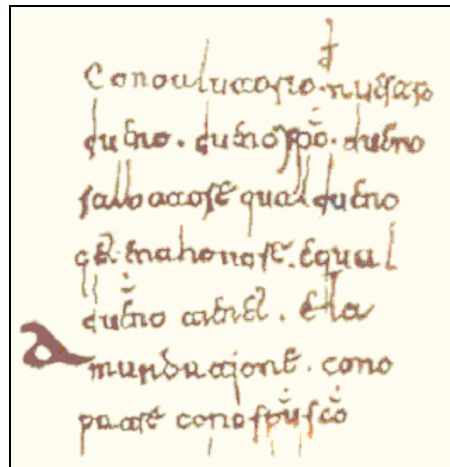
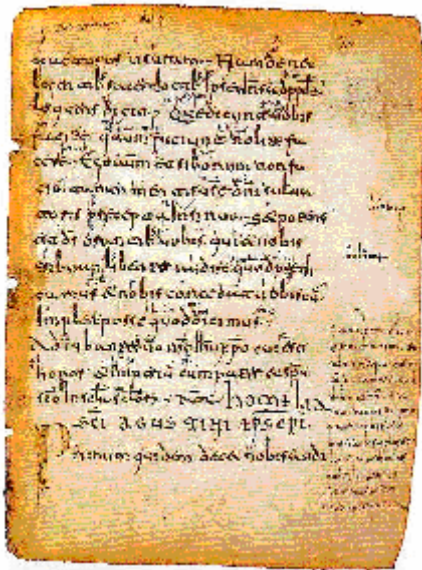
---

<sup>1</sup> Gonzalo de Berceo (1185?-1264) received an education at this monastery.

<sup>2</sup> “The first cry” is a metaphor used by Spanish linguist Dámaso Alonso. As we know,

## ● Marginal note

When we read texts to study foreign languages, we sometimes note the meanings of difficult words in the margins. Monks studying sermons of the saints at monasteries did the same thing one thousand years ago. They wrote down the meanings in the space between the lines and in the margins of their precious parchment papers in their own language, the Spanish of that time [Picture 2] . Although their intention was to learn the meanings in Latin,<sup>3</sup> it now gives us clues as to the primitive forms of Spanish by comparison.



**[Picture 2: Annotated document from the monastery of St. Millán]**

---

Spanish has gradually developed from spoken Latin, and it does not mean that Spanish had suddenly emerged at one specific time and place. ("Nunca podemos cortar por un punto y decir: Aquí está el español recién nacido. Pero en el espectro hay un instante en el que ya estamos seguros de ver color amarillo y no verde. Se trata, pues, de saber cuál es el primer testimonio conocido que caiga ya del lado del español, y no del latín.") Dámaso Alonso. "El primer vagido de la lengua española", en *De los siglos oscuros al de oro*. Madrid: Gredos. "We can not take one point and say; the Spanish language was just born. In the spectrum, however, there is an instant when we are sure to see the yellow and not the green. In other words, it is a matter of finding where the first proof of Spanish, instead of Latin, can be found."

<sup>3</sup> According to Ota (1988, 89), it is considered that these Latin words (Medieval Latin) in the margins were written by less educated persons, and there are many errors that can be associated with the slang they used (spoken Spanish at the dawn).