

OLIVER: THE RISE AND DECLINE OF A HERO**Carlos Alvar**

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Resum

El tema esencial de este trabajo es la figura literaria de Oliveros, desde sus primeras apariciones a su paulatina desaparición de los textos. El punto de partida, así, se establece en la presencia del antropónimo y en los debates acerca de su origen etimológico, pues a ese origen se asocian numerosos problemas (y algunas explicaciones) que afectan a la poesía épica occidental y a las relaciones que se establecen entre personajes y textos. Todo parece indicar que se trata de un héroe meridional y, como tal, ocupó un lugar destacado en cantares de gesta perdidos, de los que perviven versiones tardías o geográficamente lejanas (como las versiones escandinavas). Siendo un héroe ajeno a la tradición épica francesa y propio de la occitana, vinculado a la cuenca del Ródano, sorprende el protagonismo que alcanza en la *Chanson de Roland*, y a partir de ahí, en la onomástica y en las listas de los Doce Pares; sin embargo, no siempre el lugar que ocupa es el mismo, y con frecuencia queda postergado. En la Península Ibérica, no es extraño ver cómo otros héroes ocupan el lugar de Oliveros: son Bernardo del Carpio y Reinaldos de Montalbán. Nuestro paladín acaba siendo una simple sombra, un lejano recuerdo, y finalmente, es olvidado.

Paraules clau:**Abstract**

The essential topic of this paper is the literary figure of Oliver, from his first appearances to his gradual disappearance from the texts. Thus, the starting point is the presence of the anthroponym and the discussions about its etymology, given that numerous problems (as well as some explanations) affecting Western epic poetry and the relationships established between characters and texts can be related to that origin. It seems that he is a southern hero and as such, figured prominently in several lost *chansons de geste*, from which late or geographically distant versions survive (such as the Scandinavian versions). Since this hero belongs to the Occitan tradition, linked to the basin of the Rhone, and is alien to French epic tradition, the importance of his role in the *Chanson de Roland* is surprising, and from there, its preeminence in onomastics and in the lists of the Twelve Peers; however, the place he occupies is not always the same, and he is often set aside. In the Iberian Peninsula, it is not unusual to see how other heroes take the place of Oliver: Bernardo del Carpio and Reinaldos de Montalbán. Our paladin ends up being a mere shadow, a distant memory that is finally forgotten.

Key words:

I. THE ORIGINS OF OLIVER

1. An Onomastic Fashion?

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries sibling pairs named Oliver and Roland, or its equivalent forms, depending on the language, can be found throughout much of Western Europe. Two dozen examples, from Northern and Southern France, Sicily, and the Hispanic March, attest to the popularity of the two heroes, although scholars have not reached unanimous conclusions about the exact extent of the phenomenon: the earliest evidence, in which the eldest son is called Oliver, may indicate the existence of traditions prior to the *Chanson de Roland* (according to its Oxford version), and could even lead us to consider a hagiographic legend linking the two characters. On the other hand, the absence of Oliver from some lists of the Twelve Peers, and its distancing from Roland in other texts, has led many to suggest their original independence from each other, which invites reflection about the primitive form of the French *chanson de geste* and the role assigned to the deuteragonist, immediately hinting at a tradition prior to Turol. Thus, the disputes between individualists and neo-traditionalists find in onomastics the possibility of further arguments to support their standpoints.

Although we shall return to these issues, I want to point out that I think it is excessive to speak of an “onomastic fashion” on the basis of the existence of two dozen pairs of siblings called Roland and Oliver. They are but a few among several hundreds of thousands of names, which is a proportion much lower than one in ten thousand, lower even than that of Arthurian names, or those inspired by the Matter of Britain. However, this does not mean that finding those names lacks relevance, especially taking into account the break they entail with respect to the prevailing Germanic onomastic tradition of that time. In any case, it serves to grant the phenomenon its due dimension, since it would be an exotic rarity and involves a clear desire for individualization against more widespread onomastic habits, whether they were of Germanic origin or, less frequently, Roman or Christian.

2. The Texts

The first question that arises is the origin of the name *Olivier-Oliver*, which seems to be an anthroponym of Latin origin. If so, it would be the only one among the fifty four Christian characters that appear in the *Chanson de Roland* who bears a Latin name (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 318; AEBISCHER 1960: 72-80).¹ This exception also goes against the patronymic uses in France in the late tenth or early eleventh century, for approximately 6% of the documented anthroponyms were of Latin origin, whereas 93% were of Germanic origin, although the proportions vary by

¹ Now, *Rolandiana et Olivariana. Recueil d'études sur les chansons de geste*, Genève, Droz, 1967: 56-80. Actually, there are fifty-four Christian characters and fifty-four pagans (AEBISCHER 1955-1956: 73).

region and period.² Aebischer notes that the hero's name could not derive from an *olivarius* linked to the tree of wisdom, because in the *Chanson de Roland* that kind of symbolism does not appear and, on the other hand, it could not explain the existence of the name before the dissemination of the epic poem, supported by the abundant evidence of the eleventh century and even before that. Therefore, the Swiss researcher proposes that it is a Merovingian creation from the Latin feminine name *Oliva* and the Germanic suffix *-harja*, usually transcribed by the Merovingians as *-charius*, and already Latinized in the Carolingian period as *-arius*. Before the year 1000, it had become common among the Franks in Gaul, spelled as *-erius* and pronounced *-ërius*, as it happened with the suffix *-arius* from the Latin, so that these two suffixes became homophones; hence, the name *Olivarius* > *Oliverius* would be a relatively new hybrid anthroponym, with Latin root and Germanic ending.³ As a birthname it is documented especially in the basin of the Rhone. The second question is the origin of the character, for its presence alongside Roland is by no means less general in the French epic poem dedicated to Charlemagne. Indeed, it seems that the *Chanson de Roland* (as we know it through the Oxford manuscript) is the result of a long process, during which characters and episodes were progressively incorporated, which can be inferred from figures such as Ganelon, Aude and Oliver, or episodes such as that of Baligant. Aebischer summarizes the process clearly, if not in a way always accepted by other scholars, and lists a whole lot of suggestions about the phases of composition of the *chanson de geste* and about the different authors (or minstrels) who participated in the long chain: first,

Il y eut celui qui chanta les exploits d'un inconnu, Roland à Roncevaux, avec un tel succès qu'il l'imposa aux annalistes et aux fabricants de faux diplômes. Il y a eu celui qui chanta la longue lutte d'un vassal rebelle contre l'empereur son suzerain et qui, pour seconder ce vassal, inventa le personnage d'Olivier; il y eut celui qui fit passer Roland et Olivier des bords du Rhône à ceux de l'Ebre et à Roncevaux; il y eut celui qui pour la plus grande gloire de Roland, magnifia le personnage d'Aude. Il y eut sans aucun doute d'autres, qui tous inconnus apportèrent tous leur contribution au poème qui devait trouver sa parfaite expression dans le *Roland* d'Oxford. La *Chanson de Roland*, du lointain IXe siècle jusqu'à la fin du XIe, a été une longue succession de créations, d'innovations, d'adjonctions, d'emprunts, de récréations, que nous ne pouvons que deviner par l'examen minutieux des chartes, des textes d'annales, des résumés trop succincts, quelque précieux qu'ils soient, que nous conservent la *Nota Emilianense* ou la *Karlamagnús saga* (AEBISCHER 1966: 173).⁴

Let us dwell for a moment in that long tradition Aebischer alludes to, which includes the information derived from the *Nota Emilianense* (ca 1070); the *Codex Calixtinus* (ca 1145); and, above all, the successive branches of the *Karlamagnús saga*, which, between 1230 and 1250, rewrites in prose

² The statistics come from JACOBSSON 1955: 12, 28, and are compiled in AEBISCHER 1966: 169 [now, *Rolandiana et Olivariana. Recueil d'études sur les chansons de geste*, Genève, Droz, 1967: 141-173]

³ The feminine Latin name *Oliva* must not be mistaken for the masculine Visigothic name *Oliba*. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 325-327, compiles the conclusions of LEJEUNE 1950 and the criticism of DELBOUILLE 1954: 115-119. Consuelo GARCÍA GALLARÍN (2014, s.v. Oliverio, Oliver, Oliveros) considers that the French form *Olivier*, was popularly associated with the Latin *Olivarius* [olive tree], and that its origin "podría venir de *Oliver* en antiguo danés y sueco, o bien de *Alfihari*, *Alfihær* 'el ejército de los elfos'".

