

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT A
CONTROVERSIAL HAGIOGRAPHY:
THE VITA VEL GESTA SANCTI ILDEFONSI

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ABSTRACT

Among the limited hagiographical production of the Hispanic High Middle Ages, there is a story that, despite its brevity, will be truly successful. Success as a text with comes not only from its dissemination but, above all, from the disclosure of the narrative tradition embodied in it. It is the *Vita vel gesta Sancti Ildefonsi Toletanae sedis metropolitani episcopi* —thus named by E. Flórez. In recent years, there have been several discussions about the authorship, date of production and aims of this text, which started a long and productive legend about the saint portrayed in it, Ildefonso de Toledo. The purpose of this paper is to make some comments on this story and, above all, set it in its possible contexts of production and dissemination. This approach may provide some additional evidence to help to identify the controversial author of the hagiography, in particular, to determine the discursive coordinates used to construct his work.

KEY WORDS

Hagiography, Spain, Saint Ildefonso de Toledo, Pseudo Cixila.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Hagiographia, Hispania, Sanctus Ildephonsus Toletani, Pseudo Cixila.

Within the reduced hagiographical production of the Spanish High Middle Ages, there is a story that was very popular, despite its brevity.¹ This success, in fact, did not only result from the spread of the text, but also through the divulgation of the narrative tradition that it epitomised. The work in question is the *Vita vel gesta Sancti Ildefonsi Toletanae sedis metropolitani episcopi*, a title given to it by E. Flórez, a work that has been defined as “*escasas páginas de lo que pudo haber sido un discurso catequético, sin más valor que el hagiográfico*”.² The text stands out prominently on the local literary stage, where it constitutes “*la vida latina de Hispania que cuenta con mayor número de manuscritos, veinte*”.³ In recent years, there has been a great deal of discussion regarding the authorship, date of composition and aims of this tale, which initiated of a long and fruitful legend about the saint portrayed in it, Ildephonsus de Toledo. My purpose is to make some observations about this narrative and, in particular, to place it within possible contexts of its production and diffusion. This approach may allow additional clues to be supplied to identify the controversial author of the *vita* and, in particular, determine the discursive coordinates that were employed to produce this work. Similarly, I will attempt to identify the thematic variables used by the narrator, as well as the possible sources he used for this.

1. The author and date of writing

Two names appear in the codices as presumed authors of the tale that concerns us: Cixila and Eladius. The first name figures in two of the manuscripts in which

1. An overview of this work can be found in Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. “Passionnaires, légendiers et compilations hagiographiques dans le haut Moyen Age espagnol”, *Hagiographies. Cultures et sociétés, IVe-XIIe siècles*. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1981: 49-59 (reprinted in the work by the same author: *Vie chrétienne et culture dans l’Espagne du VIIe au Xe siècles*. London: Variorum, 1992). In categorical terms, Díaz y Díaz indicates that “*la producción hagiográfica de España es pobre*” (Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. “Passionnaires, légendiers...”: 53). See Valcárcel, Vitalino. “Hagiografía hispanolatina visigótica y medieval (s. XII-XIII)”, *Actas del I Congreso nacional de latín medieval: León, 1-4 de diciembre de 1993*, Maurilio Pérez González, coord. León: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León, 1995: 191-209; Valcárcel, Vitalino. “La historiografía latina medieval de Hispania. Un quehacer de la filología latina hoy”. *Historia, instituciones, documentos*, 32 (2005): 329-362.

2. “...a few pages of what could have been a catchtetic discourse with no greater value than the purely hagiographical” (Bodelón, Serafín. *Literatura latina de la Edad Media en España*. Madrid: Akal, 1989: 40). The *Vita* was systematically published from 1576 onwards. A detail of these editions can be found in verse in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1992 (reprin.): doc. n° 3919. I follow the edition by Gil, Juan. *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1973: I, 59-66. See also Díaz, Manuel. *Index scriptorum latinorum Medii Aevi hispanorum*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1959: 147, doc. n° 595; Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. *Historia de la antigua literatura latina hispano-cristiana*. Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1998: IV, 159 and following, with the reservation that he erroneously indicates that Flórez was the first editor of the tale.

3. “...the Latin life of Hispania that has the largest number of manuscripts, namely twenty”. (Valcárcel, Vitalino. “Las *vitae sanctorum* de la Hispania medieval: sus manuscritos y su historia editorial”. *Memoria ecclesiae*, 24 (2004): 145-175, especially 155).



the text is found, the Escorialense D.I.1 (from San Millán de la Cogolla, from 994, although with additions from the mid-11th century) and the one conserved in the Royal Academy of History in Madrid, Aemilianesis 47 (also from the 11th century).⁴ In contrast, the second name appears in the remaining codices, although there is no indication to whom it alludes, nor the reasons why the authorship of the tale was adjudicated to this individual. We know, at least, that this Eladius (Elladio or Helladio) “no puede ser el [obispo toledano] del que habla Ildefonso en sus *Varones ilustres* 6, ya que aquél muere en 633 y éste en enero de 667. Hoy por hoy desconocemos quién pueda ser este Eladio”.⁵ Otherwise, this discrepancy regarding the authorship—and the fact that the cited *beatus Eladio episcopo* appears in manuscripts from a wide range of origins, in contrast with the limited number and local concentration of those that allude to Cixila, has led Canal Sánchez to think that “si la atribución a Cixila fuera anterior, no nos explicamos por qué códices extranjeros contemporáneos, y situados en puntos bien diferentes, como son Cluny y Benevento, están concordes en la atribución a Heladio”.⁶ In his opinion, therefore, “la lección original era esta última [pero] algún copista, consciente que el único Heladio obispo de Toledo había muerto mucho antes de ser Hildefonso obispo [...] la cambió en la que aparece en los códices Emilianenses (Cixila)”.⁷

4. See Ruiz García, Elisa. *Catálogo de la sección de códices de la Real Academia de la Historia*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1997: 285-288. As well as the *vita* in question, the manuscript contains the *Vita sancti Martini* by Sulpicio Severo, the *Epistola ad Frunimianum* by Braulio of Saragossa, the *Vita sancti Emilianii* by the same, the canon I of the tenth council of Toledo in 656, the “De celebritate festiuitatis dominice Matris”, the *Beati Ildephonsi elogium* by Julián de Toledo, the treatise *De virginitate perpetua beatae Mariae* by Ildephonsus himself and the *Lectiones de nativitate Domini* taken from *De civitate Dei* by Saint Augustine. According to Ruiz García, the sheets reproduced in the hagiography of Saint Ildephonsus were copied by a later hand than the rest, which could be dated to “the end of the 11th century”, presenting “evidence of greater artistry in his handwriting”. Furthermore, the text begins with an I “held by a Romanesque style angel”, different from the others that make up the codex.

5. “It cannot be the [Toledo bishop] that Ildephonsus mentions in his *Varones ilustres* 6, as he died in 633 and this in January 667. We still do not know who this Eladius might be” (Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. *Historia de la anti-gua...*: 159; Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. “Personalidad y herencia literaria de san Ildefonso de Toledo”. *Revista Española de Teología*, 31 (1971): 137-66, 283-334).

6. “If the attribution to Cixila were earlier, we would not be able to explain why contemporary foreign codices, situated in very different places, such as Cluny and Benevento, agreed on the attribution to Heladio” (Canal Sánchez, José María. “San Hildefonso de Toledo. Historia y leyenda”. *Ephemerides mariologicae*, 17 (1967): 437-462 (especialmente 446)). As Bauouin de Gaiffier indicates, the name of Heladius as author of the tale appears in the *Milagros* by Gautier de Coincy, from the early 13th century. (Gaiffier, Bauouin de. “Les vies de Saint Ildephonse. A propos d’attributions discutées”. *Analecta Bollandiana*, 94 [1976]: 235-244, especialmente 240).

7. “The original lesson was the latter [but] some copyist, aware that the only Heladio, Bishop of Toledo had died long before Hildefonso was bishop [...] changed it to that which appears in the Emilianus codices (Cixila)”, (Gaiffier, Bauouin de. “Les vies de Saint Ildephonse...”: 240).

According to the same author, the list of medieval manuscripts that include this *vita*—as well as the two mentioned above, which he adjudicates to Cixila—are the following: 1) Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, XXII (12th century); 2) Londres, British Museum., add. 11695 (from Silos, 12th century); 3) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, n.a.l. 1455 (Cluny, 11th century); 4) Paris, Arsenal 272 (Fleury, 11th century); 5) Paris, Arsenal 271 (Fleury?, 11th century); 6) Paris, B.N., lat. 2833 (Spain?, 12th century); 7) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 2359 (St.-Martin-des-Champs, s. XII); 8) Dijon Bibliothèque Publique 232 (Cîteaux, s. XII); 9) Parma, Biblioteca. Palatina 1650 (Germany?, 11th-12th century); 10) Rome, Biblioteca. Alessandrina 200 (San Niccolò in Arena, Catania, 13th century); 11) Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional 10087 (Toledo?, 13th century); 12) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 2332 (second half of the 12th century); 13)



In fact, there is not much information to identify the latter. In line with the tradition inaugurated by Tamayo in the 17th century, it was generally believed that he might be Cixila, archbishop of Toledo between 774 and 783. This was maintained by others, from Flórez to Justo Pérez de Urbel, who (in a biography of this prelate) stated that “*escribió en un latín correcto, que nos delata la conservación de las aficiones literarias del siglo anterior, una vida de S. Ildefonso, no exenta de excrecencias legendarias y sucesos maravillosos*”.⁸ The tradition alluded to would obviously be that of Visigothic times, without it being entirely clear what type of “*afición literaria*” is referred to.

