Suffixal Rivalries in Medieval Spanish: Preliminary Observations on the Fate of Old Spanish Deverbal Abstract Nouns in *-miento*

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Resumen

El léxico del hispanorromance medieval abundaba de neologismos creados por medio de los recursos de la derivación sufijal. Casi todos los sufijos entraron en la lengua por vía oral de sus fuentes en el latín. A medida que la lengua medieval iba elaborándose como instrumento apto para la literatura y la difusión de la ciencia, nuevos derivados entraban en la lengua como latinismos, así creando situaciones de rivalidad entre sufijos vernáculos y latinizantes. Este estudio breve ofrece una introducción a la rivalidad entre sustantivos deverbales abstractos en *-miento* y derivados cultos de función parecida, como *-ción*, *-ancia* y *-encia*. Los registros de derivados en *-miento* que se ofrecen en Pattison (1975) y Penny (1987) constituyen el punto de partida para los análisis que se presentan a continuación.

Palabras claves: derivación sufijal, rivalidad entre sufijos, substantivos deverbales, latinismos

Abstract

Medieval Hispano-Romance was rich in neologisms created through suffixal derivation. Almost all the suffixes in question were inherited from Latin through oral transmission. Over time, as Spanish became more elaborated for use as a literary and scholarly language, new derivatives entered as Latinisms, often creating situations of rivalry between derivatives with vernacular and Latinate suffixes. This short paper will offer an introduction to the rivalry of deverbal abstract nouns in *-miento* with synonymous and functionally-similar derivatives showing Latinate suffixes, especially *-ción* and *-ancia*, *-encia*. The lists of Old Spanish *-miento* derivatives in Pattison (1975) and in Penny (1987) form the core of the data base for this study.

Keywords: suffixal derivation, suffixal rivalries, deverbal nouns, Latinisms

The historical core of the Spanish lexicon consists of those items inherited through uninterrupted oral transmission from the spoken Latin of the Iberian Peninsula (a layer that includes words of pre-Roman origin that entered local varieties of Latin). Although it may contain a large number of the most frequent words in Spanish, today this lexical stratum forms, in quantitative terms, only a small portion of the rich and extensive Spanish vocabulary. Over time, speakers of Spanish have increased the size of the lexicon through the incorporation and adaptation of countless borrowings taken from the many languages with which medieval and modern Hispano-Romance has come into

contact at the levels of oral and written levels (*cfr.* Dworkin 2012), and through the creation of neologisms generated by processes of internal creation, such as suffixal derivation, prefixation, and compounding.

The creation of new lexical items in these ways was a tool employed throughout the medieval period by members of the speech community who sought to elaborate the different varieties of Hispano-Romance through lexical expansion to render them qualitatively and functionally equivalent to Latin so that they could become worthy linguistic vehicles for the transmission of knowledge and for the administration of the state. The creation of neologisms to express abstract concepts is an essential part of the elaboration process. As a result, medieval texts offer an abundance of sets of semantically and functionally equivalent derivatives coined with different suffixes from the same underlying primitive. Many members of such sets are scantily documented, and may represent at most ephemeral creations that enjoyed no widespread vitality in the written (or even spoken) language. I offer here selected examples adapted from Dworkin (2018: 96) of competing derivatives coined to form de-adjectival and deverbal nominal abstracts:

agror / agrura 'sourness' ← *agro; agudez / agudeza* 'sharpness' ← *agudo; albor / albura* 'whiteness' ← *albo / alvo; amargor / amargura* 'bitterness' ← *amargo; amarillez / amarillor* 'pallor, yellowness' ← *amari(e)llo;* a*ncheza / anchura / anchor* 'width' ← *ancho; aspereza / asperedumbre / asperidad* 'roughness' ← *áspero; azedura / azedía* 'sourness' ← *azedo; bermejura / bermejedumbre* 'redness' ← *bermejo; blancor / blancura* 'whiteness' ← *blanco; blandez / blandura* 'softness' ← *blando; brevez / breveza* 'shortness, brevity' ← *br(i)eve; clareza / clarura / claridad* 'clarity' ← *claro; dulcedumbre / dulçura / dulçor* 'sweetness' ← *dulce; espessedumbre / espessura* 'thickness' ← *espesso; feedad / feura / feumbre / fealdad* 'ugliness, repugnance' ←*feo; firmedumbre / firmeza* 'firmness, strength' ← *firme; gafedad / gafeza* 'state of having leprosy' ← *gafo; graveza / gravedumbre / gravedad* 'heaviness, seriousness'← *grave; limpieza / limpiedumbre* 'cleanliness' ← *limpio; magreza / magror* 'thinness' ← *magro; molleza / mollura* 'softness' ← *muelle ; negror / negrura* 'blackness' ← *negro; pobreza / pobredad* 'poverty' ← *pobre; preñadez / preñedad / preñedumbre / preñadura* 'pregnancy' ← *preñe; reziedumbre / reziura* 'stiffness, strength' ← *rezio; rictad / riqueza / ricura* 'wealth, power' ← *rico; sequedad / sequera* 'dryness, drought' ← *seco; ternura / ternedumbre* 'tenderness' ← *tierno; tristeza / tristor / tristura / tristencia* 'sadness' ← *triste; vejez / vegedad* 'old age' ← *viejo; verdor / verdura*' greenness' ← *verde; viltança / vilteza* 'vileness' ← *vil*.