⁴ For an overview of the issues mentioned here, see RIQUEUR 2009: 47-152.

several French *chansons de geste* based on different versions, all of them preceding those which have come down to us. Besides this relationship, the pairs of brothers named Roland and Oliver documented throughout the eleventh century must also be taken into account, as well as other textual proofs previous to the Oxford manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland*.⁵

The brief *Nota* of the monastery of San Millán, in La Rioja, lists half a dozen “nephews” (*neptis*) of Charlemagne, in what is an incomplete list of the Twelve Peers: *Rodlane, Bertlane, Oggero Spata curta, Ghigelmo Alcorbitanas, Olibero, episcopo domini Torpini*. The separation of the names of Roland and Oliver would indicate that the relationship between both heroes was not so close as the Oxford’s *Chanson de Roland* suggests. Thus, we can deduce that the *Nota* is a clear witness to the dissemination of the theme in the Iberian Peninsula and also stands out for presenting an earlier tradition different from the *chanson de geste* we know (ALONSO 1953; 1973: 225-319; MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 353-410).⁶

The *Codex Calixtinus* contains the oldest version of the so-called *History of the pseudo-Turpin* (*Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*). Among the dead at the Battle of Roncesvalles there was—according to the *Chanson de Roland* (ll. 2248-49) and some other texts—the Archbishop of Reims, Turpin, but this detail must have been disregarded as a mistake, because according to other texts, after the defeat he retired to Vienne and began to write the *Historia* at the request of his friend Leoprand, dean of Aachen. This work compiled the memories of fourteen years of military campaigns alongside the emperor in Spain, as he claims in the epistle that precedes it (CÓDICE 1998; CODICE 2008). Turpin’s death occurred soon after, as his continuator Pope Callixtus II (1119-1124) recounts in an epilogue to the *Historia*, which is as false as the rest. Composed in the mid-twelfth century, this chronicle was obviously not written by Archbishop Turpin, and in that sense it is a fiction, and the events in it are as false as the attribution to the prelate of Reims, but all this did not impede its widespread dissemination in the Middle Ages (about a hundred and thirty extant manuscripts and six different translations into French before 1500 attest to it), or that the story itself was deemed authentic (LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ-MORÁS 2002a: 175-186).

On 29 December 1165, Charlemagne was canonized. For that reason, the clerics of Aachen composed the *Vita Karoli Magni*, abundantly drawing on materials from the *Historia* of the pseudo-Turpin, which by then was already considerably renowned (PSEUDO 2003).

In fact, in the mid-twelfth century, the French or Francophile cleric—who took the identity of Bishop Turpin—must have compiled a lot of materials from different origins—ecclesiastical, profane, moralizing, epic, etc.—to write this text of propaganda for the Crusade in Spain and the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Charlemagne, the king of epic poetry and the *chansons*

⁵ For a complete account of the testimonies, see, in general, MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959; RIQUER 2009: 85 et seq. For French and Italian versions, see HORRENT 1951.

⁶ For a different perspective, see MARTÍNEZ 1975: 316-344.

de geste, is the leading character, although the figure of his nephew, Roland, gradually began to take shape (LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ-MORÁS 2002b; LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ-MORÁS 2003), next to a much less present Oliver, who nevertheless maintains an undeniable main role besides his friend. Thus, in the expedition of Charlemagne against Agolant, the most noble knights who joined the king are listed: first, Archbishop Turpin; then Roland, and immediately after him, Oliver, “military leader, most valiant knight, very skilled in warfare, powerful by the strength of his arm and his sword, Earl of Agen and son of Count Renier, who had in his entourage three thousand fighters...”⁷ The other noblemen are barely mentioned by name, title and the number of soldiers they contributed to the army, and as the list progresses, the details become more scarce. Oliver has a prominent place in the *Historia* of the pseudo-Turpin, which he does not hold in the *Nota Emilianense*.

It is possible that the *Historia* of the pseudo-Turpin and the *Nota Emilianense* come from different traditions, more elaborate in the case of the latter. After the first reference in the “list of leaders”, and upon narrating the return to France, the author of the historiographic narrative explains how Charlemagne, on the advice of Ganelon, ordered his dearest knights that is, “his nephew Roland, Count of Le Mans and Blaya, and Oliver, Count of Geneva”, to take charge of the rearguard.⁸

Nothing else is said about our knight until we discover him on the battlefield, martyred as if he were St. Bartholomew himself, crucified, flayed and beaten, and pierced by spears and arrows;⁹ later on we will learn that he was buried in Belin, with other fighters.¹⁰ In the appendix attributed to Pope Callixtus, the two companions are mentioned again together with “the other martyrs” of Roncesvalles, and the same event is remembered later, when the *Guía de peregrinos* [The Pilgrims’ Guide] to Santiago refers to the Roncevaux Pass, “the place of the great battle where King Marsile, Roland, Oliver and hundred and forty thousand other Christian and Saracen soldiers met their deaths”.¹¹ In the same part of the *Codex Calixtinus* there is another reference to the tomb of the “martyr” Oliver in Belin.¹²

Thus, the data contained in the *pseudo-Turpin* do not match the information conveyed by the *Nota Emilianense*, nor what we know through the *Chanson de Roland*, and it seems clear that we must consider different traditions.¹³

⁷ Book IV, chap. XI.

⁸ Book IV, chap. XXI. “Count of Geneva” is a scholarly interpretation of the Latin form “Comites Gebennensis”, given that the Swiss town was called “Gebenna” until 1535 and appears in this manner in Einhard’s *Anales*.

⁹ Book IV, chap. XXVI. “[The French] Oliverum ... iacentem super solum terrae eversum, in effigie crucis extensum quattuor palis in terra fixis, cum quattuor retortis fortiter nexum, et a collo usque ad unguis pedum et manuum cultellis acutissimis excoriatum iaculisque, sagittis, lanceisque, spatibus perforatum magnisque ictibus baculorum attritum inveniunt”.

¹⁰ Book IV, chap. XXIX.

¹¹ Book V, chap. VII.

¹² Book V, chap. VIII. On the “martyrdom” of Roland and Oliver, see BURGER 1948-1949.

¹³ See also AEBISCHER 1966: 151.

The information supplied by the *Karlamagnús saga* is also different. This work is a mid-thirteenth Scandinavian translation of several French *chansons de geste*. Apparently, it was composed at the behest of Hákon IV Hákonarson, king of Norway between 1217 and 1263, after the model of some text that circulated in the court of Henry III Plantagenet early in the century. It is an example of an amply documented translation activity attested to by other works, mostly pertaining to the Matter of Britain, although there are also *chansons de geste* that were never part of the *Karlamagnús saga* or of the Anglo-Norman compilation on which the text in old Norse is based (SAGA 2000).¹⁴ The compilation recounts the life of the Frankish Emperor, from his birth to his death, and has been divided by scholars into ten branches:

- I. *Life of Charlemagne*, formed with elements of several *chansons de geste*, which will then be taken up in other branches of the compilation. Among other interesting facts, the incestuous origin of Roland is revealed here; he is the offspring of the relationship between the king and one of his sisters, and this sin will be behind the defeat of Roncesvalles. In this first branch, we can trace a now lost *Entrée d'Espagne*, which is older than the extant Franco-Italian version, and a primitive *Girart de Vienne*, which has not survived. A now lost *Guerre d'Espagne* and a hypothetical *chanson*, *Roncevaux*, could also have provided the basis for this part.
- II. *Olive and Landres*, where the theme of the wife unjustly accused of adultery is developed. It is a late text, from the late thirteenth century. In this story, Olive is a sister of Charlemagne.
- III. *Ogier the Dane*, a translation of a French *chanson de geste*, close to *La Chevalerie d'Ogier de Danemarche*.
- IV. *Aspremont* recounts the confrontation between Charlemagne and the Moorish king Agolant until the latter is defeated and killed. It draws on a French *chanson d'Aspremont* now lost but older than the version that has reached us.
- V. *Gvitalin the Saxon* happens after the conquest of Spain by Charlemagne. It is a translation of a disappeared *Chanson des Saxons*, perhaps the same one that provided the basis for Jean Bodel's *Chanson des Saisnes*.
- VI. *Otuel* is a translation of the *Chanson d'Otinél* and is set again in Italy. It is possible that it was copied by an Icelandic copyist, who abridged and cut the original significantly.
- VII. *The journey of Charlemagne to Jerusalem and Constantinople* is the translation of the homonymous French *chanson de geste*, older than the extant version.
- VIII. *The Battle of Roncesvalles* is an adaptation of a version of the *Chanson de Roland* that is quite close to the Oxford manuscript until l. 2569 (the death of Roland), but differs from it from that moment on: both the episode of Baligant and the trial against Ganelon do not appear here.
- IX. *William Short-Nose* is a rendition of the *Moniage Guillaume*, and recounts the events following the disaster of Roncesvalles.

¹⁴ See also AEBISCHER 1954.

- X. *The Death of Charlemagne*, incorporates all sorts of signs and miracles extracted from Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum historiale* and the same sources used in Branch I.

Oliver is no stranger among the heroes of the *Karlamagnús saga*; he appears frequently in Branch I, probably because of his prominent role in the lost *chanson Girart de Vienne*: instead of Charlemagne and his nephew Roland, this Southern poem featured Girart and his nephew Oliver. Tradition would soon turn Oliver into the son of Renier—brother of Girart and father of Aude—so that Oliver and Aude ended up being siblings, although at first they were cousins, for the *Karlamagnús saga* (I) presents Oliver as the son of a sister of Girart, not a brother.

Two significant facts can be derived from this information: first, the important role of the family group and the link between the sister's son and his uncle, essential to maintain the unity of agnatic kinship, for only males count as members of the group. Second, the purely literary need to symmetrically balance the figures of Charlemagne and Roland, both of them already well known to the public, gives the powerful rebel vassal Girart a nephew, Oliver, who could face Roland and beat him in single combat. However, such a combat never happens, for peace is restored by the marriage alliance between a relative of Girart, Aude the Fair, and the most prominent of Charlemagne's relatives, Roland (FAVATI 1962: 12-16).

Thus, Aude would be Renier's daughter and a niece of Girart. At the time when the marriage agreement was settled to restore peace, she was probably too young because Roland did not marry her immediately. Oliver, who was also Girart's nephew, was the son of a sister, as the *Karlamagnús saga* points out repeatedly, and through a "transfer of fatherhood" ended up being the son of Renier and therefore, the brother of Aude, as I have just mentioned following Aebischer and Favati (AEBISCHER 1966: 157...; FAVATI 1962).