However, this same “old” tradition, a series of questions of style and certain historical errors (examined in detail below) were those that led Manuel Díaz y Díaz to suppose that the Cixila named could not be the cited archbishop of Toledo but rather some author from the 10th or early 11th century.⁹ In this sense, he takes up an earlier suggestion by B. de Gaiffier who, after having adjudicated the text to Pelayo, bishop of Oviedo, who died in 1129, then changed his position and estimated that this *Vita* “*data del siglo XI o, a lo sumo, finales del X*”.¹⁰ Moreover, in the same expert’s opinion, the adjudication of authorship to Cixila could answer to the fact that, in the majority of the manuscripts, this text was accompanied by the *vita* written by Julián de Toledo. Thus, “*los copistas tuvieron cuidado de anotar Hucusque Hildefonsus. Abhinc Iulianus. La c de hinc [...] se junta a Iulianus, obteniendo una forma muy cercana a Cixilianus*”.¹¹ In contrast, Díaz y Díaz rejects this suggestion and, giving Cixila an authentic personality, believes that he may have been the monk, possibly of Mozarabic origins, who was in charge of the monastery of San Cosme y San Damián in Abéllar, 13 kilometres from the city of León, around 905.¹²

París, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 16357 (Sorbonne, 13th-14th century); 14) Luxemburg, Université 119 (Münster, between 1220 and 1240) and 15) Toledo, cathedral 15-13 (France, 1388).

8. “*He wrote in correct Latin, that reveals the preservation of the literary interests from the previous century, a life of S. Ildephonsus, not without legendary excrecences and marvellous events*”. (Pérez de Urbel, Justo. “Cixila”. *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España*, Quintín Aldea Vaquero, Tomás Marín Martínez, José Vives Gatell, dirs. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1972: 429).

9. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. “De patrística española”. *Revista Española de Teología*, 17 (1957): 3-46. The reference to Cixila is on pages 44-45.

10. “*dates from the 11th century or, at the most, the end of the 10th*”. (Gaiffier, Bauoruim de. “Les vies de s. Ildephonse...”: 243). See also the same author’s works on this theme that appear in various editions of *Analecta bollandiana*, 56 (1938), 60 (1942), 64 (1946) and 71 (1953). See also Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. *Historia...*: 159-60.

11. “*the copyists were careful to note Hucusque Hildefonsus. Abhinc Iulianus. The c of hinc [...] is joined to Iulianus, obtaining a form very close to Cixilianus*”. (Gaiffier, Bauoruim de. “Les vies de s. Ildephonse...”: 242).

12. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. “De patrística...”: 44; Pérez de Urbel, Justo. “Cixila II”. *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España...*: 429-430. The identification of this Cixila as the second responded to the desire not to confuse him with either the bishop of Toledo mentioned above or the the bishop of León of the same name, who ruled the see between 853 and 857 and who confirmed “*dos donaciones de Ordoño I a la iglesia de Oviedo y el discutido privilegio de los obispos Severiano y Ariulfo a la misma iglesia*”. See also Carbajo Serrano, María José. “El monasterio de los santos Cosme y Damián de Abéllar. Monacato y sociedad en la época astur-leonesa”. *Archivos leoneses*, 81-82 (1987): 7-300, especially 31-34, who believed that this monastery already existed before 905, so that this date only refers to its legal recognition by Alfonso III (page 34). April 904 is the date of foundation suggested (without a very solid base) by Díaz-

If we accept this hypothesis, we must briefly outline this new character, of whom we have some important vestiges, although there are certain difficulties in their chronology. In first place (and as indicated above), he would seem to have been a Mozarab, who some identify with a monk fleeing from Córdoba, although, in this case, we do not know which monastery he came from.¹³ Cixila presents himself “*en unión de mis hermanos*” as the founder of the above-mentioned monastery of Abéllar.¹⁴ He was first elected abbot of the monastery and shortly afterwards appointed bishop of León (perhaps succeeding St Froilan), an appointment in which it seems Alfonso III intervened favourably.¹⁵ He appears with this episcopal title on the first diploma that was signed by Alfonso’s successor, García I, on 15 February 911,¹⁶ and he must surely have held the post until 914. In fact, his work as a bishop did not imply leaving his old post as abbot, but rather he continued to run the monastery, contributing to its aggrandisement.¹⁷ Cixila ceased to appear as bishop of León in mid-914, being succeeded by Fruminio II, possibly also a Mozarab.¹⁸ It is very likely that the death of King García and the transfer of the capital to León influenced the prelate’s retirement to Abéllar, which monastery he continued

Jiménez, Juan Eloy. “Inmigración mozárabe en el reino de León. El monasterio de Abéllar o de los santos mártires Cosme y Damián”. *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 20 (1892): 123-151, the reference is on page 128.

13. In this respect, see the opinion of Collins, Roger. “Poetry in ninth-century Spain”. *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar*, IV (1984): 194 (note 39). The article has been reproduced in the same author’s work, Collins, Roger. *Law, Culture and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain*. London: Variorum, 1992; Mozarab from Córdoba is what Díaz-Jiménez believes (Díaz Jiménez, Juan Eloy. “Inmigración mozárabe...”: 128); as does Carbajo Serrano (Carbajo Serrano, María José. “El monasterio de los santos...”: 51-52). In contrast, Díaz y Díaz suggests a possible origin in Toledo (*Códices visigóticos de la monarquía leonesa*. León: Centro de estudios e investigación “San Isidoro”, 1983: 236).

14. “*in union with my brothers*” In his famous will dated 5 November 927 (which is mentioned below), the bishop indicated that “*cum sociis et fratribus meis, nomini sancto uestro, construxi hac monasterium, in suburbio Legionense, loco uoca ualle de Abeliare, super ripam fluminis Turio situm*” —*Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León*, ed. Emilio Sáez. León: Centro de Estudio e Investigación San Isidoro, 1987: I, 125, doc. n.º 75—. Juan Eloy Díaz Jiménez (Díaz-Jiménez, Juan Eloy. “Inmigración mozárabe...”: 136) followed by María José Carbajo Serrano (Carbajo Serrano, María José. “El monasterio de los santos...”: 52), mentions a certain Recafredo as Cixila’s father, alluding to a document by García I from 12th April 911. In truth, this is a falsification for which Ordoño II named his wife, Elvira, giving Cixila “*et pater tuus Rekafredus et fratribus tuis*” the town of “Monasteriolo” in Río Seco —*Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León...: doc. n.º 56—*. The reference is thus doubtful.

15. Palomeque Torres, Antonio. “Episcopologio de las sedes del reino de León (Siglo X)”. *Archivos leoneses*, 19 (1956): 4-5, 47-54; Palomeque Torres, Antonio. “Episcopologio de las sedes del reino de León” *Archivos leoneses*, 20 (1957): 5-6, who supposes that there was a third bishop between Froilán and Cixila (page 47).

16. Flórez, Enrique. *España Sagrada*. Madrid: Imprenta de Don Pedro Marin, 1784: XXXIV, 205. The bishops Genadio of Astorga and Atilano of Zamora appear in the same diploma.

17. Palomeque Torres, Antonio. “Episcopologio...”, 19 (1956): 48-49; Rodríguez Fernández, Justiniano. *Reyes de León. García I (910-914), Ordoño II (914-924), Fruela II (924-925) y Alfonso IV (925-931)*. Burgos: La Olmeda, 1997: 27 and following. A detail of the action by Cixila can be seen in Díaz-Jiménez, Juan Eloy. “Inmigración mozárabe...”: 140-144.

18. Palomeque Torres, Antonio. “Episcopologio de las sedes...”, 20 (1957): 6-22; Rodríguez Fernández, Justiniano. *Reyes de León...: 54, 80*.



to head. In unclear circumstances, Cixila went back to the episcopal see between 924 and 928, when King Fruela II persecuted his successor (the above-mentioned Frumínio), and a struggle broke out for this monarch's dynastic continuity. The reasons behind this persecution are that the latter bishop belonged to the aristocratic Olmúndiz family, opponents of Fruela.¹⁹ Frumínio's exile must have ended around the end of 927, after Fruela's death. However, he did not resume his episcopal position, being succeeded by bishop Oveco. Meanwhile, Cixila returned to his work as abbot, appearing in the documentation from León until 938.²⁰ His death must have occurred sometime between that date and April 940, when Severus appears for the first time as abbot of Abéllar.²¹

Among the documents that Cixila left, his will is of special importance. In it he bequeathed a series of objects and texts to the monastery of Abéllar, which made its library a reference point for 10th-century Hispanic culture.²² In fact, the inventory (dated 5 November 927) mentions, among others, such writers as St Augustine, John Cassian, Ephrem the Syrian, John Chrysostom, Prosper of Aquitaine, Claudius, Isidore of Seville, Eucherius of Lyon, Maurus Servius, Donatus, Avitus of Vienne, Aldhelm of Malmesbury, Pompeius Trogus, Juvenal, Dracontius, Virgil, Prudentius, Eugenius of Toledo, Cato and Ildephonsus of Toledo.²³ Evidently, this is a magnificent repertoire of classic and patristic knowledge, to which a series of liturgical texts are added, these being antiphonaries, the Visigothic *Liber Ordinum* and *Commicum*, psalters, etc., and an exemplar of the Bible. There is also a codex that apparently included the anonymous *Vitas sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* and a work by Gerontius, perhaps the *Vita S. Melaniae*, composed in Greek by this writer around the 5th century. Lastly, it mentions a large collection of chalices, crosses and other liturgical objects, made of gold, silver and precious stones, vestments for liturgical use and other objects.