abondanç(i)a / abondamiento 'abundance' ← *abondar; acordança / acordamiento* 'concord, harmony' ← *acordar; antojamiento / antojança / antojo* 'strongdesire' ← *antojar; asmança / asmamiento* 'thought, calculation' ← *asmar; atrevencia / atrevimiento* 'boldness' ← *atrever; catamiento / catadura* 'appearance' ← *catar; demandança / demanda* 'demand' ← *demandar; engañamiento / engaño* 'deception' ← *engañar; mejorança / mejoramiento* 'improvement' ← *mejorar; obligación / obligamiento* 'obligation' ← *obligar;*

> *poblança / poblamiento* 'town, settlement' ← *poblar; quemazón / quemamiento / quemadura* 'burn(ing)' ← *quemar; tajamiento / tajadura* 'cutting, division; clearing' ← *tajar.*

One of the features of the creation of a standard written language is the reduction (although not the complete elimination) of seemingly unnecessary formal variation. This lengthy process began in Spain in the last centuries of the Middle Ages and continued well into the early modern period. By the mid-seventeenth century, Spanish texts show far less variation in both inflectional (especially verbal) and derivational morphology. Many of the neologisms created through suffixal derivation found in medieval texts begin to fall into disuse (at least in the written language, the only medieval and early modern reality to which we have access).

Almost thirty years ago I studied the rivalry between competing de-adjectival nominal abstracts formed by adding the suffixes *-dad*, *-(d)umbre -eza*, *and -ura* to adjectival bases in an attempt to identify some formal and semantic factors that may have determined which of the competing derivatives would have survived (Dworkin 1989). I concluded that the productivity and vitality of the suffix at issue as well as the possible semantic incompatibility between the suffix and the base to which it was attached may have played roles in determining the fate of the nouns at issue.

This paper seeks to continue this line of investigation by studying Old Spanish deverbal abstract nouns in *-miento*, many of which failed to survive into the modern language. This suffix, the continuation of Latin -MENTUM, used principally to designate a verbal action, the agent or instrument used to carry out the action, or the resulting condition or state, was the most productive morpheme employed in the medieval language in the creation of deverbal abstract nouns. Penny (1987: 14-18) identifies 544 derivatives in *-miento* in the Alfonsine corpus as preserved in manuscripts prepared at the royal chancellery of Alfonso X el Sabio (reigned 1252-1284)[1]. Pattison's study of nominal suffixes in thirteenth-century Hispano-Romance lists 251 *-miento* derivatives in the texts surveyed. Only a small fraction of these nouns are inherited directly through oral transmission from Latin bases in -MENTUM or are later Latinate borrowings (in which case the suffix often appears as *-mento*); the overwhelming majority represent Hispano-Romance creations. This three-way diachronic distinction did not form part of a speaker's linguistic consciousness, and would have played no role in deciding the fate of individual derivatives. Opinions seem to be divided on the vitality of *-miento* in the modern language. Despite the loss over time of numerous derived nouns in *-miento*, Rainer (1993: 608-613) argues, offering many examples, that the suffix at issue has continued to be highly productive in the creation of neologisms in modern Spanish, whereas Lliteras speaks of the 'lenta pero constante decadencia del sufijo *-miento*" (2002: 70-71).

