Count Pedro Ansúrez (c. 1037–1117) was surely the most prominent and probably the greatest Leonese noble of his time. That importance was reflected in the notices of the chronicles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries where he was conceded an attention exceeded only by that given to the Castilian noble, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, El Cid. The first of these histories is the *Chronica Naierensis*, whose recent editor, in his critical edition of the text, rehearses the bases of its dating and comes to the conclusion that the text, as we presently have it, most probably derives from after 1185. The historical *persona* of Count Pedro then, appears to be a creation of the popular literature of the twelfth century subsequently absorbed into the more sober Latin chronicle genre.

That conclusion is bolstered by the fact that Pedro makes no appearance in the *Historia Silense*, composed circa 1130, although that chronicle detailed many of the events of the mortal struggle over the succession between Alfonso VI of León (1065–1109) and Sancho II of Castile (1065–1072) with which the count’s public career supposedly began and gave evidence already of the incorporation of popular materials. So too, the *Chronicon Regum Legionensium*, composed sometime after 1121 and before 1132, retailed much of the same story.

---

1 Simon Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 275–77 is the most recent introduction to the man and the sources.
2 Juan A. Estévez Sola, ed., “Chronica Naierensis,” in *Chronica Hispana Saeclui XII, Pars II, CCCM 71A* (Turnholt, 1995), pp. lxviii–lxxix, (hereafter CN). Nevertheless, he also suggests the possibility that the work was of much earlier composition and was subsequently redacted and additions made that account for the later dating of a work whose narration of events ends with the death of Alfonso VI of León-Castile in 1109. This tentative suggestion was based on some particulars of the manuscript tradition. The most recent discovery, by the same editor, of a new manuscript, is irrelevant to the question of a redaction: “Un nuevo manuscrito de la Chronica Naierensis,” *Scriptorium* 55 (2002), 118–36.
but again without mentioning the count.  

But again without mentioning the count. Because of the regional nature of its focus it is less surprising that Count Pedro does not figure in the *Historia Compostelana* completed after 1139. On the other hand, he is absent as well from the “Crónicas anónimas de Sahagún” that treat a development and an area with which he must, even then, have been concerned in some degree. The final, presently known historical work usually held to be of twelfth-century composition, the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, began its account after the death of Count Pedro in 1117 and made no reference to him.

Insofar as we know, the importance of Count Pedro Ansúrez must have grown slowly, in popular tales rather than clerical and literary products, until it was first noted in the *Chronica Naieriensis* after 1185. It must be said that he made only a “cameo” appearance there. It was said only that the count accompanied the defeated King Alfonso VI into exile in Toledo in 1072, and that he had been the young Alfonso’s guardian. By contrast, the whole relation of the episode of struggle over the royal succession between 1068 and 1072 was so framed as to make Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, *El Cid*, its epic hero, complete with stirring speeches as well as hardy deeds. That perspective, emphasizing as much as could be the relative importance of all things Castilian in contrast to those Leonese, accords well with the putative assignment of authorship to a monk of the area of the Rioja, perhaps of Nájera, familiar with the works of Cluny and Paris as well as those of Iberian provenance. But that same emphasis upon things Castilian would also reinforce the argument for the composition of the *Chronica* in the period well after the 1157 division of the kingdom following the death of Alfonso VII.

---


6 *Crónicas anónimas de Sahagún*, ed. Antonio Ubieto Arteta (Zaragoza, 1987). Only the early modern Spanish text survives. The initial portions of it were likely written in the second quarter of the twelfth century.


8 *CN*, pp. 170–175. The same period has been examined with an eye to all the historical materials available in Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under King Alfonso VI, 1065–1109* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 41–67.

9 *CN*, pp. lxxxix–xciv.