19. On this, see Rodríguez Fernández, Justiniano. *Reyes de León...*: 150 and following. Regarding the succession of Fruela II, see Sánchez-Albornoz, Claudio. "La sucesión al trono en los reinos de León y Castilla". *Boletín de la Academia Argentina de Letras*, 50 (1945): 35-124, especially 59 and following.

20. The last diploma in which he is mentioned (as a witness) is a sentence by Ramiro II about the use of water in the monastery of Valdevimbre from 25 June 938- signed "Cixila Dei gratia episcopus", Díaz-Jiménez, Juan Eloy. "Inmigración mozárabe...": 144 -. This document was not taken into consideration by Palomeque Torres, Antonio. "Episcopologio de las sedes...", 20 (1957): 5, who understood that the last participation by Cixila corresponded was as a witness to the donation made to the monastery of Celanova by Ilduara Eriz, the mother of Saint Rosendo, on 27 February the same year.

21. It is probable —as Carbajo Serrano indicates, "El monasterio...": 56— that there was a third abbot, by the name of Provicus, between Cixila and Severo. He must have been in charge of the monastery between 25 June 938 (as we have seen, the last document in which Cixila appears) and 1 April 940 (the first text that mentions Severo). This is suggested by the document from 23 October 941, with which two individuals confirmed for Severo a donation they made to Cixila and had revoked "Provicus abba essente in ipso monasterio" (*Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León...*: doc. n°147).

22. Pérez de Urbel stated categorically in his time that the mentioned library was the only one "which is known to have a good collection of poetical books, both Christian and pagan" —*Historia de los monjes españoles en la Edad Media*. Madrid: Ancla, s.d.: II, 357—. Undoubtedly, this opinion should be revised in line with the more recent studies (that underline the importance of other similar stores, scattered around the Iberian Peninsula).

23. See *Colección documental del archivo de la catedral de León...*: 124-127.



We are thus facing a character who had access to an extensive common bibliographical stock, a peculiar but not entirely atypical situation in Hispanic society in the second half of the 9th and throughout the 10th centuries. In fact, such a stock has suggested to Díaz y Díaz (as mentioned above) that this Cixila was possibly from Toledo as this set of works "*sólo puede entenderse en manos de un personaje formado en centros más ricos intelectualmente y con bienes adquiridos fuera de tierras de León*".²⁴ In this sense we should bear in mind that this was in the setting of the "renaissance" of the Latin tradition, largely motivated by the need to counterbalance Islamic culture, which was very active in the centre and south of the peninsula in those times.²⁵ Nor is the number of works mentioned by Cixila surprising. The desire to own great libraries was a constant feature among both Muslims and Christians from Andalusia in those times. As Herrera Roldán states, the city of Córdoba, for example, must have had a good number of booksellers, given the interest among Mozarabic intellectuals to acquire new books.²⁶ Clear examples of this were such famous characters as Eulogius and Álvaro of Córdoba, who sought books on their journeys across the peninsula, asked friends from northern lands for those they could not find in the city, patronised the work of the booksellers and placed the books they found at the their own disposal. In fact, many of the titles cited in Cixila's library coincided with those brought back by Eulogius from his journeys to Christian lands.²⁷

If we accept his Mozarabic origin, this must have been the intellectual setting in which the monk Cixila moved before emigrating to the north of the peninsula. Nor is this move clear, as mentioned above. If it were true, it probably took place at the end of the 9th or beginning of the 10th century, during the turbulence that affected the Umayyad state and the situation of the Christian communities within this state. The purposeful policy of founding and restoring monasteries promoted by Alfonso III and Fruela II, as part of their work to repopulate the territories conquered from the Muslims, may also have been a factor. We ought to remember that, during the reigns of these sovereigns, such monasteries as Sahagún (872), San Cebrián de Mazote (915), San Martín de Castañeda (916), San Pedro de Eslonza (around the beginning of the 10th century), San Miguel de Escalada (from the same time) and the previously mentioned Saints Cosme and Damián of Abéllar were built.

To summarise, we have a text that was widely read (within the parameters of the epoch), attributed to three possible authors (Eladius, Cixila, bishop of Toledo in the 8th century, or his homonym from León from the 10th), which may not be the work

24. "*can only be understood in the hands of a character trained in the richest centres intellectually and with goods acquired outside the lands of León*" (*Códices visigóticos de la monarquía leonesa...*: 236).

25. About this theme, see among others, Herrera Roldán, Pedro. *Cultura y lengua latinas entre los mozárabes cordobeses del siglo IX*. Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 1995: 49 and following; Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. *Manuscritos visigóticos del sur de la Península. Ensayo de distribución regional*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1995: 170-174.

26. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. *Manuscritos visigóticos del sur de la Península...*: 50. See also Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. "La circulation des manuscrits dans la Péninsule Ibérique". *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale*, 12 (1969): 219-241, 383-392. The reference to the Mozarab libraries is on 223 and following.

27. See González Muñoz, Fernando. *Latinidad mozárabe. Estudio sobre el latín de Alvaro de Córdoba*. Córdoba-La Coruña: Universidad de Córdoba-Universidade da Coruña, 1996: 19-25.



of any of these but rather of fourth hagiographer and, given all that, might be dated from between the 8th and 11th centuries (the latter date corresponding to the first manuscript manifestations).

2. The work and its possible sources

The same confusion regarding the possible author of this story extends to the text itself. In first place, there is no doubt that it is an entirely legendary piece, which perhaps compiles some ancient traditions or legends. As we shall see, the only known earlier biography of St Ildephonsus (written by Julian, one of his successors in the see of Toledo) has a minimal relation to the one we are considering.²⁸ Entirely to the contrary, the hagiography composed by our unknown author (whom, for practical question, we shall call Pseudo Cixila) is an extensive catalogue of apparitions, and marvellous and supernatural events. The text begins with a reference to Ildephonsus' high position in Spanish spiritual life, comparing him to St Isidore. Even more, it is explicitly stated that Ildephonsus was a student of Isidore and that his education had been contracted by Bishop Eugenius I of Toledo. Then it states that after returning to the monastery of Agali when he finished his training in Seville, Ildephonsus was appointed abbot of the monastery, dedicated to Saints Cosme and Damián. In their honour, Ildephonsus composed (according to the tale by the Pseudo Cixila) two masses, that "*quas missas infra adnotatas inuenietis*".²⁹

The narration then continues with the appointment of Ildephonsus to the see of Toledo, including a reference to his magnificent virtues, an elegy loaded with symbolic expressions. This also serves as a prologue for one of the most important events in the tale: the miraculous appearance of St Leocadia. For the hagiographer, this fact "*fidei eius meritum coram hominibus declararet* [i.e., that of Ildephonsus]".³⁰ According to the text, during the mass held to celebrate the day of the festivity of the saint, the "*tumulus [of Leocadia] in quo sanctum eius corpusculum usque hodie humatum est exiliret et operculum, quem uix triginta iuuenes mouere non possunt, non humanis manibus, sed angelicis eleuatum...*". Thus, the saint appeared dressed in the clothes in which she had been buried.³¹ This appearance gave rise to an outburst of weeping, singing and shouts among the people present, while the saint, "*estrechando y apretando las manos*",

28. Toledo, Julián de. "Beati Hildephonsi Elogium", *Patrologiæ cursus completus. Series latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris: Montrouge, 1850: XCVI, cols. 43-44. See also Jiménez Duque, Baldomero. *La espiritualidad romano-visigoda y mozárabe*. Salamanca-Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca-Fundación Universitaria Española, 1977: 138 and following.

29. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 61. According to Bruyne, Donatien de. "De l'origine de quelques textes liturgiques mozarabes". *Revue bénédictine*, 30 (1915): 421-436, one of these masses could have been the one published by Férotin, Marius in: *Le Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum*, ed. Marius Férotin. Paris: Firmin-Didot. Didot, 1912. See also Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. *Historia de la antigua...*: 273-274 (who also considers that the reference to the Pseudo Cixila could be correct).

30. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 62.

31. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 62.

said "*Deo gratias, uiuit Domina mea per uitam Ildefonsi*", an obvious reference to the latter's well-known treatise about the Virgin Mary.³² Meanwhile, the clergyman sang the verses of the hymn "*Speciosa facta est, alleluia*", composed (according to the narrative) by St Ildephonsus himself in honour of Leocadia.³³ This reference is used by the author to indicate again that this hymn also "*subter est adnotata*".