Oliver was well known to the southern audience, thanks to the role he played in the early *Girart de Vienne*, a *chanson de geste* known since the early eleventh century. His friendship with Roland would then arise and, together, they would join Charlemagne's expeditions to Spain and die as martyrs or knights of Christ in the ambush of the Pyrenees.

In addition to this evidence, the silence of Einhard's biography of Charlemagne, of the so-called *Fragment of The Hague*, of the *chansons de geste Gormond et Isembart* and *Raimbaut et Hamon*, and of the the diploma of Saint-Yrieix-de-la-Perche (Haute Vienne)—falsely dated 794, but actually composed around 1090—about the figure of Oliver are quite eloquent. The absence of Roland and Oliver from these accounts is a clear indication of the existence of *chansons de geste* about Charlemagne in which the king is not accompanied by neither of the two heroes; or, to put it another way, it evinces an epic tradition which is alien to the events of Roncesvalles.¹⁵

¹⁵ EGINHARDO 1999. the *Fragment of The Hague* can be found in MARTÍNEZ 1975: 401-406; RIQUER 2009: 354-365.

3. Oliver, a Meridional Hero

Aebischer's studies have shown the existence of an early southern epic poem based on the confrontation between Charlemagne and Girart of Vienne.

Favati, in turn, establishes a close relationship between Oliver and different localities in the basin of the Rhone, or close to this river, that can be found in the Provençal texts in which Oliver is called "of Lausanne", while in northern France he is known as "of Vienne" like his uncle Girart. Renier, Aude's father, is the Count of Geneva. The link between Oliver and Aude and the "Burgundian" regions seems certain, as numerous allusions confirm. As Favati claims, it is also possible that the lists of the Twelve Peers contained in Oxford's *Chanson de Roland*, in the early *chansons de geste*, *L'Entrée d'Espagne* and *Pèlerinage Charlemagne*—attested to in the *Karlamagnús saga*—in the *Fragment of The Hague*, in the *Nota Emilianense*, and in the apocryphal of Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche present northern and southern heroes alternatively. This meticulous composition would be broken if Oliver is considered as one of the paladins of northern France, therefore there seems to be a tradition interested in maintaining the balance regarding the place of origin of the Twelve Peers (FAVATI 1962).

These hypotheses raise again the controversy about the existence of epic in southern France, an issue that was hotly debated in the second half of the nineteenth century and already seems definitely accepted by scholars, and even more so since the discovery of *Roland a Saragossa* in 1912 (ROLAND, 1991; ALVAR 1978; BELLETTI 1998). This is not the time to deal with this matter, but I would like to point out how François Pirot, analysing the references to Oliver in Provençal texts, identifies two possible "Olivers": Oliver of Lausanne and Oliver of Verdun, and leaves out the appellations of Vienne and Geneva, which do not appear in southern French works. For the first one he contributes the allusions of Guillem de Berguedà (*Consiros cant e planc e plor*, ca 1185), the Provençal version of the *Gesta Karoli Magni ad Carcassonam et Narbonam* (beginning of the thirteenth c.), of *Ronsasvals* (mid-fourteenth c., although there was possibly an earlier version two centuries before) and concludes that this Oliver is the hero known by the tradition of the *Chanson de Roland*, whom we have already discussed (PIROT 1969: 247-265).

As to "Oliver of Verdun", Pirot concludes after the *ensenhamen* of Guerau de Cabreira—addressed to his jongleur Cabra (ca 1155), and in which the name of Oliver appears twice (ll. 86 and 156), first accompanying Roland and later by himself under the denomination "of Verdun"—that there are indeed two different characters, and that the said "Oliver of Verdun" is not Roland's companion.¹⁶ The same "Oliver of Verdun" is mentioned in *Flamenca* (second half of the thirteenth century), which would suffice to recall what was a well-known theme for

Here I am using GORMOT 1969. For *Raimbaud et Hamon*, see AEBISCHER 1954: 35-55. The apocryphal of Saint-Yrieix-de-la-Perche can be found in MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 370.

¹⁶ The *ensenhamen* was published in RIQUER 2009: 367-391; RODRÍGUEZ VELASCO 1999: 221-243.

the audience since the mid-twelfth century. The absence of Roland seems to suggest that in this case the character is actually the “other” Oliver. Moreover, the *Roman d’Arles* (composed between the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth) seems to contain an error in which a compiler mistook “Olevier de Verdun” for Roland’s companion, leading to an incomprehensible reading. At the end of the story the same name appears again as a counsellor of Louis the Pious, which renders the identification with the hero of Roncesvalles impossible. Finally, a mention in *De castri stabilimento* (an Hispanic-Latin opuscle of the fourteenth century, maybe composed by a Catalan author) seems to refer to the same character.

If Pirot is right, we might have to accept the possibility that there were two Olivers: one would be Roland’s companion, linked to the territories near the Rhone; the other would come from a certain village called Verdun, whose location would be difficult to pinpoint given the frequency of the toponym. However, I believe that given the scarcity of the name *Oliver* we can not surmise the existence of two homonymous heroes, one coming from a certain Verdun in northern France and the other from the Rhone Valley, for there are several villages called Verdun in the region of Vienne. It is easier and therefore more plausible—in my opinion—to infer the existence of two different *chansons de geste* with the same protagonist, which leads to the possible existence of a local epic cycle dedicated to the friend of Roland.

Certainly, the issue is much more complex, as H. E. Keller notes (KELLER 1989: 139...). Southeastern France had weathered the pressure of the Capetians under the leadership of Girart and his “retinue”, therefore the exploits of Roland would not be accepted without some changes. The most significant changes come from the role given to the character of Oliver, highlighted perhaps because of his relationship with the historical lineage of the Olivas, counts of Carcassonne in the ninth and tenth centuries, who enjoyed great prestige (LEJEUNE 1950: 383-384; KELLER 1989: 156). “Oliver would be a natural ally of the rebel Girart against the northern Carolingian rule but, in his maturity, he would also prove a partner on equal terms, again in connection with Girart” (KELLER 1989: 157). Keller adds,

nothing more natural, either, than the need an eleventh-century poet apparently felt, perhaps moved by opportunism, of merging a regional *chanson*, *Girart de Vienne*—which had already assimilated the Septimanian tradition of the fight of the lords of Carcassonne against the Arabs—with the new fashion, that is, a *chanson* on Charlemagne and Roland, his young nephew, who in the southeast was suspected to be the king’s son, and turn Oliver—for symmetry, to use Aenischer’s expression—into Girart’s nephew. It was this new *chanson* which became so popular that parents in southern France began to baptize the eldest son Oliver and the youngest Roland, first in the Dauphiné and then in other neighboring regions, such as Auvergne (KELLER 1989: 157-158).

4. On Onomastics

In the mid-twentieth century, a series of works by R. Lejeune, P. Aebischer and R. Menéndez Pidal revealed the existence of pairs of brothers named Roland and Oliver or Oliver and Roland (LEJEUNE 1950; AEBISCHER 1952a, 1952b, 1953, 1955, 1955-1956; MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 327-336). The discovery of the documents was used to date the formation process of the *Chanson de Roland* and its dissemination, for the fact that a father would baptize his children with the names of the protagonists of the *chanson de geste* had to be due, without a doubt, to the success achieved by the epic poem, which would already present the structure of the text of the manuscript of Oxford. But, moreover, the location and dating of these documents could be useful to try to explain the origin of the primitive *chanson de geste* and may even serve to shed some light on the figure of Oliver, who resisted any historical approach.

Thus, among the several questions arising, one was especially insistent: was Oliver created by the author of the *Chanson de Roland*? Against those who thought the name and character were at the base of the anthroponym and, therefore, the documentary presence of one Oliver—and more so if he was accompanied by Roland—showed the widespread dissemination of the *chanson de geste*, there was no shortage of those who brought to light documents from the late tenth or early eleventh century to prove that the name of the deuteragonist was older than the version we know of the *Chanson de Roland*. The chronological and geographical organization of such evidence clearly showed the pre-existence of the birthname *Oliver* and its early presence in southern regions of France. These findings paved the way for the assumptions already discussed about the mixed composition of the name, with both Latin and Germanic elements, and about the important role of the hero in a primitive *chanson*, *Girart de Vienne*, where the friendship between him and Roland would have been born, and from which it would later pass on to the text of the *Chanson de Roland*.

On the basis of the list of sixteen *Rotlandus* prior to the year 1000 that she found in southern France, and especially in the Mediterranean region and the eastern Pyrenees, R. Lejeune claimed that area as the point of origin of the epic story of Charlemagne, Roland and Oliver. In contrast, Keller points to the Dauphiné as the birthplace of the legends, and bases his assumption on political reasons. Despite the absence of evidence to support his hypothesis, the German scholar argues that the *Rotlandus* quoted are generally random survivals in the documentation, which would only prove that the senior members of the administration in southern France came from northern France since the time of Clovis (KELLER 1989: 158). Thus it was “in the French-Provençal South East and in northern Provence, and more specifically in the Dauphiné around the year 1000, where the “matter” of Roland and that of Oliver merged” (KELLER 1989: 158-159). Keller concludes that it was around the mid-twelfth century, at the abbey of Saint-Denis, that Abbot Suger promoted an epic poem in which the friendship between Roland and Oliver reached

its noblest expression and became a symbol of the union of North and South, as Suger himself desired (KELLER 1989: 159).