A substantial number of the Old Spanish derivatives in *-miento* have either disappeared or have become obsolescent in the standard language (although modern dictionaries such as the *DRAE* continue to record many of them and do not always mark the relevant items as such with a label such as "arc[áico]" or "desus[ado]" , or whether today they are used only regionally). Loss is fairly consistent in the case of those nouns whose

verbal base has fallen into disuse or has become infrequent (although some are still recorded in modern dictionaries), e.g.:

alongamiento, ascondimiento, asmamiento, assacamiento, aviltamiento, compeçamiento, contrallamiento, corroçamiento, empeecimeinto, encobamiento, enflaquimiento, ennozimiento, esbaharimiento, espeluzramiento, guarimiento, llantamiento, loamiento, melezinamiento, segudamiento, sossacamiento, tossigamiento, trocimiento ← alongar, asconder, asmar, assacar, aviltar, compeçar, contrallar, corroçar, encobar, enflaquir, ennozer, enpeecer, esbaharir, espeluzrar, guarir, llantar, loar, melezinar, recudimiento, segudar, sossacar, tossigar, trocir.

Many of the nouns in *-miento* identified by Pattison and Penny are attested less than ten times in their data, or in the medieval examples found in the *CORDE* database, a situation that may reflect their e phemeral nature: selected examples include *abivamiento, abraçamiento, abtamiento, acalonnamiento, acorramiento, adevinamiento, afremosamiento, afficamiento, affinamiento, cabamiento, callamiento, camamiento* [2] *, comulgamiento, consejamiento, conturbamiento, deboxamiento, defensamiento, desamparamiento, esperamiento, loamiento, nodrimiento, olvidamiento, quebrantamiento, soltamiento, testiguamiento, usamiento, violamiento*. Others, although abundantly attested, appear only in one text or in one text type or genre. Almost all the medieval examples of *acabamiento, acusamiento, adelantamiento, confirmamiento, desafiamento, obligamiento, prometimiento, seguramiento*, come from legal codes, notarial documents or administrative texts (many in the 1491 edition of the Alfonsine *Siete partidas*, although they are absent from the medieval manuscripts that have preserved the various parts of this compilation). According to Pattison (1975), he found a small number of the nouns in *-miento* in his corpus only in the manuscript tradition of the thirteenth-century *Fuero Juzgo*: e.g., *contemplamiento, decebimiento, defensamiento*. The *CORDE* database indicates that many *-miento* derivatives are first documented in the thirteenth-century Navarro-Aragonese legal compilation known as *Vidal Mayor*. The following nouns in *-miento* are documented (and may have originated) as translations of Arabic technical terminology in astronomical treatises prepared at the court of Alfonso X: *abaxamiento, andamiento, annadimiento, ascondimiento, ascendimiento, catamiento, caymiento, descendimiento, enclinamiento, levamiento, levantamiento, llegamiento, menguamiento, mudamiento, parescimiento, passamiento, reboluimiento, rectificamiento, sobimiento* (Bossong 1979: 111-115). Some nouns in *-miento* turn up for the most part only in medical texts: *abrimiento, adobamiento, guarimiento*.

Throughout the history of Spanish, the suffix under study competed with other elements used to form deverbal abstract nouns such as *-a, -o, -e, -ado, -ancia, -encia, -ido, -ción, -(d)ura* (*cfr.* Lüdtke 270-278). Its most serious rivals were the vernacular / Latinate pairs *-ança / -ancia, -ença / -encia*, and *-zón / -ción*. Penny (1987: 20-22) presents a comparative chart showing rivalries between the various suffixes used in the Alfonsine texts to form deverbal nominal abstracts. I summarize selectively his quantitative findings below with regard to the rivalry between competing derivatives in *-miento* and *-ción* on one hand, and between *-miento* and *-ança / -ancia, -ença / -encia* on the other. In some instances the forms are essentially synonymous, whereas in other cases there is

a semantic distinction between a noun denoting a verbal action and a noun denoting a resulting state, quality, or condition (see also Clavería Nadal 2012: 55-59):

