

El Cid Campeador



El Cid Campeador's real name was Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar. He was a Castilian nobleman who was born in Burgos in the 11th century A.D. He was a military leader who was exiled by the king of Castile, Alfonso VI, under accusations of treason. But El Cid didn't give up on his loyalty to the king, and he conquered Valencia from the Moors. This granted him the King's forgiveness, and he was made governor of the newly reconquered land.

He became so famous and popular in his time, that the minstrels composed an epic poem about him: *El Poema de Mio Cid*. The minstrels travelled from town to town singing and telling stories and poems. This poem narrates the adventures and heroic feats carried out by Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar. It was written in the 13th century and it is considered the first written poem in Castilian language.

Alfonso X El Sabio



Alfonso X, was born in Toledo, in the 13th century A.D., and he was king of Castile and Leon. As a warrior king, he led his fierce armies against the Moorish occupation, and regained many lands for the Christians, but this was not his most important achievement.

He was above all, a highly educated statesman who promoted the arts and learning in his kingdom. He was a writer himself, and composed the *Cantigas*, which were songs about The Virgin Mary. He also created the Toledo School of Translators, where scholars from the three cultures, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim, translated important works of Science, History, and The Arts. His promotion of the arts and culture granted him the nickname of "The Wise Man".

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

1. When did Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar live?

2. Where was he born?

3. Which kingdom did he conquer?

4. What poem did the minstrels sing about him?

5. What do you think *exile* means?

6. Why was Alfonso X known as "The Wise Man"?

7. When did he live?

8. Which cultures were represented in the School of Translators? _____

9. Why do you think having a school of translators could be important? _____

10. What were the Cantigas about? _____