According to the data collected by these studies, the early appearance of Oliver is quite clear. It is also remarkable that the oldest evidence of sibling pairs named after the two companions put before Oliver's name, which seems to demonstrate the existence of a text in which he was the protagonist, while Roland took a back seat. The list established by Aebischer serves as a proof to this:¹⁷

1. Savigny (Lyon, Rhône)	prior to 1000	Oliverii
2. Brioude (Auvergne)	999-1031	Oliverii; Rodlandi
3. Maine (Mans)	from 1040 a 1065	Olivero
4. Angers (Anjou)	1056 y 1090	Oliverius
5. Lérins	1056	Olivarius
6. Castillon-sur-Dordogne	from 1058 a 1088	Oliverius
7. Saumur	1059-1070	Oliverius
8. Redon	1062-1070	Oliver
9. Vendôme	1062 y 1090	Oliverius
10. St-Émilien (Bretagne)	from 1068 a 1080	Oliver
11. Poitiers	1073-1100	Oliverius
12. Burdeos	1080	Oliverius
13. Angers (Anjou)	1082-1106	Oliverius, Rotlandus
14. Molêmes (Côte-d'Or, Bourgogne)	1083-1096	Oliverius
15. Jumièges (Normandie)	1086	Olivarius
16. Savigny (Lyon)	1087	Oliverius
17. Poitiers	1088-1091	Olivarius
18. Molêmes (Côte-d'Or, Bourgogne)	1090-1111	Oliverius
19. Béziers (Languedoc)	1091	Olivarius, Rotlandus
20. Nouaillé	1092-1115	Oliverus
21. Redon	ca 1095	Oliverius
22. St-Pé-de-Bigorre (Htes-Pyrénées)	1096	Olivarius, Rollandus
23. Beaulieu	1097-1107	Oliverius
24. Limoges	1100	Olivarius
25. Dinan (Bretagne)	1108	Oliverius, Rollandus
26. Saintes (Saintonge, Charente-Inf.)	1119-1123	Oliverius
27. Molêmes (Bourgogne)	1123	Rollanus, Oliverius

¹⁷ The data here come from MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 332 et seq., adding some of the data compiled in AEBISCHER 1960: 76-77, 67. Following Aebischer, I'm ignoring doubtful or questionable documents related to the epic pair.

28. Scafati	1131	Rollandus et Uliverius
29. Pisa	1136	Ulivieri
30. Saintes (Saintonge, Charente-Inf.)	1137	Rothlandus, Oliverius
31. Picardie	1145	Olivier
32. Sant Cugat del Vallés	1145	Rotulandus et Olivarius ¹⁸
33. Pavia	1145?	Rolandus et Oliverius
34. Saintes (Saintonge, Charente-Inf.)	ca 1163	Olivier
35. Lorraine	1171	Olivier
36. Sant'Olcese	1172	Oliverius et Rolandus
37. Mulazzano	1174	Rolandus et Oliverius
38. Ferrara	1176	Orlando; Olivero

This table evinces that until the early twelfth century Oliver took precedence and that over that century he gradually lost it in favour of his companion. This fact is explained by the success of the *Chanson de Roland*, where the role of the nephew of Charlemagne is far more prominent than the role of his friend. On the other hand, the southern origin of the earliest documents is quite clear, both those that only contain the name of Oliver and those including the pair Oliver-Roland.

II. PENINSULAR DOCUMENTS

5. From the *Nota Emilianense* to the *Poema de Almería*

In the preceding pages I have mentioned the *Nota Emilianense* on several occasions, because it is crucial to understand the spread of the legend of Roland, appreciate the early arrival of the same to the Iberian Peninsula, and grasp how it presents characteristics that are different from those conveyed by other texts. The fact that the *Nota Emilianense* alludes to Oliver is exceptional and is no doubt due to its departure from official historiography, since other texts, such as the *Historia Seminense*, from the early twelfth century, closely follow Einhard's *Vita Karoli* and the *Anales carolingios refundidos (Annales Regii)* (MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 138...; HORRENT 1951a: 445...). The same can not be said about the *Liber Maiolichinus* (ca 1135), or the *Poema de Almería* included in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* (ca 1150), which stand apart from traditional historiographical schools. The first of these texts recounts the expedition of the Pisans against Majorca (1113-1115); its author, anonymous, was possibly from Pisa. Towards the end of the *Liber* (ll. 3294-3296) he writes:

Protinus incipiunt pugnam, Brunicardia proles,
 Promptus Oliverius, Vada quem misistis ad arma
 Rolandusque valens Rodulfo patre creatus.¹⁹

¹⁸ Se trata de «Olivario, presbitero, et fratri suo Rodlando Olivario», muy probablemente hijos de un «Olivarius».

¹⁹ This passage is quoted in MARTÍNEZ 1975: 282. "Immediately the son of Brunicardo, the nimble Oliver, Vada,

However, the presence of the two friends in a work that celebrates the expedition to the Balearic Islands should be considered as a mere mirage (partial or relative), first because it is an Italian work, and therefore it belongs to a tradition alien to the Iberian Peninsula. Second, there were two historical figures called Oliver and Roland, the sons of Brunicardo and Rodulfo, respectively, documented in Pisa in the early twelfth century: *Ulivieri*, signs a document as a witness on 16 September 1136, while the documents related to Roland are dated 1111 and 1118 (MARTÍNEZ 1975: 284, n. 28). Nevertheless, the presence of both of them as an example of courage belies the existence of an epic tradition and perhaps again, the way in which Oliver occupied a more prominent place than his companion, as also happens in the Provençal *Canso d'Antiocha* (ca 1130-1140, "Oliviers fo e Turpi et aussì Rotlan", l. 577). Returning, then, to Hispanic territory, the *Poema de Almería*, which narrates in Latin verses the conquest of the Andalusian city by the troops of Alfonso VII in 1147, is of great interest (HORRENT 1951a: 447...; MARTÍNEZ 1975: 298...). Since the Castilian king died ten years later, it is clear that the text eulogizing the monarch must be prior to 1157. As a way of assessing the courage of Álvaro, grandson of Álvaro Fáñez, the anonymous author uses its knowledge of epics and recalls the Cid, Roland and Oliver:

Tempore Roldani si tertius Alvarus esset
 Post Oliverum, fateor sine crimine verum,
 Sub iuga Francorum fuerat gens Agarenorum,
 Nec socii chari iacuissent morte preempti,
 Nullaque sub coelo melior fuit hasta sereno. (ll. 215-219)²⁰

The words are succinct, but clear enough to see how Roland has taken precedence; Oliver is the second one with no one standing between the friends. The anonymous author seems convinced that the French were defeated, or at least, that the Saracens were never submitted on the battlefield nor through any other punishment, and that the *socii*, the Twelve Peers, found death at the hands of their enemies. I can not dwell on the considerations these lines have generated, but it seems unfair to infer that there is a hagiographic poem in Latin at the basis of the *Poema* instead of an epic poem in Castilian, as the form *Roldani* seems to suggest and Horrent and Menéndez Pidal noted (HORRENT 1951a: 448...; MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 152...).²¹ The *Poema de Almería* differs from the *Nota Emilianense*—composed a hundred years earlier—in the prominence given to Oliver, while it comes near the contemporary tradition of the *pseudo-Turpin* and the *Guía de peregrinos* included in the *Codex Calixtinus*.

whom you sent with the weapons (?), and the brave Roland, son of Rodulfo, start fighting”.

²⁰ “Estoy seguro que si en tiempo de Roldán hubiese vivido Álvaro, habría sido el tercero después de Oliveros; el pueblo agareno se habría sometido al yugo de los francos y la amada pareja no habría caído vencida por la muerte; bajo el cielo sereno no hubo mejor lanza” (Spanish translation in MARTÍNEZ 1975: 39).

²¹ On the hagiographic interpretation, see MARTÍNEZ 1975: 298 et seq., which follow BURGER 1948-49. On the bases of Burger’s paper, MARTÍNEZ 1975: 407-408 includes in the appendix a passage of what could be the *Passio beatorum Rotholandi et Oliverii martyrum*, which he places before 1154.

6. Some Literary Romance Texts

A short poem, also from the twelfth century, with a similar topic is included in the *Crónica de la población de Ávila*, written between 1255 and 1256, but it refers to a character who apparently lived in the mid-twelfth century, Zorraquín Sancho:

Cantan de Roldán,
cantan de Olivero,
e non de Çorraquín
que fue buen cavallero.

Cantan de Olivero,
cantan de Roldán,
e non de Çorraquín
que fue buen barragán (RICO 1975).

The exploits of the two companions are comparable and have become not only exemplary, but they have also pervaded popular and traditional poetry.

Later will come Berceo's allusions in the *Vida de San Millán* in the mid-thirteenth century (v. 412), or the *Poema de Fernán González*, somewhat later, which lists the paladins with details reminiscent of the *pseudo-Turpin* (v. 349):

Carlos e Valdovinos, Roldán e don Ojero,
Terrín e Gualdabuey, Arnald'e Olivero
Torpín e don Rinaldos, el gascón Angelero,
Estol'e Salomón, otro su compañero (LIBRO 2001).²²

But the name of Oliver was gradually relegated to the background and forgotten, while Roland seemed to withstand the vicissitudes of time, which shows that the union of the two partners was not as strong as it appeared.²³

The passage of the Castilian *Roncesvalles* copied by a scribe from Navarre can be also traced back to the thirteenth century. On the battlefield, Charlemagne finds the body of Turpin and then the body of Oliver (l. 11) whom he addresses asking for Roland (ll. 18 et seq.); the emperor finds his nephew nearby, and Oliver is not mentioned again. Jules Horrent believes that *Roncesvalles* is

²² It is possible that the introduction of Renaud de Montauban among the fighters of Roncesvalles is a late addition. It appears in *Roncesvalles* and in the Alphonsine *Versión crítica de la Estoria de España*; it also belongs to the Italian tradition that inspired Pulci's *Morgante*.