The appearance of Leocadia gave rise to a curious happening: kneeling before the Virgin, the saint implored someone to give him "a sharp instrument to cut up" her veil, which she apparently had in her hands. As the frenetic crowd paid no attention to the bishop's plea and Leocadia threatened to leave, the king

Clamabat [Ildephonsus] inter uoces populi uelut mugiens tu aliquid incisorium deferrent, unde quod manibus tenebat precideret. Et nemo illi occurrebat, quia populos uastis ictibus rictibusque frendeabat, nam et sancta uirgo quod uoluntate submiserat, tu desideria cresceret, uiolenta retrahebat. Sed princeps quondam Recesuintus, qui eius tempore erat, gloria et ferocitate terrena deposita —qui eum ob iniquitates suas increpatus superbo oculo intuebatur—, cultrum modicum quem in teca tenebat cum lacrimis offerebat.³⁴

This monarchic gesture allowed Ildephonsus to obtain the precious relic, which was placed, together with the providential knife, in a silver reliquary.

A short paragraph (which states that "*alia miracula Spiritus Sanctus per eum in ipso Dominico aduentu*") serves as the introduction to the second and last part of the tale, also characterised by a supernatural appearance: that of the Virgin Mary. It seems that the saint had prepared a special mass for the festivity of the Virgin (the seventh of this kind of works, according to the Pseudo Cixila),³⁵ a work that (once again) was "mentioned below" (*missam superscriptam*). When the moment for the celebration arrived, King Recceswinth, "*supra dictus rex minus de timore Dei sollicitus et de suis iniquitatibus male conscius ad audienda sollempnia regali de more paratus accessit*".³⁶ This was the setting for perhaps the most famous episode in the life of St Ildephonsus: the appearance of the Virgin. In fact, when the procession entered the church, a celestial light frightened most of the clergy and guardians of the temple, who fled in fear. Meanwhile, the people "*Sollicita omnis congregatio requirens quid Dei seruus ageret cum angelicis choris*."³⁷ As well as this, the saint approached the altar and, kneeling

32. "taking and holding hands" (Pseudo Cixila. *Vita*...: 62). See Canal Sánchez, José María. "San Hildefonso...": 447.

33. This would be the second work that the Pseudo Cixila attributed to Ildephonsus. About this text, see Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. *Historia de la antigua*...: 274.

34. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita*...: 62-63.

35. Domínguez del Val, Ursicino. *Historia de la antigua*...: 274, suggests that the mass "Erigamus quaeso, Karissimi, in sublime oculos", that appears in the *Le Liber mozarabicum sacramentorum*...: 50-54 could be the one that Ildephonsus dedicated to the Virgin. The basis for such a claim, otherwise rather weak, is that this text "starts at least from the manuscript tradition directly after the *De uirginitate* [by the same author]". The same feeling is shown by Rivera Recio, Juan Francisco. *San Ildefonso de Toledo. Biografía, época y posteridad*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1985: 222.

36. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita*...: 63.

37. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita*...: 64.



before it, saw Mary sitting in the ivory episcopal seat. This cathedra would from this moment on become the most venerated object, to the point that nobody ever tried to sit in it, with the exception of the bishop "*quam cathedram nullus episcopus adire temptavit nisi postea dominus Sisbertus, qui statim sedem ipsam lapsu perdens exilio religatus est*".³⁸ Mary was accompanied by a "*una multitudo de vírgenes*", who filled the apse of the church, intoning "*cánticos davídicos con suave acompañamiento musical*". Finally, the Virgin turned to the saint with these words,

*Propera in occursum, serue Dei rectissime, accipe munusculum de manu mea, quod de thesauro Filii mei tibi adtuli; sic enim tibi opus est, ut benedictione tegminis que tibi delata est in meo tantum die utari. Et quia oculis fixis in meo semper seruitio permansisti et in laudem meam diffusa in labiis tuis gratia tam dulcia in cordibus fidelium depinxisti, ex uestimentis glorie iam in hac uita orneris et in futuro in promtuariis meis cum aliis seruis Filii mei leteris.*³⁹

After this, the celestial group disappeared and "*Remansit Dei seruus in tantum sollicitus de adipiscenda gloria quantum prespicuus de sibi donata palma uictorie*".⁴⁰ The tale ends abruptly at this point without a colophon.

As we can see, this *vita* has an enormous quota of fantastic elements, apparently composed for an explicit purpose: to serve as an introduction to a series of works by the saint (or supposedly belonging to him). The hymns to Saints Cosme and Damián, Leocadia and the Virgin should perhaps be included among these works, as such expressions as "mentioned below", "footnoted" and the like that appear in the text would lead us to understand. Otherwise, this supposed introduction should also link to some earlier tale, given that the expression that opens it (as Canal Sánchez has noted) is strange "*si no supone otro texto precedente*".⁴¹ In fact, the sentence "*Ecce dapes melliflue illius domni Ildefonsi...*"⁴² indicates that this *vita* should continue other works by the same bishop of Toledo or the *Elogium* by St Julian.⁴³ However, the function of concatenation in the tale we are analysing seems to me more specific than the mere "catechetical discourse" suggested by Bodelón.⁴⁴ On the other hand, it was undoubtedly this link to the works of Ildephonsus that justified the extraordinary success of this *vita*, a merit that cannot be the result of "*ni a la calidad literaria de la obra, más bien escasa, ni al nombre de su autor*".⁴⁵

The situation with respect to the possible sources of the narrative is different. It seems that a substantial part of this (the two celestial appearances) could not have

38. Pseudo Cixila, *Vita*...: 64.

39. "*a multitude of virgins*" (...) "*psalms of David with soft musical accompaniment*" (Pseudo Cixila, *Vita*...: 65).

40. Pseudo Cixila, *Vita*...: 65.

41. "*if it does not suppose any earlier text*" (Canal Sánchez, José María. "San Hildefonso...": 447).

42. Pseudo Cixila, *Vita*...: 61.

43. The latter is the opinion of Canal Sánchez, José María. "San Hildefonso...": 447.

44. See note 2.

45. "*neither the literary quality of the work, that is rather poor, nor to the name of its author*" (Valcárcel, Vitalino. "*Las vitae sanctorum...*": 155).

been taken from the hagiography written by Julian of Toledo, mentioned above. In fact, Julian only refers to Ildephonsus as having professed as a monk from an early age, in the monastery of Agali (on the outskirts of Toledo), where he would later return to the post of abbot. Similarly, he notes his building of a nunnery, his promotion to the episcopate during the time of Recceswinth (in 657), and cites the works he composed. Lastly, he indicates that the saint died in the eighteenth year of the reign of the same sovereign (that is, in 667) and that he was buried in the church of St Leocadia in Toledo, at the feet of his predecessor. The tale, as we can see, is succinct and only deviates from the narration of the facts to indicate the exalted virtues of Ildephonsus, the imposition of the bishop's office to which he was subjected (a classic theme in hagiographical literature) and a short indication that the saint's task was marked by "*variis rerum ac molestiarum occupationibus impeditus*".⁴⁶

In contrast, a suggestion about the possible source used by Cixila is in the text itself. In a passage, we read that

*quia omnia longa sunt recensiri que eius temporibus in Toletana urbe dominus Urbanus et dominus Euanlius per eum facta narrabant, uel ex multis pauca progrediamur, quia qui mecum hoc audierunt, cum hec legerint, dolebunt pretermisisse me tam multa et magna que utique mecum sciunt.*⁴⁷

Unfortunately, we know nothing of these two characters or their works. The only existing reference to them is found in the so-called *Crónica mozárabe de 754*, that presents Urbanus as an "*anciano chantre de la catedral de Toledo*" and Euanlius as an "*arcediano de la misma sede*", illustrious men, given their "*predicación, sabiduría y santidad*", who died around 737.⁴⁸ It seems that Euanlius has been identified as the author of a letter against the Jews in Saragossa, included in a manuscript from the Escorial.⁴⁹ In contrast, no information has survived about Urbanus. Whatever the case, no evidence remains that either of them composed a hagiographic text about St Ildephonsus or any other saint. Could they have acted as an oral source for the Pseudo Cixila, as López Pereira suggests?⁵⁰ If that had been so, they "*deberían ser viejísimos, casi centenarios*" when the tale was written, still supposing that it dates from the 8th century.⁵¹ Apart from that, there is now a basis to support this oral

46. Toledo, Julián de. "Beati Hildefonsi...": col. 44.

47. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita*...: 63.

48. "old cantor in the cathedral of Toledo" (...) "archdeacon of the same see" (...) "preaching, wisdom and holiness" (*Crónica mozárabe de 754*, ed. José Eduardo López Pereira. Saragossa: Anubar, 1980: 84-86). "*Urbanus Toletanae sedis urbis regie katedralis ueteranus melodicus atque eiusdem sedis Euanlius archidiaconus nimium doctrina et sapientia, sanctitate quoque et in omni secundum scripturas spe fide et karitate ad confortandam ecclesiam Dei clari habentur*" [era 756]. In page 106, he states that "*Per idem tempus [era 775] uiri doctores et sanctimonie studio stans pollentes Urbanus et Euanlius leti ad Dominum pergentes quiescunt in pace*".