> *abondamiento* (12) *vs. abondancia* (16) ~ *abondança* (3); *aborrescimiento* (2) *vs. aborrescencia* (2); *aborrimiento* (3) *vs. aborrencia* (8); *acordamiento* (4) *vs. acordança* (5); *acusamiento* (2) ~ *acusamento* (4) *vs. acusación* (3); *acordamiento* (4) *vs. acordança* (5); *adelantamiento* (6) *vs. adelantança* (3); *adevinamiento* (6) *vs. adevinança* (6) ~ *adevinancia* (1); *aiuntamiento* (4) ~ *aiuntamento* (8) *vs. aiuntancia* (1); *alabamiento* (1) *vs. alabança* (57); *andança* (169) ~ *andancia* (25) *vs. andamiento* (102); *antojança* (4) *vs. antojamiento* (1); *confirmamiento* (2) *vs. confirmación* (14); *connoscencia* (14) *vs. connoscimiento* (2); *consagramiento* (35) *vs. consagración* (65); *contradezimiento* (35) *vs. contradicción* (65); *corrompimiento* (16) *vs. corrupción* (5); *declinamiento* (2) *vs. declinación* (461); *demostramiento* (4) *vs. demostración* (10); *descomulgamiento* (32) *vs. descomulgación* (81); *destruymiento* (126) *vs. destruycion* (38); *exaltamiento* (22) *vs. exaltación* (254); *folgamiento* (2) *vs. folgança* (26) ~ *folgancia* (7); *maldezimiento* (1) *vs. maldicción* (42); *matamiento* (1)³ *vs. matança* (51); *multiplicamiento* (2) *vs. multiplicación* (29); *olvidamiento* (1) *vs. olvidança* (11); *omillamiento* (1) *vs. omillança* (8); *ordenamiento* (134) *vs. ordenación* (25) *vs. ordenança* (14); *predicamiento* (1) *vs. predicación* (33); *recebimiento* (108) *vs. recepción* (1); *remembramiento* (1) *vs. remembrança* (100); *revolvimiento* (10) *vs. revolución* (8); *salvamiento* (31) *vs. salvación* (27); *seguramiento* (1)⁴ *vs. segurança* (30); *tardamiento* (2) *vs. tardança* (54); *tentamiento*(1) *vs. tentación* (1); *trasladamiento* (2) *vs. trasladación* (22); *visitamiento* (9) *vs. visitación* (13); *ungimiento* (9) *vs. unción* (13); *ymaginamiento* (1) *vs. ymaginación* (3).

The number of competing pairs of derivatives in *-miento* and in *-ción* far exceeds the above examples from the Alfonsine corpus. Some selected examples from other medieval sources are:

> *abominamiento / abominación*, *abreviamento / abreviación*, *absolvimiento / absolución*, *adevinamiento / adivinación*, *confirmamiento / confirmación*, *consolamiento / consolación*, *contemplamiento / contemplación*, *estrellamiento / estrellación*, *lamentamiento / lamentación*, *obligamiento / obligación*, *pagamiento / pagación*, *participamiento / participación*⁵.

Lüdtke (1978: 264-268) lists over 160 sets of doublets in *-miento* and *-ción*, including material first recorded in the post-medieval language; see also Lliteras (2002). In some instances there is a semantic differentiation between the competing forms. The deverbal nouns in *-miento* usually denote a verbal action (*nomen actionis*) whereas the derivatives in *-ción* tend to refer to an abstract state or condition.

Unless both items have survived (often with some degree of semantic differentiation), it is usually the derivative in *-miento* that has eventually disappeared or become obsolescent, giving way to the variant in *-ción*. The latter suffix represents the learned or Latinate outcome of Lat. -TIONEM (which yielded *-çón / -zón* through oral transmission). Nouns in *-ción* abound in the early medieval language; at the outset, many of these formations are not Romance-created neologisms, but rather the

adaptation to Romance of Latin forms (i.e., outright Latinisms). Of the 148 words in Pattison's corpus taken from thirteenth-century texts, 129 fall into this etymological category, as do most of the nouns listed above from Alfonsine texts. Such formations became the starting point for the continued and massive productivity of *-ción* as an independent suffix (for details and pertinent examples see Pattison 1975: 88-97, Pharies 2002: 148-149). Pharies (2002: 148) claims that Spanish has over two thousand derivatives in *-ción*. In some pairs from the medieval language, *-miento* is attached to a base showing oral transmission, while *-ción* is used with a learned or Latinate variant of the base (e.g., *contradezimiento / contradicción*, *corrompomiento / corrupción*, *desponimiento / disposición*, *recibimiento / recepción*, *revolvimiento / revolución*, *ungimiento / unción*.