²³ Neither the Galician-Portuguese parody by Afonso Lopez de Baian, nor *De rebus Hispaniae* by Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (ca 1243), or Alfonso X's *Estoria de España* (before 1284) do mention our knight. This points to those historians who follow other sources than the *chanson de geste*, as I will note below. As to the *cantiga de escarnio*, *Sedia-xi don Velpelho en hũa sa mayson*, by the Portuguese nobleman, no names seem to come from French epic, although we can find other elements derived from it that were analysed by Jules HORRENT 1948.

at a fairly advanced stage in the general narrative evolution of the accounts on Roland (HORRENT 1951b: 138), composed later than the rhymed version (V4), but prior to the first refreshing Italian versions of the fourteenth century. It is possible that the scene of the discovery of the body of Oliver was already in the model followed by *Roncesvalles*, which certainly was a hybrid version (HORRENT 1951b: 140). The words of Charlemagne, in any case, suggest that our hero was in charge of protecting his companion, reinforcing the idea that he was the eldest, already suggested by Aebischer on the basis of the primitive *Girart de Vienne*, as summarized in Branch I of the *Karlamagnús saga*.

We still find Oliver in the *Poema de Alfonso XI*, a rhymed chronicle composed by Rodrigo Yáñez in 1348:

Non fue mejor cavallero
el arçobispo don Torpín
nin el cortés Olivero
nin el Roldán palaçín. (estr. 1742) (POEMA 1956)

Here the ideal of courage is exemplified by the three characters of the *Cansó d'Antiocha*, although Roland is the only one who maintains his position, behind the other two. Turpin, Oliver, and Roland, in the same order of appearance we find in *Roncesvalles*. But not much more can be added in my opinion.

7. Historiography

Despite this fleeting appearance in the *Poema de Alfonso XI*, Oliver slowly disappeared from the epic scene, replaced by Renaud de Montauban. Historiography can provide us with some hints in this regard.

A slight evolution can be perceived in the account of the events of Roncesvalles between the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi* of the pseudo-Turpin (twelfth c.) and the *Crónica del emperador Carlomagno* (or *Crónica fragmentaria*, end of the fourteenth c.). Results of such evolution are the change in the list of participants and, finally the disappearance of Oliver from the Frankish army. We have already seen how the *pseudo-Turpin* described the death of Oliver on the battlefield, as if he was a martyr—and idea also contained in *Roncesvalles*. But, as is well known, from the *Crónica Silense* or *Seminense* (ca 1110) onwards,²⁴ a nationalist reaction set in, which involved a certain resistance against the information about the exploits of Charlemagne in the Iberian Peninsula, conveyed by both cultured and popular means. Along these lines we find the works of Lucas de Tuy (*Chronicon Mundi*, ca 1138),²⁵ Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (*De rebus*

²⁴ MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959: 138 et seq. “En esta batalla cayeron Eggihardo, mayordomo de la casa real, Anselmo, conde de palacio, y Rotholando, prefecto británico, con otros muchos”. These words are extracted from Einhard’s *Vita Karoli*.

²⁵ Don Lucas closely follows the *Chronica seminensis*, but departs from it when he discusses the defeat of

Hispaniae, ca 1243),²⁶ Alfonso X (*Estoria de España* or *Primera Crónica General*, before 1289)²⁷ and, later on, the official historiography and other compilations, up until the so-called *Crónica del emperador Carlomagno*.²⁸ It is true that all of these works belong to the same tradition, and their prestige and dissemination in the courtly milieu and around it was unquestionable.

An adaptor of the *Tercera Crónica General* (at the very end of the fourteenth century) increases the list of fighters, but he fails to mention Oliver (and Gondelbuef), perhaps by sheer distraction, as Horrent thinks, perhaps because the name was already of little significance, perhaps for both reasons; in any case, it is clear that the story had distanced itself from the *Chanson de Roland* (HORRENT 1951a: 498). The *Cuarta Crónica General* (or *Estoria del Fecho de los Godos*, ca 1460) again mentions Oliver among the casualties.

Lope García de Salazar wrote the *Libro de las bienandanzas e fortunas* as a way of passing the time in prison between 1471 and 1475, although the stated objective is to bring together all the events since the creation of the world until those in which he took part. All of them compiled into twenty books ranging from the more general aspects (worldwide), to the most particular (Europe, the Iberian Peninsula, and finally Vizcaya, to which he devotes the last six books). To carry out such a long work, García de Salazar drew on the *Crónica de 1344* (*Segunda Crónica General*) and the Alphonsine histories, as well as other more recent works such as the *Crónica de Alfonso XI* or the *Crónicas de Pedro I, Enrique II* and *Juan I*, by Pero López de Ayala.²⁹ It is clear that the sources he used varied according to the matter in question, and in the absence of bibliographic information, García de Salazar did not hesitate to resort to oral traditions, whether related to *chansons de geste* or customs and beliefs of his homeland. Thus, the variety of details he relayed makes him a very interesting author. Referring to the Battle of Roncesvalles, he mentions the two

Roncesvalles “y al hacer intervenir en ella [...] a un caballero Bernaldo, desconocido de los historiadores que le precedieron” (CATALÁN 2000: 67). “Al retirarse hacia Francia, el rey de Zaragoza Marsil, a quien apoyan Bernaldo y algunos navarros, ataca la retaguardia del ejército franco en Roncesvalles, dando muerte a Roldán, prefecto de Bretaña, al conde Anselmo y a Egiardo, adelantado de la mesa de Carlos, y a muchos otros francos” (CATALÁN 2000: 68). Notice the change in the order of the fallen.

²⁶ Jiménez de Rada follows Luca de Tuy’s outline, but places the high dignitaries of the emperor’s court (Roldán, Anselmo and Egiardo) at the forefront instead of at the rearguard. Bernardo holds his leading role in the victory.

²⁷ Alfonso X repeats the words of Lucas de Tuy: “Et dize don Lucas de Tuy que morieron en aquella batalla don Roldán, et el conde Anselmo, et Guiralte el de la mesa del enperador, et otros muchos omes de los altos omes de Francia” (PRIMERA 1977, chap. 619: 353). However, the *Versión crítica de la Estoria de España* recounts the events in more detail: “En las primeras azes vinien estos altos omnes: Roldán, que era adelantado de Bretaña, et el conde don Anselmo, et Renalte de Montalván, et Guiralte, adelantado de la mesa del rey Carlos, et el conde don Olivero, et el conde don Terrín, et el conde don Delbón, et otros muchos altos omnes que aquí non podemos dezir” (VERSIÓN 1993, chap. LV: 467; HORRENT 1951a: 496). Horrent maintains the possibility that *Roncesvalles* might have included the same names in the parts now lost.

²⁸ The *Crónica del emperador Carlomagno* goes back to the path of official historiography, with the structure of *De rebus Hispaniae*, and Roland in charge of the rearguard: “E en las primeras azes vinié Roldán, que era adelantado de Bretaña, e el conde Anselmo e Giralte, adelantado de la mesa de Carlos, e otros muchos ricos omnes con ellos [...] E dize don Lucas de Tuy que morieron en aquella batalla don Roldán e el conde Anselmo e Giralte, adelantado de la mesa del enperador, e otros muchos de los altos omnes de Francia” (BAUTISTA 2008: 318-319).

²⁹ LIBRO XI 2007: xvi-xxxiv.

companions, but he does so in an episode taken from the tradition of the *Chanson de Roland*, after its pass through Italy in a later period (HORRENT 1951a: 501).

Silences are many, and the presence of Bernardo del Carpio as the antagonist of Roland raises questions we can not answer, but which have much to do with the Hispanic “nationalism” of these texts and Oliver’s gradual departure from the scene.³⁰

8. The *Romancero*

Something similar happens with the *Romancero* related to the Matter of France, more specifically, to the Carolingian cycle, where the name of Oliver is barely remembered (HORRENT 1951a: 503...; MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1968: 244-300).³¹ Roland’s companion can not be found in the romance entitled “Huída del rey Marsín” (*Ya comiençan los franceses / con los moros pelear*), despite the fact that its longer version mentions Baudouin, Bertram, Roland, Renaud, the Archbishop Turpin, the Moorish King Marsile, the Moorish woman Abraïma and her daughter Mataleona.³² Oliver does not appear in the romance of the prophetic dream of lady Aude (*En París está doña Alda, / la esposa de don Roldán*), derived from the Provençal *Ronsasvals*; he does not appear either when lord Bertram dies (*En los campos de Alventosa / mataron a don Beltrán*), although it is possible that this romance did not belong to the Carolingian cycle, at least not in origin; neither does he appear in the captivity of Garin (*Mal ovistes, los franceses / la caça de Roncesvalles*), despite the reminder of the death of the Twelve Peers.