49. *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España*...: 887. See also Simonet, Francisco Javier. *Historia de los mozárabes de España*. Madrid: Turner, 1983 (reprint.): I, 468-469.

50. *Crónica mozárabe de...*: 85 (note 9).

51. "they must have been very old, almost a hundred" (Rivera Recio, Juan Francisco. *San Ildefonso de...*: 15).



transmission. We should bear in mind that the hagiographer states that these were events “narrated” by Urbanus and Evantius (not that they had been contemporary to the events) and that these were well known to everyone. In other words, we cannot discount the existence of a text that refers to such events. What is more, even if this was an oral tradition, this could well have reached the 10th-11th centuries, adjudicated to two characters who, for some reason, were considered significant within the history of the Iberian church after the Muslim invasion.

On the other hand, this consonance of actors between the *Vita Ildephonsi* and the *Crónica mozárabe* has led Angel Vega to think that perhaps both sources were the product of the same author (or that the hagiographer knew the text of the chronicle). In his opinion, these contacts were

*numerosos y muy significativos [y] no se pueden explicar nada más que por uno de estos dos modos: o porque el autor de la Vita conoce y maneja la Chronica, o porque el autor de la Chronica es también el mismo de la Vita. La primera solución es más fácil y la más simple.*⁵²

This second option should not seem strange to us, given that manuscripts from the 10th century have been conserved in the *Crónica mozárabe*, which demonstrates the antiquity of its transmission.⁵³

Together with this, a second antecedent has also been suggested, much more controversial than the previous one and from a source far from the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, in 1957, E. Cerulli suggested that there was a close influence between medieval Ethiopian literature and the work of St Ildephonsus, to the point that “*el relato del milagro de [este santo] inicia la mayor parte de los manuscritos del Libro etíope de milagros de María*”.⁵⁴ Similarly, he emphasised that the three fundamental elements of the tale by the Pseudo Cixila (the appearance of the Virgin, the present she gives to Ildephonsus and the theme of the episcopal chair) could have been taken from the life of a popular saint in the East: St Nicholas of Myra.⁵⁵ In fact, more than the hagiography of the latter saint, these images seem to come from the life of another of God’s chosen, homonym of the previous, whose adventures were transferred to the bishop of Myra from the 10th century: Nicholas, Archimandrite of the Monastery of Sion and bishop of Pinara in the 6th century.⁵⁶ In this source,

52. “numerous and very significant [and] nothing can be explained except in one of these two modes: either because the author of the Vita knew and handled the Chronica, or because the author of the Chronica was the same as that of the Vita. The first solution is easier and simpler”. (Vega, Angel Custodio. “De patología española. San Ildefonso de Toledo”. *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 165 [1969]: 55-107).

53. From this century is the codex that was divided and is now shared between London (Egerton, 1934) and Madrid —Real Academia de la Historia, 81—: *Crónica mozárabe*...: 7-8.

54. “the tale of the miracle of [this saint] begins most of the manuscripts of the Ethiopian book of the Miracles of Mary” (Cerulli, Enrico. “La littérature éthiopienne dans l’histoire de la culture médiévale”. *Annuaire de l’Institut de Philologie et d’Histoire orientales et slaves*, 14 (1954-1957): 17-35, especially page 28).

55. Cerulli, Enrico. “La littérature éthiopienne dans l’histoire...”: 29.

56. Some authors even sustain that this Nicholas of Myra never existed and that it was the life of this Sionite which created the legend about the first. Others, such as Cerulli, suggested that the Sionite Nicholas was the author of the *life* of the former. Lastly, there are those who separate both characters and

which possibly had earlier origins but which, as it has survived, dates from the 10th century, we read that this Sionite had a vision in which "*Spiritus Sanctus praedicto sancto viro Nicolao in somnis apparet thronum ei demonstrans et gloriosum pulchrumque schema vestii*".⁵⁷ Shortly after, it was the Virgin who appeared to Nicholas, showing him "*el lugar y las dimensiones de una casa de oración, que llevaría su nombre, para que alzase el templo de Santa María*".⁵⁸ Various observations can be made about this. In the first place, there is a clear coincidence of motives between this appearance of the Holy Ghost to Nicholas of Sion and to the one known by St Ildephonsus. In this latter case, although the text by the Pseudo Cixila identifies the Virgin as the celestial protagonist of the portent, he had also explicitly stated that "the Holy Ghost" performed various miracles through the same saint.⁵⁹ Alongside this, one can read in another passage "*Sic enim habitator suus Spiritus Sanctus egit, tu quod iste celebrat intrus ille patefaceret foris*".⁶⁰ This double allusion to the Holy Ghost has attracted attention given that, according to Canal Sánchez, it is not frequent in the Latin hagiographic literature of the epoch.⁶¹ The same must be said about the reference that Mary makes, in the life of the Sionite, to a building for prayer, which perhaps resembles the "*promtuariis meis*" (in the sense of a room reserved for the chosen ones) that the Virgin Mary promised to the bishop of Toledo.

To sum up, there is a consonance of elements that give the impression that our author knew this History about Nicholas of Sion and adapted it to his tale. Another option (according to Cerulli) is that the Pseudo Cixila had seen some Byzantine icons that represented the scene of Nicholas, a recurrent motive in which "*Jesús y María dándole el libro de los Evangelios, el trono y el omophorion episcopal*" appear,⁶² and constructed his narrative from this image. This latter possibility cannot be discarded but does not explain the consonance of themes and literary resources that appear in both texts. It is not impossible that a 9th-10th century Byzantine work had reached and circulated the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, various characters from the Near East arrived in the region in that time. One example is the monk George who, originally from the monastery of St Sabas in Jerusalem, ended up martyred

warn about the confusion, deliberate or chance, that arose about them. The Latin text about Nicholas of Sion was published by Falcone, Niccoló Carminio. *Sancti confessoris pontificis et celeberrimi thaumaturgi Nicolai acta primigenia*. Naples: Josephi de Bonis, 1751. Given that I have not been able to obtain this text, I have used the translation into Spanish included as an appendix in the book by Pero-Sanz, José Miguel. *San Nicolás: De obispo a Santa Claus*. Madrid: Palabra, 2002.

57. Pero-Sanz, José Miguel. "Vida de Nicolás de Sión", *San Nicolás. De obispo a santa Claus...*: 310. The quote is from the article by Canal Sánchez, José María. "San Hildefonso...": 448. The Latin text states "*Spiritus Sanctus praedicto sancto viro Nicolao in somnis apparet thronum ei demonstrans et gloriosum pulchrumque schema vestii*" —where the Greek *schema* is equivalent to the Latin *veste latino*.

58. "*the place and dimensions of a prayer house, that would have his name, so that they built the temple of Santa María*" (Pero-Sanz, José Miguel. "Vida de Nicolás de Sión...": 310).

59. Pero-Sanz, José Miguel. "Vida de Nicolás de Sión...": 310.

60. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 62.

61. Canal Sánchez, José María. "San Hildefonso...": 448.

62. "*Jesus and Mary giving him the book of the Gospels, the episcopal throne and omophorion*" (Cerulli, Enrico. "La littérature éthiopienne dans l'histoire...": 29).



in Córdoba in 852.⁶³ We need to bear in mind also that in the second third of the 10th century, another manuscript from St. Millán de la Cogolla included, for example, a legend elaborated in the same century from Syrian materials: the life of St Alexius, a hagiographical work that was widely known in the Rioja region in those times.⁶⁴ Lastly, we must not forget that, some time later, between the 12th and 13th centuries, in St. Millán, a codex was again copied that contained a *Vita sancti Nicolai*,⁶⁵ with which we return to the same field to which some manuscripts of the *vita* of St Ildephonsus correspond. In summary, there is nothing definite that challenges this possible oriental influence as a predecessor for the work by the Pseudo Cixila.

The dependence on another text, which is also presented as a source for our hagiography, namely the life of St Bonitus, or Bonitus of Clermont, is different.⁶⁶ Like Ildephonsus, Bonitus receives a visit of the Virgin during mass, and she awards him with a “*celestem vestem*”. Similarly, the legend includes the story of a “*procax, praesumptuosus*” meaning that whoever dared to try on these vestments, would die immediately after this sacrilege. If we bear in mind that this work cannot date from before the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th, there is no doubt that this is a version of the story by the Pseudo Cixila and not a possible antecedent to this.⁶⁷

In summary, a study of the presumed sources of the tale again places the text no earlier than the end of the 11th century. This theory therefore discounts the possible authorship by the 8th-century bishop from Toledo and partially questions that of his

63. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. “La circulación des manuscrits...”: 384.

64. Real Academia de la Historia. manuscript cod. 13, f. 250v-253v. Ruiz García, Elisa. *Catálogo de la sección...*: 130; Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. *Libros y librerías en la Rioja altomedieval*. Logroño: Instituto de estudios riojanos, 1979: 133-138. According to Carlos A. Vega, “no se encuentra en Occidente ninguna narración de la vida de san Alejo anterior al siglo X. Tradicionalmente, se ha considerado que la divulgación de esta historia en Europa es debida a la llegada a Roma, el año de 977, del destituido arzobispo de Salamanca, Sergio” (“In the West, there is no narration of the life of Saint Alejo from before the 10th century. Traditionally, it has been considered that the divulgation of this story in Europe was due to the arrival in Rome, in 977, of the displaced archbishop of Salamanca, Sergio”). (*La vida de san Alejo. Versiones castellanas*, ed. Carlos Alberto Vega. Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1991: 20).