In like fashion, the medieval language offers numerous pairs of deverbal nominal abstracts in *-miento* alongside counterparts in *-ança / -ancia* (derived from *-ar* verbs), *-ença / -encia* (derived from *-er*, *-ir* verbs). Almost every one of the 68 deverbals in *-ança / -ancia*, *-ença / -encia* listed in Pattison (1975: 76-77) is flanked by a derived noun in *-miento*. I offer here only selected examples (without repeating those presented by Penny from the Alfonsine corpus and listed above; the number of occurrences represents the information provided by the *CORDE* database for the period 1100-1499):

> *abastamiento* (53) / *abastança* (42), *alongamiento* (485) / *alongança* (11), *antojamiento* (1) / *antojança* (15), *criamiento* (100) / *criança* (570), *espantamiento* (16) / *espantança* (1), *esperamiento* (7) / *esperança* (3165), *estamiento* (209) / *estança* (215), *fincamiento* (6) / *fincança* (5), *folgamiento* (4) / *folgança* (565), *loamiento* (3) / *loança* (40), *matamiento* (68) / *matança* (219), *olvidamiento* (9) / *olvidança* (80), *refusamiento* (2) / *refusança* (2), *seguramiento* (67) / *segurança* (369), *testiguamiento* (8) / *testiguanca* (3); *atrevemiento* (224) / *atrevencia* (2), *guarimiento* (12) / *guarencia* (1; see also Pattison 1975: 202), *nacimiento* (368) / *nacencia* (370), *reconnocimiento / reconnencia*, *repentimiento* (64) / *repentencia* (5).

As is the case with the *-miento* and *-ción* pairs discussed above, the *-miento* derivatives may have originally denoted a verbal action while those in *-ança / -ancia*, *-ença / -encia* referred to a resulting state or condition. The line between these two semantic categories could often be blurry and easy to cross. Consequently, derivatives in all the suffixes at issue here may have, for many speakers or writers, have become quasi-synonymous or functionally equivalent, a situation that may have culminated in the early modern language in the elimination of what many members of the speech community viewed as superfluous variants. However, in most cases there is probably no way to determine with any high degree of certainty why in some cases speakers chose the derivative in *-miento* and in others its rival. Any attempt to answer this legitimate and difficult question would require a careful monographic study of the history of each relevant item, a task far beyond the scope of this paper.

The loss in the medieval and early modern language of many *-miento* derivative in favor of their counterparts in *-ción* may not result from any formal or semantic conditions that undermined this suffix. In all likelihood this shift may have been initiated in the written language of the late medieval period by those few members of the speech community

who had some familiarity with Latin. At this time the language was undergoing what some workers (Harris-Northall 1999, Dworkin 2010) have called the re-Latinization of both its lexicon and its semantic structures. As part of this process, when faced with (nearly-) functionally equivalent or synonymic pairs of derivatives, speakers (or perhaps better, writers) may have opted for the Latinate option. This desire may also account for the eventual triumph of Latinate *-ancia*, *-encia* over *-ança*, *-ença*, and of *-ción* over its vernacular counterpart *-zón*. The period 1450-1650 is also a crucial moment in the effort to create a written standard language. As noted at the beginning of this paper, standardization involves the reduction (at least in the written language) of what the speech community may perceive as unnecessary variation with regard to orthography and inflectional and derivational morphology.

This study is meant to serve only as a brief introduction to some of the issues posed by the history of deverbal abstract nouns in *-miento*. By no means does it even come close to being a history of the genesis and vicissitudes in Old Spanish of the suffix at issue. In reality, the study of the origin, integration, and spread of a suffix (or any other derivational morpheme for that matter) often becomes the analysis of each word bearing that suffix. The systematic study of derivatives has been one of the most neglected aspects of Romance etymology. At best, Romance etymological dictionaries record, usually without discussion, some or most of the derivatives coined from the base under study. The maxim "Each word has its own history", originally coined with regard to the study of sound change, applies equally well both to the diachronic study of lexical bases as well as to any resulting derivatives. Diachronic derivational morphology is, in essence, a branch of etymology[6].

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Notas

[1] Haring (1978: 79-89) lists and analyses the semantic function of the numerous deverbal nouns in -*miento* found in the Alfonsine legal compilation known as the *Setenario*, a text that has not been preserved in any of the surviving manuscripts from the royal chancellery (and thus not included in the data available in Penny 1987).

[2] This rare noun is formed from OSp. *camiar*.

[3] The noun *matamiento* is abundantly documented in other sources, especially the mid-thirteenth-century version of the Bible preserved in Escorial MS i-j-6 and in the late-fourteenth-century writings of Juan Fernández de Heredia.

[4] The *CORDE* database offers almost sixty additional examples of *seguramiento*, of which the overwhelming majority are found in legal texts.

[5] For many additional examples taken from fifteenth-century texts from the Crown of Aragon, and analysis, see Raab (2014: 62-69, 73-75).

[6] *Cfr.* "I contend that etymology and diachronic derivational morphology appear to be but two sides of thesame coin" (Dworkin 1985: 79).