But Oliver does appear in several works, the romance of Gaiferos (*Assentado está Gaiferos en el palacio real*), greatly renowned throughout the fourteenth century, presents a courtly scene in which the Gaiferos is about to play tables with Garin when “don Carlos el emperante” rebukes him for not rescuing his wife Melisendra, from the hands of the Moors. Angry, he goes to fetch his cousin Roland, who was with “Oliveros y Durandarte el galán”, so that he lends him arms and a horse, despite the efforts of lord Bertram to dissuade him from going after his wife by himself. Oliver is mentioned several times over this long romance, always next to Roland, but when the most prominent French heroes are listed, the names of Roland, Reinaud de Montauban, and Ogel of the Marches are included (ll. 227-229), whereas that of Oliver, who appears a couple of times as the cousin of Gaiferos (ll. 166, 236) is not.

We find Oliver again in the romance *De Mérida sale el palmero, / de Mérida essa ciudade*. The pilgrim goes to Paris, to Charlemagne’s palace. The emperor is at St. John Lateran, hearing Mass, and the pilgrim heads that way, he humbles himself before them all, except from Oliver and Roland “porque un sobrino que tienen/ en poder de moros estáe” [because they have a nephew

³⁰ On Bernardo del Carpio, see also HORRENT 1951a: 462-483 and HORRENT 1987:68-75.

³¹ Although we are interested in the Carolingians, which appear in pp. 244-250. On the current survival of this issue in Portugal, see PINTO CORREIA 1993.

³² DI STEFANO 2010: no. 119. The shorter version of the romance (*Domingo era de Ramos*) does not mention our hero either, because most of the characters that appear in the longer version are among the elements eliminated.

in the hands of the Moors] and they have not rescued him. At the end, the pilgrim ends up being Charlemagne's only son.

Finally, the name of Oliver appears in the rubric of a romance included in a bundle at the beginning of the sixteenth century:

Romance de un desafío que se hizo en París de dos cavalleros principales de la Tabla Redonda, los cuales son Montesinos y Oliveros. Fue el siguiente desafío por amores de una dama que se llamava Aliarda.

The romance starts *En las salas de París / en el palacio sagrado*, and was glossed. It is not surprising that Oliver has become a knight of the Round Table, since Gawain appears in several romances as a member of Charlemagne's retinue ...³³

9. Chivalric Romance

At the end of the fifteenth century, Oliver appears in the title of a Castilian chivalric romance: *Oliveros de Castilla y Artús d'Algarbe* (Burgos, Fadrique Biel de Basilea, 1499), a translation or adaptation of the *Histoire d'Olivier de Castille et Artus d'Algarbe* written by Philippe Camus at the Burgundian court between 1430 and 1460. However, the character of the chivalric romance has nothing to do with the hero of Roncesvalles. If we were to look for a link between the romance and French epic poetry, we would find it in the *chanson Amis et Amiles*, mostly on the basis of the theme of "the two brothers" (ALVAR 2012: 53-82; MENÉNDEZ PIDAL 1959). The fact that the Castilian text is a translation sets this example apart from the issue of the name *Oliveros* in the Iberian Peninsula, while it attests to the oblivion in which the deuteragonist of the *Chanson de Roland* fell, for homonymy did not work as a reminder any more.

However, our character was not absent from chivalric romances, since we find him, first —no surprises there—in *Renaldos de Montalbán* (Toledo, Juan de Villaquirán, 1523). In the prologue, the anonymous author establishes the genealogy of the main characters (Emperor Charles, Roland and Renaldos/Renaud) and that of the houses of Claramonte (to which Montalbán/Montauban belongs) and Mongrana. There is only a brief note on the lineage of Oliveros [Oliver], as a son of Rainer, brother of Alda, and one of the Twelve Peers. His exploits take place in France, Italy and Spain (Córdoba), but he is frequently defeated on the battlefield: by Salión, in Montalbán; by Carmelo in Lira; by Trafata in Rome; by Renaldos in Paris, in this case due to a misidentification of his opponent. He defends Paris against Marsile and is saved by Renaldos, who gives him his own horse, Bayarte, when he was lying on the ground... To sum it up, it is a version in the Italian way, in which Oliver, replaced by Renaldos de Montalbán [Renaud de Montauban] has gone into the background, whereas Roland maintains his prominence. At any rate, Roncesvalles barely

³³ For instance, in *Estávase la condessa y Vámonos, dixo, mi tío*.

registers as a distant memory for the author, who nevertheless advances in his account how the traitor Galalón [Ganelon], brother-in-law of Charlemagne, will avenge the death of the count of Lanzona, a member of his lineage: “hizo matar a los Doze Pares e a otros muchos cavalleros de nombradía, e Roldán también murió con ellos”. In vain would we seek the traces of *Renaut de Montauban* or *Les quatre fils Aymon*, for the Castilian text derives from *L’innamoramento di Carlo Magno* (ca 1481), spiced with elements from *La Spagna* (ca 1487), which in turn abbreviated the French-Italian *L’Entrée d’Espagne*. The Castilian *Renaldos de Montalbán* (1511) originated a cycle that includes *La Trapesonda* (1513) and *Baldo* (1542). More than the exploits in the Ardennes of the four sons of Aymon, who rebelled against the emperor, the interest now lay in a model that was applicable to the Italian situation at the end of the fifteenth century, the conflicts with France and Aragon, wars and betrayals: Renaud de Montauban represents, both in Italy and in Spain, the role model of “a nobleman who just craves to serve his monarch with loyalty and will end up expelled from the courtly milieu due to the intrigue and slander with which Ganelon sows discord, who convinces Charlemagne of the need to destroy that faithful vassal” (GÓMEZ REDONDO 2011: 9).

It is not surprising either that Oliver reappears in *La Trapesonda* (Valencia, Jordi Costilla, 1513), the third book of the cycle *Renaldos de Montalbán*, inspired by Francesco Tromba’s *Trabisonda hystoriata* (1483). In that work Oliver is the Marquis of Vienne, son of Count Malarte and brother of Aude; he is one of Charlemagne’s champions and, as such, he lives in Paris and frequents the court of the emperor. However, he is a second-rate knight who finds both victory and defeat upon the battlefield. The fourth book of the cycle, *Baldo* (1542), dedicated to the great-grandson of Renaldos/Renaud, does not remember the noble knight Oliveros de Viana [Oliver of Vienne] (GARZA MERINO 2002; GERNERT 2001).

Another chivalric cycle, initiated with *Espejo de caballerías* (Toledo, Gaspar de Ávila, 1525) by Pedro López de Santa Catalina, is also related to the adventures of Renaud of Montauban. It deals with the exploits of Count Roland and the feats he accomplished for the love of Angelica the Fair, the daughter of King Galafrón, and recounts “las grandes e muy hermosas cavallerías que don Renaldos de Montalbán, y la alta Marfisa, y los paladines fizieron”. Pedro López himself informs us that his work is a translation of *Orlando innamorato* (1483-1494), by Boiardo. Later on, the sequels by Niccolò degli Agostini, with three books (1506, 1514 and 1521), Raphael Valcieco da Verona (1513) and Pierfrancesco Conte da Camerino (1518) would follow. Pedro López used a 1518-edition that included the three books of Boiardo, the first one of degli Agostini and the sequels of Valcieco da Verona and da Camerino. The results were *Espejo de caballerías*, published in two parts (1525 and 1527, in the workshops of Cristóbal Francés and Francisco de Alfaro, in Toledo), as well as *Roselao de Grecia* by Pedro de Reinosá (Toledo, Juan de Ayala, 1547). In the *Espejo*, Oliver is the Marquis of Vienne, the father of Aquilante and Grifón; with his sword Altaclara he defends Charlemagne in Paris and then faces Ferragut. He also fights

under the command of the emperor in Monaco, where the Moor Rodamonte unhorses him. Later on, he fights against Marsile, but is taken prisoner and freed by Roland. Many knights are more prominent than Oliver: among the Moors and pagans, Ferragut, the son of Marsile, Rodomonte, King of Sarza, or Agramante the Moor King of Africa, direct descendant of Alexander the Great, are especially remarkable for their literary echoes; among the Christians, Oliver's sons, Aquilante and Grifón, Estolfo, Duke of England, Sacripante, lord of Circassia, Mandricardo, the son of Agricán, emperor of Tartary, and obviously Renaud de Montauban and Roland are above Oliver himself (SÁNCHEZ 2009).

In *Roselao de Grecia*, Oliver is barely the name of one of the champions that join Charlemagne in his journey to Constantinople, whereas Roland maintains his prestige as a brave fighter, and is connected to Renaud de Montauban through friendship and kinship ties (DUCE GARCÍA 2008).

Oliver did not fall completely into oblivion among the authors of chivalric romances. Antonio de Torquemada published *Olivante de Laura* in 1564 (in Barcelona, through Claude Bornat). Rewording the theme of the “found manuscript” and the journey to the afterlife, the author explains the circumstances surrounding the origin of his book in the prologue: due to a storm, he ends up—after several vicissitudes—in a cave, a true garden, or *locus amenus*, where the wise Ipermea lives surrounded by maidens and the most renowned knights of Antiquity. Next to the heroes of the Old Testament, the Trojan, Alexandrine and Roman traditions, we find the most outstanding knights-errant of chivalric romances, the Matter of Britain and Charlemagne's court: don Roland, Renaud de Montauban, Oliver and don Tudón, and several of the Twelve Peers, among others (DUCE GARCÍA 2002).