65. This is the codex 10 of the Real Academia de la Historia. f. 110ra-116rb; Ruiz García, Elisa. *Catálogo de la sección...*: 107.

66. Manuscript Biblioteca Hagiografica Latina (BHL), 1418-1420. His life can be seen in *Acta Sanctorum*. Antwerp – Brussels: Societé des Bollandistes, 1643: I/L, 1070-1077.

67. According to Canal Sánchez, José María. “San Hildefonso...”: 449 (note 39), the earliest known version of this story is the one that William of Malmesbury (c. 1080-c. 1142) includes in his *De laudibus et miraculis sanctae Mariae*. I do not know why this author suggests in the same note that Cerulli “doubts whether the the narration by St Bonet is posterior to that by St Hildefonso” when said specialist states that “the tale of Saint Ildephonsus in the West had already become one of the components of the story of another bishop, Saint Bonet of Clermont”. (Canal Sánchez, José María. “San Hildefonso...”: 29). Moreover, this dependence is what the same author uses to reaffirm his hypothesis that the story of Saint Nicholas of Sion “reached Spain in the 11th century, travelled around Western Europe over the following centuries, returned to the East with the Crusades and, translated into Arab, finally reached Ethiopia with an increased function and popularity in the 14th century” (Canal Sánchez, José María. “San Hildefonso...”: 29).

colleague from León in the first half of the 10th century. This is confirmed if we take into account that the manuscripts that contain our *vita*, as we have seen, are no earlier than the 11th century (the one from 994 from St. Millán de la Cogolla includes certain additions from that century). Proof of this, moreover, is that all the codices from before 1000 that copy the work of St Ildephonsus, like the one obtained by Bishop Godescalc of Puy on his visit to the monastery of San Martín de Albelda in 951,⁶⁸ also contain the *Elogium* by St Julian. From the 11th century, the *vita* of the Pseudo Cixila was included together with these to make up a trinomial that spread very widely around Western Europe.

3. Function and structure of the legend

Going beyond these conjectures, we must now analyse the legend itself in order to detect the possible intentions within it and, eventually, reinforce some theories about its authorship and date of writing. In the first place, it is necessary to establish which objectives this narrative might have pursued. In this sense, there is no doubt that its main characteristic is its supernatural context, full of marvellous resources. To designate them, the text resorts to the *miraculum* voice, using it in a precise sense: these *miracula* are evident signs of the manifestation of God on Earth. Thus, it indicates that Ildephonsus was not only “*dono superno afflatis tantis talibusque predecessoribus suis equiter clarens, quod illis clausum fuerat, isti reseratum est*”.⁶⁹ Similarly, and as mentioned above, it states that “*Sic enim habitator suus Spiritus Sanctus egit, tu quod iste celebrat intrus ille patefaceret foris [...] illis reuelaret quid aliquid mirum in alletam ostenderet*”.⁷⁰ Hence the first characteristic of the saint is to act as the earthly spokesman of divine knowledge, thus illustrating God’s power over men.

In second place, the miracle acts as a visible guarantee of the saintliness of Ildephonsus, exalting his character as God’s chosen one. This occurs with the following appearance narrated in this *Vita*, the one that features the Virgin Mary. Such an apparition, like the first one, was witnessed by many of those present, but only Ildephonsus receives the message from Mary. This message is clear and specific: the saint must wear, in this life, the clothing reserved for celestial beings. After this, Ildephonsus is aware of his rank, thus seeing his future and fully accepting his place as God’s chosen one. In this sense, the narrative again coincides with the *vita* of St Nicholas as, after the mentioned visit from the Holy Ghost, he understood that the Lord “*le había anticipado los avatares de su vida futura*”.⁷¹

68. See Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. *Libros y librerías...*: 55-62. This is from the manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France. lat. 2855, f. 69-160.

69. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 61. For the notion of *miraculum*, see García de la Borbolla, Angeles. “El universo de lo maravilloso en la hagiografía castellana”. *Boletín de la Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 47 (1999-2000): 335-351 (especialmente page 338).

70. This is the opinion of Canal Sánchez, José María. “*San Hildefonso...*”: 447.

71. “*he had anticipated the avatars of his future life*”. (Pero-Sanz, José Miguel. “*Vida de Nicolás...*”: 310).



In both cases, the author has emphasised that the holiness of Ildephonsus had been recognised during his life. In fact, the two miracles it alludes to are not *post mortem* portents (like the majority of the hagiographies of the time), but rather happen during the life of the person in question.⁷² All this exalts the magnificence of the subject of the biography over any earthly powers of the time, particularly the monarchy.

It is precisely this link to royal power that is one of the characteristics of the legend that we ought to analyse. In fact, the text carefully states that the two apparitions that benefit Ildephonsus took place in the sovereign's presence (in this case, Recceswinth) and adds that the latter did not have very good relations with the bishop. In fact, it adds that this hostility was due to the saint having reprimanded the "iniquities" of the monarch. A little later, it mentions that the king then forgot this reprimand and attended the service without any repentance. Only on one occasion is this monarchic attitude attenuated: this is the moment when the sovereign, "*cum lacrimis offerebat [the knife] et collo submisso, supplicibus manibus a trono suo extentis,*" demands that the saint be given the knife that will be used to cut a piece of the veil of St Leocadia. In these circumstances, the king appears pleading "*ut eum illi deferrent instantius deprecabatur, postulans tu indignum non iudicaret sua cum lacrimis offerentem*".⁷³ Beyond that, the sovereign is presented as a clear example of arrogance and foolishness, to the point of not accepting the bishop's supposed recommendations or reproaches. However, what could have been behind this clash and, consequently, behind the negative connotation attributed to the king in this source? We do know that that, from the historical point of view, Ildephonsus' relation with Recceswinth was not very good. Reliable proof of this is the lack of councils during the nine years of the saint's episcopate. This is even more striking if we bear in mind the four similar meetings held during his predecessor's mandate, a fact revealed by the panegyrists of Ildephonsus from all epochs.⁷⁴ In contrast, what is totally unknown is the reason behind this enmity. The same can be said about the figure of Recceswinth. In this sense, the sources are not unanimous when judging the sovereign. Whatever may be, we do know about a text that alludes to Recceswinth with the same pejorative overtone that he has in our legend. I am referring again to the *Crónica mozárabe de 754*, which presents the sovereign as "*Reccesuintum licet flagitiosum tamen bonimotum*".⁷⁵ Once again, as we can see, this chronicle appears as a possible source of our hagiography or, at least, as coming from a sole ideological tradition, in which both were included.

72. Dierkens, Alain. "Réflexions sur le miracle au Haut Moyen Age", *Miracles, prodiges et merveilles au Moyen Age. XXVe Congrès de la Société des Historiens Médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur (Orléans, juin 1994)*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995: 9-30 —the reference to the insertion of the miracles in the hagiographies on page 19.

73. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 63.

74. See Rivera Recio, Juan Francisco. *San Ildefonso...*: 147-150. Said panegyrists are generally included to show that Ildephonsus' scant leadership skills were ostensibly counterbalanced by his fruitful literary and doctrinal work.

75. *Crónica mozárabe...*: 46. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. "De patristica...": 45.



Another additional perspective for analysing the text is the one that revolves around the costumes as the axis of the narration. Effectively, the entire *vita* appears structured around dress and clothing. The two supernatural appearances have these as the subject of the tale. In the first of these (about St Leocadia), this relation particularly obvious: Ildephonsus obtained a piece of the veil that covered the saint, a fragment that would be used as proof of the miracle. Armed with the “*módico cuchillo*” which Recceswinth passed to him, the saint “*Quem ille adprehendens quod manu leua iam modicum tenebat dextera precisit et cultrum ipsum una cum eisdem reliquiis in tecis argenteis conlocauit, indignum iudicans ut qui sancta preciderat polluta ultra non tangeret*”.⁷⁶ Bear in mind that in the biblical tradition, “*las ropas [revelaban] la naturaleza interna de una persona*”, leading to innumerable miracles caused by merely brushing against these clothes.⁷⁷ In the same way, it is said that God would give the chosen an incorruptible tunic, which would replace the corruptible clothing of humans (2 Cor. 5, 3-4; Ap. 7,14: 22-14).

Clothing again appeared in the second celestial apparition, but much more significantly. This was the famous gift from the Virgin Mary and which gave rise to the no less known history of St Ildephonsus’s chasuble. This gift, in truth, was a reward offered to the bishop for the treatise that he had written in favour of the virginity of Mary. Again, the tunic acted as a sacred object and relic, a tangible testimony of the portent. By the way, it should be mentioned that this was an attempt to contrast this divine dress (the text does not call it a “chasuble”, as it was later known), with the clothing of King Recceswinth, who witnessed the event “*de more paratus*”, and totally alien to his past reverence for the things of the Church. Hence, once again, the person of the sovereign is criticised, appealing in this case to a symbolic differentiation of customs and costumes.

The same must be said about the best-known consequence of this divine gift, widely spread in later versions but which does not appear in the tale analysed here. This is clearly a reference to the impossibility of using this tunic by the bishops who came after Ildephonsus. In the narration, as we have seen, this profanation was not linked to the gift in question but rather to the ivory cathedra in which the Virgin Mary appears seated, the same in which “*ubi solitus erat episcopus sede et populum salutare -quam cathedram nullus episcopus adire temptauit nisi postea dominus Sisibertus, qui statim sedem ipsam lapsu perdens exilio religatus est*”.⁷⁸ We only know that this Sisbert succeeded Julian as bishop of Toledo (690-693) and was deposed by the XVI council of the city for having taken part in a plot to dethrone Egica and replace him with one of his relatives.⁷⁹ Thus we are faced with a new contraposition between the figure of Ildephonsus and a historical figure, as with Recceswinth, but this time in the same ecclesiastical hierarchy as the subject of the biography.

76. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 63.

77. “*the clothes [revealed] thye internal nature of a person*” (Browning, Wilfrid Robert Francis. *Diccionario de la Biblia*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1998: 398).

78. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 64.

79. Vives, José. *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*. Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963: 507-508 (canon 27).



This latter point confirms an aspect that I have emphasised: the entire *Vita* seems to be a clear affirmation of the excellence of the episcopal dignity, beyond any nefarious representatives (like the mentioned Sisbert). In fact, the hagiography revolves around the bishops, linked in a specific fashion. The first of these relations is the one that the author attempts to establish by making Ildephonsus a disciple of Isidore, fulfilling Eugenius I's mandate in Toledo with him. The reference is clearly incorrect as when Eugenius I was appointed archbishop of Toledo (in 636), Isidore was already dead (in 633) and Ildephonsus had been ordained by Eladius, who in turn died in 631.⁸⁰ Independently of that, with this elusion, the author manages to link the two most important episcopal sees of Visigothic Spain and the first centuries of the Reconquest. Ildephonsus, according to the tale, would be a perfected continuation of the saint from Seville, when "*adeo ab eo tentus et elimatus est et, tu ferunt, temporali ferro constrictus, tu si quid scientie deerat plenius instructus ad pedagogum suum domnum Eugenium remeans*".⁸¹ In consequence, it is insinuated that the see of Toledo would enjoy a bishop of greater magnitude than Isidore himself.

Secondly, this dignity of the bishop is exalted in the confrontation with the lay hierarchy of Recceswinth. Moreover, said exaltation is equally evident in the two apparitions from which the saint benefits. Lastly, an identical overvaluation can be seen in the contraposition between good and bad churchmen, as exemplified by the binomial Ildephonsus-Sisbert.

Opposition between ecclesiastical and royal power, costumes as argumental resources and exaltation of episcopal dignity are, up to this point, three coordinates that appear to guide the structure of the story. A fourth might be the one that refers to the celestial apparitions in themselves and their ideological implications. Regarding the apparition of the Virgin Mary, we must add to the characteristics already mentioned, the fact that this promoted an authentic sanctification of Ildephonsus in life. Certainly, this type of consecration of the bishops' sector (through recurrent visits from Mary) was a common resource in the literature from the 10th century onwards. In Silvie Barnay's words, "*son cada vez más numerosos los obispos [de ese siglo] que tienen la visión de la Madre de Dios*".⁸² They were the privileged protagonists of this type of narration, clear symptoms of the hierarchical exaltation mentioned above.

In second place, we must bear in mind that such exaltation is even more significant given that it affected the metropolitan bishop of Spain, whose seat was, by extension, also distinguished. The glorification of Toledo by different means was a common element in Spanish historiography from the Middle Ages, but es-

80. This last item was indicated by Ildephonsus himself in his *De viris illustribus* when saying: "Me, ad monasterium rediens memoratum [i.e., el de Agali], ultimo vitae suae tempore levitam fecit". *Patrologiae cursus...*: CXVI, col. 202. Rivera Recio, Juan Francisco. *San Ildefonso...*: 14.

81. Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 61.

82. "there were more and more bishops [in that century] who had visions of the Mother of God" (Barnay, Silvie. *El cielo en la Tierra. Apariciones de la Virgen en la Edad Media*. Madrid: Encuentro, 1999: 39). Similar examples to that of Ildephonsus (analysed by this author) are those that appear in *Historia de la Iglesia de Reims* by Flodoard and in the *Vita sancti Radbodi* (both from the 10th century).

pecially in the latter years of the 9th century and beginning of the 10th. In fact, the most relevant narrative example from that time, the so-called *Crónica de Alfonso III*, was a clear exercise of this attitude and a “demonstration of [the] antiquity [of the see of Toledo] as the peninsular locus predilectus for the rulers of heaven and the Earth”.⁸³ In this process, Ildephonsus acted as a key figure as he “related Toledo with Isidore and associated it with the beyond”.⁸⁴ This latter association, in fact, not only takes place through the Virgin Mary but also, and especially, through St Leocadia. We must bear in mind that she was the saint par excellence of Toledo, who died as a “confessor” and not as a “martyr”,⁸⁵ and her worship dates from the first half of the 7th century. Also, it must be mentioned that the her body was buried in the basilica dedicated to her, which was known to Ildephonsus and even Eulogius of Córdoba and which thus shows the error by the author of our *Vita*, who states that the apparition of Leocadia served to reveal this place, which was unknown until then.⁸⁶

In third place, the relation with Toledo is reinforced by the mention of the monastery in which St Ildephonsus professed: that of Agali. In this case, the indication underlines that this monastery was dedicated to Saints Cosme and Damián, which only appears in this source and has no earlier testimonies. However, if we remember, as we have seen, that the 10th-century bishop Cixila founded a monastery in Abéllar under the same avocation, might we have a resource to link both sees through the figure of Ildephonsus? In this case, it could be thought that the *vita* in question was written or emerged as a tradition in the cultural environment of this monastery. Another possibility, on the other hand, might be that a copyist (knowing the reality of León), when finding the reference to the monastery of Saints Cosme and Damián in the text, assumed that the author of the tale must have been the founder of this congregation in the 10th century, hence the particular attribution to this prelate, which is only found in a few codices.

Another element that might help us with this identification of the context of the production of the tale would be the particular link that appears between Ildephonsus and Recceswinth. We saw above that a certain negative fame around this sovereign must have been common in some erudite media in Spain after the Muslim invasion (as the *Crónica mozárabe de 754* suggests). However, beyond

83. Linehan, Peter. *History and Historians of Medieval Spain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995: 96. Bear in mind that he assigns the authorship of our hagiography to Cixila from the 8th century, not the one from the 10th.

84. Linehan, Peter. *History and Historians...: 97*.

85. Fábrega Grau, Ángel. *Pasionario hispánico, siglos VII-XI*. Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953: I, 67-78.

86. de Toledo, Ildefonso. “De viris illustribus”, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina...: XCVI*, col. 206: “Eugenius... post lucius mundialis occasum in basilica Sanctae Locadiae tenet... sepulchrum” and Eulogio de Córdoba, *Apologeticum martyrum*, 16, 5 (*Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, ed. Juan Gil. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1973: II, 483). The XVII council of Toledo in 694 specified that the church is “in suburbio Toletano ubi sanctorum eius corpus requiescit” (Vives, José. *Concilios visigóticos...: 522*); Rivera Recio, Juan Francisco. *San Ildefonso...: 15*; Castillo Maldonado, Pedro. *Los mártires hispanorromanos y su culto en la Hispania de la Antigüedad tardía*. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1999: 333-34.



this, there are really two things that are objected to in the *vita*: in first place, the fact that the sovereign was wary of St Ildephonsus because he had criticised him, and secondly, Recceswinth's lack of humility before the ecclesiastical institution, demonstrated in his will to attend the liturgical ceremonies, showing his arrogance and without having shown remorse for his attitude.⁸⁷ In contrast, the tale highlights the sovereign's gesture of submission on the occasion of the celestial visit by St Leocadia. To summarise, what we see here is a critical observation of the monarch's behaviour and his position regarding the Church. Therefore, might it not be possible that, in the last instance, in this recreation the Pseudo Cixila was alluding to much closer circumstances? In this sense, we know that the 10th-century Castilian episcopate, especially in León, was marked by its tense relations with the monarchy. For example, we see that Fruela II had exiled Cixila's successor, Frunimio, for political reasons, which led the former to take up the position of bishop again to replace the exile. During the reign of Fruela's heir, Ramiro II, Cixila himself was detained in "voluntary retreat" (the expression is from Linehan), while his successor, Oveco, "*fue rápidamente enviado a un trabajo misional en la región de Salamanca*".⁸⁸ Similar attitudes can be seen in the trajectory of other prelates from various ecclesiastical sees in the kingdom. It should be noted that in this, the monarchs of León and Castile behaved like their Visigoths ancestors, exalting the king's supremacy over the Church. Moreover, normally the hagiographers tried to forget the episcopal times of their subjects, probably owing to the "neutralisation" of monarchic bishops in the court.⁸⁹ In this sense, the text about St Ildephonsus could be a sample of that: what stands out most about him is the fact that, despite monarchic opposition, he was recognised as chosen by God through the celestial powers, through the interventions of Leocadia and Mary. Whether or not one accepts this supposition, what is beyond doubt is that the tale used the figure of Recceswinth to question monarchic behaviour, which was seen as unfit, while also warning royalty about this behaviour.