Oliver has lost the fight for renown against Renaud. Such combat started in the thirteenth century and lasted over three hundred years. When Don Quijote remembers the death of Roland in Roncesvalles, the figure of Bernardo del Carpio comes to mind, and not far behind Reinaldos de Montalbán follows above all others.³⁴ Oliver has finally come to his decline behind the horizon of heroes.

10. Onomastics

The eclipse of the deuteragonist of the *Chanson de Roland* can be perceived in his gradual departure from literary texts. Chansonnier poetry could be added to the list of genres discussed so far. However, the search would yield no results; while Charlemagne, Roland and even Bernardo del

³⁴ *Quijote*, I, 1: “Mejor estaba con Bernardo del Carpio, porque en Roncesvalles había muerto a Roldán, el encantado, valiéndose de la industria de Hércules, cuando ahogó a Anteo, el hijo de la Tierra, entre los brazos. Decía mucho bien del gigante Morgante, porque, con ser de aquella generación gigantea, que todos son soberbios y descomedidos, él solo era afable y bien criado. Pero, sobre todos, estaba bien con Reinaldos de Montalbán, y más cuando le veía salir de su castillo y robar cuantos topaba, y cuando en allende robó aquel ídolo de Mahoma que era todo de oro, según dice su historia. Diera él, por dar una mano de coces al traidor de Galalón, al ama que tenía y aun a su sobrina de añadidura”.

Carpio have their place in the compositions of the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, Oliver and Renaud de Montauban are nowhere to be found. Apparently, the mythical horizon of chansonnier poets points in another direction.

What happens with Oliver in the sphere of onomastics? P. Aebischer, who meticulously analyses the *Liber Feudorum Maior* and the *Cartulario de Sant Cugat*, remarks the existence from the mid-tenth century onwards of the name *Oliva* (“*Oliva, levita atque monachus*”, 957). A hundred years later, *Oliva* is almost radically replaced by *Oliver* (from 1053 on). It is at that moment that *Rodlandus* appears, which seems to suggest that it does so as the result of a trend that reaches the Hispanic March coming from the North of the Pyrenees. However, “those two names are independent from each other; each one has its history, and their presence in the eleventh century should not lead to infer that a legend [...] related to the poetical connection between Roland and Oliver was already known in the territories of the current Catalonia. Only around the year 1000 do we find siblings called *Rotulandus* and *Olivarius*” (AEBISCHER 1955-1956: 61).³⁵

Montjuich Barcelona, 24	1057	Oliver Mir
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 595	1061	Olivari Bernardi, de Termes
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 653	1064	Petrus Olivarius
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 285	1053-1071	Oliver
Sant Cugat del Vallès, 682	1075	Olivarii Mironis
Sant Cugat del Vallès, 686	1076	Olivero
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 165	1079	Olivarii Arnalli
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 73	1079	Olivero Bernardo
Sant Cugat del Vallès, 700	1080	Oliver
<i>Cartoral Carles Many</i> , 149	1083	Oliver Guillem
Sant Cugat del Vallès	1089	Oliver Gitardi
Obispado de Elna	1093	Bernardi Olivarii
<i>Cartoral Carles Many</i> , 372	1051-1093	Oliver, hijo de Retrudis
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 106	1055-1098	Oliver, h. de Ermessenda de Senterada
<i>Crónica Principado Cataluña</i> , VIII	end 11 th c.	Oliver Bernat, de Pals
<i>Liber Feudorum Maior</i> , 80	1061-1108	Oliver, d'Eroles

The absence of the name *Oliver* in Sicily after the Norman conquest (1070) is also quite significant. It is not until 1167 that one *Oliverius* signs as a witness in a Latin document, and until 1192 there is no other example recorded, in this case in a Greek document; only half a dozen other cases can be added to those throughout the thirteenth century. These arguments support the hypothesis of a primitive account of the events of Roncesvalles—not only Hispanic—where Oliver was merely another companion (LI GOTTI 1956).

In León and Castile the name *Olivero(s)* is quite rare; in fact, I have not found any evidence prior to the second half of the fifteenth century, although there is one *Olivier* (probably French) and several Catalan and Majorcan *Oliver*, related to the territories of Murcia and Almería.

³⁵ The list comes from COLL I ALENTORN 1956: 145.

The current presence of the surname *Oliveros*, even if it has only barely survived (only 5,500 people have it as their first or second surname, especially in Aragon, Soria, Valladolid, Zamora, Seville and Cádiz) evinces there was a tradition: the oldest example dates back to the final years of the fifteenth century (July 1490) in Llerena (Córdoba), with the inquisitorial process against Fernando de Oliveros.³⁶

Finally, the evidence gathered—partial but significant—raises doubt over the early existence of a *Cantar de Rodlane*, which seems a working hypothesis to try and put together the pieces of the puzzle that is the transmission of epic poetry. However, it seems possible that there were different epic traditions, within and outside the Iberian Peninsula. Some of them gave Oliver a leading role: the abundance of the surname *Oliver* in Catalonia during the Middle Ages in documents contemporary to those showing the name *Roldán*, and the survival of the surname *Oliveros* in Aragon and Soria, leads to conclude that a version was disseminated throughout the Peninsular North-East, from where the name (and not necessarily the legend) passed on to Zamora and Valladolid, and from there to the Andalusian territories. In all likelihood, the epic tradition surrounding Roncesvalles and the exploits of its main characters was quite unknown in the West of the Iberian Peninsula. Or maybe, if some of the events were known, they were more related to Bernardo del Carpio and Renaud de Montauban than to Oliver...³⁷

³⁶ Suffice it to check out the following list: 27 May 1180, Dompnus Oliuer conf. appears as a witness in a sale in Coyanza. (*Sahagún* 1398). 1259. Olivier has a son called Rodrigo. (*ComptosI*, 1.334). 1266-72. Johan Oliver receives properties in Murcia and in Campo de Cartagena (*Repartimiento Murcia* 99, 249). 20 August and 22 December 1421. Oliver Fernández, a neighbour of Hellín, scribe, royal collector. (*Juan II, Murcia*, 45 and 49). 1492. Gaspar Oliver, Nadar Oliver and Pero Oliver receive properties in Almería (*Repartimiento Almería* 135v, 139v and 145) [the three of them come from Majorca]. Squires.

4 December 1497. Lope Olivero, a neighbour of Morata, requests a delay in the payment of his debts. (Simancas, Registro Sello, RGS, LEG. 149712, 125). 9 December 1497. Juan Paulo Olivero was robbed while he was in the monastery of La Merced in Almazán (Soria). (Simancas, Registro Sello, RGS, LEG. 149712, 60). 27 October 1530. Juan Bautista Olivero, tax procurator of the Apostolic Chamber. (Archivo Indias, Indiferente, 422, L. 14. F. 139r-2). 15 April 1535. Alonso de la Peña and Constanza Olivero, neighbours of Medina del Campo, have a son called Diego de la Peña, who departs for New Spain. (Archivo Indias, Contratación, 5536, L. 3, F. 219-1). 1547-1551. Juan Bautista Olivero, from Toledo, supervisor of the works of the *alcázares*. (Chancillería Valladolid, Pl. Civiles, Pérez Alonso (F), Caja 1067, 6).

July 1490. Fernando de Oliveros, a neighbour of Llerena (Córdoba) is brought before the Inquisition. (Simancas, Registro Sello, RGS, LEG. 149007, 264). 27 April 1510. Domingo de Oliveros and Catalina Álvarez, neighbours of Vejer (Cádiz), have a son called Domingo de Oliveros, a merchant who wants to go to the West Indies. (Archivo Indias, Contratación, 5536, L. 1, F. 17-1). 1524. Hernando de Oliveros, a neighbour of Linares (Jaén) sues the *corregidor* of Baeza. (Simancas, Consejo Real, CRC, 534, 5). 1538, 26 January 1538. Antonio de Oliveros, the son of Juan de Oliveros and Elena García goes to La Florida. (Archivo Indias, Contratación, 5536, L.5, F. 273r-5). 11 November 1549. Juan de Oliveros and Beatriz, Indians, litigate for their freedom against María Ochoa de Vizcarra, a neighbour of Triana. (Archivo Indias, Justicia, 757, N.3).

16 September 1384. Simón Olivier recibe an emphyteutic lease for a vineyard from the monastery of Jesús Nazareno, in Montearagón de Quicena (Huesca). (AHN, Clero-secular_regular, Car. 670, N. 3).

For more data, see GARCÍA GALLARÍN 2014: **Oliverio**.

³⁷ The longest account is included in the *Primera Crónica General* or *Estoria de España* (chaps. 617 et seq.) which, on the basis of *cantares e fablas*, presents the hero as the illegitimate nephew of Alfonso II or Charlemagne. Bernardo defeats the French army at Roncesvalles, but later helps Charlemagne to conquer Zaragoza. Then he revolts against Alfonso III to secure the release of his father, but finally surrenders his castle to the king in exchange for his father's freedom: Alfonso III returns merely the corpse, because the count had died a few days before. Next Bernardo takes

APPENDIX

Frequency of the surnames Olivero, Oliveros, Oliver, Olivé, Olivier, Alda and Oda classified by province of birth according to the data provided by the population census on 1 January 2013 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística).

1. Olivero

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	1.295	0,027	1.155	0,025	17	..
Badajoz	42	0,045	60	0,064	..	..
Balears, Illes	11	0,017	..	..	..	..
Barcelona	85	0,022	69	0,018	..	..
Bizkaia	11	0,011	12	0,012	..	..
Cáceres	35	0,059	32	0,054	..	..
Cádiz	153	0,122	147	0,117	8	0,006
Córdoba	5	0,005	8	0,008	..	..
Gipuzkoa	5	0,008	15	0,024	..	..
Huelva	46	0,091	31	0,061	..	..
Madrid	26	0,006	36	0,008	..	..
Málaga	8	0,006	5	0,004	..	..
Palmas, Las	188	0,221	190	0,223	7	0,008
Salamanca	5	0,011	..	..	..	..
Santa Cruz de Tenerife	132	0,175	144	0,190	..	..
Sevilla	337	0,180	241	0,129	..	..
Toledo	8	0,013	..	..	..	..
Valencia/València	8	0,004	9	0,005	..	..
Born abroad	172	0,026	125	0,019	..	..

2. Oliveros

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	2.660	0,056	2.614	0,055	17	..
Alicante/Alacant	8	0,007	8	0,007	..	..
Almería	5	0,009	5	0,009	..	..
Araba/Alava	..	..	5	0,022	..	..
Asturias	78	0,077	104	0,103	..	..
Badajoz	34	0,037	40	0,043	..	..
Balears, Illes	17	0,026	19	0,029	..	..
Barcelona	147	0,038	210	0,054	..	..
Bizkaia	60	0,060	33	0,033	..	..
Burgos	..	..	6	0,014	..	..
Cáceres	72	0,121	78	0,131	..	..
Cádiz	145	0,115	143	0,114	..	..
Cantabria	5	0,009	9	0,017	..	..
Castellón/Castelló	7	0,017	6	0,014	..	..
Córdoba	11	0,011	17	0,017	..	..

refuge in Paris, but leaves the city to come back to Spain; he wreaks havoc in his path and defeats the Arabs. The numerous internal incongruities of the events narrated in the *Primera Crónica General* can not be explained through the preceding works (by Lucas de Tuy and Jiménez de Rada), or the *Poema de Fernán González*, which also deals with the hero and his exploits in the historical introduction. See HORRENT 1951a: 462-483.

Coruña, A	18	0,017	8	0,007	..	..
Cuenca	..	..	5	0,015	..	..
Gipuzkoa	7	0,011	11	0,017	..	..
Girona	8	0,017	9	0,020	..	..
Granada	76	0,071	125	0,117	..	..
Guadalajara	39	0,189	42	0,203	..	..
Huelva	49	0,097	60	0,118	..	..
Huesca	52	0,239	36	0,165	..	..
Jaén	10	0,010	10	0,010	..	..
León	11	0,018	9	0,015	..	..
Lleida	12	0,033	7	0,019	..	..
Lugo	41	0,097	41	0,097	..	..
Madrid	398	0,093	332	0,078	..	..
Málaga	46	0,037	65	0,052	..	..
Murcia	12	0,009	9	0,007	..	..
Navarra	5	0,009	8	0,015	..	..
Ourense	8	0,021	6	0,016	..	..
Palmas, Las	16	0,019	20	0,023	..	..
Pontevedra	10	0,011	6	0,007	..	..
Salamanca	12	0,027	18	0,040	..	..
Santa Cruz de Tenerife	12	0,016	..	..	..	..
Sevilla	253	0,135	249	0,133	..	..
Tarragona	..	..	15	0,030	..	..
Teruel	68	0,337	37	0,183	..	..
Toledo	37	0,058	20	0,031	..	..
Valencia/València	39	0,020	44	0,022	..	..
Valladolid	139	0,277	82	0,163	..	..
Zamora	64	0,218	39	0,133	..	..
Zaragoza	272	0,343	269	0,339	..	..
Born abroad	333	0,050	331	0,050	..	..

3. Oliver

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	19.098	0,405	17.983	0,382	169	0,004
Albacete	721	1,451	713	1,435	7	0,014
Alicante/Alacant	1.364	1,157	1.374	1,165	15	0,013
Almería	752	1,287	796	1,363	19	0,033
Araba/Álava	34	0,152	39	0,175	..	..
Asturias	82	0,081	48	0,048	..	..
Badajoz	17	0,018	25	0,027	..	..
Balears, Illes	4.375	6,635	4.297	6,517	60	0,091
Barcelona	2.200	0,564	2.032	0,521	..	..
Bizkaia	125	0,125	82	0,082	..	..
Burgos	8	0,018	11	0,025	..	..
Cáceres	7	0,012	5	0,008	..	..
Cádiz	98	0,078	159	0,126	..	..
Cantabria	9	0,017	20	0,037	..	..
Castellón/Castelló	382	0,920	359	0,865	..	..
Ciudad Real	387	0,571	374	0,552	..	..
Córdoba	29	0,028	32	0,031	..	..
Coruña, A	52	0,049	43	0,040	..	..

Cuenca	10	0,030	..	..	..	..
Gipuzkoa	48	0,076	31	0,049	..	..
Girona	455	0,991	380	0,828	..	..
Granada	360	0,336	255	0,238	..	..
Guadalajara	43	0,208	14	0,068	..	..
Huelva	51	0,101	51	0,101	..	..
Huesca	67	0,308	83	0,381	..	..
Jaén	421	0,435	373	0,385	..	..
León	54	0,090	42	0,070	..	..
Lleida	129	0,357	141	0,390	9	0,025
Lugo	5	0,012	9	0,021	..	..
Madrid	859	0,202	806	0,189	..	..
Málaga	285	0,229	268	0,216	..	..
Murcia	694	0,549	750	0,593	..	..
Navarra	221	0,413	208	0,388	6	0,011
Ourense	7	0,018	..	..	..	..
Palmas, Las	41	0,048	30	0,035	..	..
Pontevedra	11	0,012	8	0,009	..	..
Rioja, La	36	0,129	24	0,086	..	..
Salamanca	10	0,022	18	0,040	..	..
Santa Cruz de Tenerife	32	0,042	29	0,038	..	..
Sevilla	592	0,317	588	0,315	8	0,004
Soria	5	0,034	5	0,034	..	..
Tarragona	194	0,390	178	0,358	..	..
Teruel	193	0,956	161	0,797	..	..
Toledo	193	0,303	159	0,250	..	..
Valencia/València	2.155	1,098	2.132	1,086	16	0,008
Valladolid	7	0,014	25	0,050	..	..
Zamora	..	..	5	0,017	..	..
Zaragoza	443	0,558	403	0,508	..	..
Ceuta	9	0,100	8	0,089	..	..
Melilla	24	0,259	34	0,367	..	..
Born abroad	796	0,120	346	0,052	..	..

4. Olivé

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	2.662	0,056	2.654	0,056	26	0,001
Alicante/Alacant	..	..	5	0,004	..	..
Balears, Illes	15	0,023	12	0,018	..	..
Barcelona	1.561	0,400	1.521	0,390	14	0,004
Castellón/Castelló	8	0,019	8	0,019	..	..
Gipuzkoa	..	..	6	0,009	..	..
Girona	129	0,281	136	0,296	..	..
Lleida	63	0,174	89	0,246	..	..
Madrid	73	0,017	51	0,012	..	..
Pontevedra	..	..	10	0,011	..	..
Rioja, La	5	0,018	..	..	..	..
Santa Cruz de Tenerife	..	..	14	0,019	..	..
Tarragona	688	1,385	695	1,399	9	0,018
Valencia/València	9	0,005	18	0,009	..	..

Zaragoza	..	..	12	0,015	..	..
Born abroad	78	0,012	52	0,008	..	..

5. Olivier

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	200	0,004	101	0,002	..	..
Asturias	5	0,005	..	..	..	..
Barcelona	39	0,010	24	0,006	..	..
Cáceres	..	..	11	0,018	..	..
Madrid	33	0,008	13	0,003	..	..
Tarragona	10	0,020	5	0,010	..	..
Born abroad	89	0,013	29	0,004	..	..

6. Alda

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	1.030	0,022	1.025	0,022	9	..
Alicante/Alacant	..	..	13	0,011	..	..
Araba/Alava	74	0,331	86	0,385	..	..
Avila	14	0,057	10	0,040	..	..
Barcelona	62	0,016	78	0,020	..	..
Bizkaia	80	0,080	47	0,047	..	..
Burgos	..	..	6	0,014	..	..
Córdoba	7	0,007	10	0,010	..	..
Gipuzkoa	18	0,028	40	0,063	..	..
Guadalajara	169	0,818	127	0,615	..	..
Huelva	..	..	8	0,016	..	..
Huesca	..	..	13	0,060	..	..
Madrid	253	0,059	173	0,041	..	..
Málaga	28	0,023	9	0,007	..	..
Navarra	19	0,035	36	0,067	..	..
Rioja, La	9	0,032	..	..	..	..
Santa Cruz de Tenerife	5	0,007	..	..	..	..
Sevilla	7	0,004	6	0,003	..	..
Soria	..	..	11	0,075	..	..
Teruel	20	0,099	7	0,035	..	..
Valencia/València	..	..	10	0,005	..	..
Zaragoza	214	0,270	292	0,368	..	..
Born abroad	20	0,003	16	0,002	..	..

7. Oda

Province	First Surname		Second Surname		Both Surnames	
	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)	Total	(‰)
Total	57	0,001	26	0,001	..	..
Barcelona	6	0,002
Cádiz	11	0,009	13	0,010
Girona	7	0,015
Málaga	5	0,004
Born abroad	16	0,002

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