Lastly, an analysis of the language in the text, which Díaz y Díaz qualified as "too ornate" to be from the 8th century,⁹⁰ and the possible literary influences that it contains is pending. In this sense, I think a specific philological study of the vocabulary and its morphological variants is needed, a task I reserve for the specialists in these disciplines. For now, the author's tendency to use numerous diminutives such as "*corpusculum*", "*munusculum*" or "*clientulus*" is striking.⁹¹ He

87. I return to the conclusions said some times ago: Guance, Ariel. "De reyes y santos: la caracterización de la monarquía en la hagiografía castellana (siglos VII-XI)". *Acta historica et archaeologica mediaevalia*, 22 (1999-2001): 9-30.

88. "*was rapidly sent on missionary work in the region of Salamanca*" (Linehan, Peter. *History and Historians...*: 199-120).

89. Linehan, Peter. *History and Historians...*: 199-120.

90. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. "De patrística...": 44.

91. The first two appear defined, in an Emilianense glossa from 964, as "breue corpus" and "dona modical breue munus", respectively, *Fuentes españolas altomedievales. El código emilianense 46 de la Real Academia de la Historia, primer diccionario enciclopédico de la Península Ibérica*, eds. Claudio García Turza, Javier García Turza. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia-Fundación Caja Rioja, 1997: 292, 432.



also uses some interesting classicisms. Thus, he refers to Spain as “Hesperia” and states that Ildephonsus shone “*in sede Romulea*”. These were the usages that, to an extent, suggested to Pérez de Urbel that the author of the *vita* might be the same as the composer of the hymns “*Urbis Romulea jam toga candida*”, dedicated to the seven male apostles, and “*Exsulta nimium, turba fidelium*”, dedicated to St Thyrsus. In this sense, the same specialist adjudicated both works to the bishop Cixila from the 8th century and, hence, the *Vita Ildefonsi* would correspond to the same prelate.⁹² Indeed, the first of these compositions used the ideas of *sede Romulea* and Hesperia on various occasions,⁹³ a circumstance that approaches the “*sede Romulea*” and the “*totam Hesperiam*” which our hagiographer talks about. However, such a coincidence is not enough to sustain this authorship theory. In fact, this could also be due to direct knowledge by the Pseudo Cixila, of the classical literature, or the transfer of this in the patristic texts. Another (much simpler) possibility would be that our author had access to, or recalled, the hymns in question. This circumstance is perfectly plausible as hymnbooks were part of all medium-sized ecclesiastical libraries.⁹⁴

To conclude, there is another similarity of an argumental, not stylistic, type that I believe deserves to be mentioned. There is a curious narrative approximation between this hagiography by Cixila and a certain passage in a collection of seventh-century tales, the *Vitas sanctorum Patrum emeretensium*, which was well-known in the Peninsula and also found in most ecclesiastical libraries.⁹⁵ I refer to the life of Masona, the bishop of Mérida. In fact, both texts begin by stating that their subjects succeeded two relevant figures in their respective sees (Eugenius for St Ildephonsus and Fidelis in the case of Masona).⁹⁶ Moreover, both had to face sovereigns who were against them: Recceswinth filled this role for the saint from Toledo, while Leovigild was an opponent of the bishop of Mérida —whose opposition was demonstrated in terms of Arian Catholicism. Similarly, a textile relic intervenes in both cases. While in the case of Ildephonsus this was the piece of St Leocadia’s veil and the tunic that the Virgin Mary gave him, Masona was confronted by the king for possession of a fragment of St Eulalia’s tunic (about to

92. Pérez de Urbel, Justo. “Origen de los himnos mozárabes”. *Bulletin hispanique*, 28 (1926): 5-21, 113-129, 209-245, 305-320, especially page 210.

93. *Hymnodia Gotica. Die Mozarabischen Hymnen des alt-spanischen Ritus. Aus handschriftlichen und gedruckten Quellen (Analecta hymnica Medii Aevi, XXVII)*, ed. Clemens Blume. New York-London: Johnson Corp, 1961 [reedition; first edition: Leipzig 1897]: 253-255 (doc n° 176): “*Urbis Romulea jam toga candida*” (v. 1); “*Missos Hesperiae quod ab apostolis*” (v. 3); “*Per hos Hesperiae finibus edita*” (v. 12).

94. For the subject of the classical influences on high medieval Hispanic literature, see the works by Roger Collins: Collins, Roger. “Poetry...”; Collins Roger. “Literacy and the laity in early mediaeval Spain”, *Law, Culture...* For the rest, as Díaz y Díaz states, “[en la alta Edad Media] no se da un escritor... si no hay cerca, o al lado, una biblioteca. Libros y composición son del todo inseparables” —Díaz y Díaz, Manuel Cecilio. “La cultura medieval y los mecanismos de producción literaria”, *VII Semana de estudios medievales: Nájera, 29 de julio al 2 de agosto de 1996*, José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte, coord. Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1997: 281-95, especially page 286.

95. *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium*, ed. Antonio Maya Sánchez. Turnhout: Brepols, 1992.

96. The tale about Masona appears in chapter V of the *Vitas (Vitas Sanctorum Patrum...)*: 47-102, to which I refer for the following references.



argue that he had swallowed said relic to stop it from falling into heretical hands). Moreover, this saint fulfilled a similar role to that of Leocadia: while the former represented the excellence of Mérida, the latter did the same for Toledo. Even more, Eulalia appeared before Masona while he was praying in front of his altar, as in the case of Ildephonsus in his time. Even the remains of the saint are alluded to in the same terms as those used by the author of our tale, "*venerabile corpusculum*".⁹⁷ It must be mentioned, however, that while Leocadia assumed a fully human form and approached the saint, allowing him to take a piece of her veil, the Mérida saint was much stricter and more elusive: she is presented as "snow white" (alluding to the portent that occurred after her death, as mentioned in the *Pasionario*) and only ordered the bishop to return to the see after the expulsion that he had suffered at the hands of Leovigild. The monarch, in fact, would equally know about the visit of the saint, who beat him for having removed Masona from his post and urged him to reinstate him.

In other words, it would seem that the author of the *life* of St Ildephonsus had attempted to show, with similar criteria to those used by the hagiographer of the tales from Mérida, the excellence of Toledo and its bishop, as the other did with Mérida and *its* bishops. Thus, both intertwined a local saint, a particularly venerated churchman, a confrontation with royal power and a supernatural event, all with the same aim: to demonstrate the magnificence of the subject of the biography and the importance of the see linked to them. Thus, what Eulalia was for Masona, Leocadia was for Ildephonsus. In the same way, the confrontation between them (from the point of view of their use to justify certain ecclesiastical pretensions) is not new. A similar criterion was analysed by Collins in relation with the abovementioned *Vidas de los Padres de Mérida*, where the rights of Mérida were defended against the power of Toledo.⁹⁸ However, this similarity in the argument is not limited to the factors indicated: wishing to adjudicate even more relevance to his saint, the supposed author of the *Vita* from Toledo (whoever it was) incorporated a second portent, related to a supernatural being of a higher rank than a simple saint: the Virgin Mary. The justification for this was simple: if Ildephonsus had written a treatise defending the Virgin Mary, it was natural that the latter would be grateful.⁹⁹ Toledo's honour was saved and the glory of the see could be transferred (through different ways) to whoever needed it.

In conclusion, we are faced with a narrative that leaves the aims pursued through it quite clear. Thereby the author's secondary criteria also become plainly visible. Initially, it does not seem to be a text used as instrument of propaganda for an ecclesiastical centre (either because it held the remains of the saint in question or because it was linked to his life). Nor does it attempt to emphasise the thaumaturgical capacity of one chosen by God (Ildephonsus was the passive

97. *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum...*: 204 (Chapter V).

98. Collins, Roger. "Mérida and Toledo: 550-585", *Law, Culture...*: 213-214.

99. See Rucquoi, Adeline. "Ildefonse de Tolède et son traité sur la virginité de Marie", *La virginité de Marie*. Paris: Médiaspaul, 1998: 105-125, especially page 116 and following.



receptor of such miracles, not their executor). Similarly, he did not promote a pilgrimage route (for the same reasons as in the first point) nor was he linked to a specific transfer of relics. In contrast, it is a work that, first of all, underlines the importance of episcopal dignity, its pre-eminence over any other earthly power and its link with a specific ecclesiastical see.

This argumental clarity contrasts with the uncertainty regarding the authorship and dating of the tale, as mentioned above. In line with the different hypotheses arising (and our observations about the possible discursive traditions and historical factors that influenced the text), I believe it is necessary to discard a date as early as the 8th century for this *vita*. I am inclined to believe, like other specialists, that it should be dated around the mid-10th century or, at the latest, the early 11th. An additional piece of information in this regard is the fact that only the Mozarabic calendars from León after the 11th century attribute to Ildephonsus the status of saint, something ignored in earlier calendars from other regions.¹⁰⁰ Together with this, it must be remembered, as Gaiffier states, that the famous catalogue of the relics in the Holy Ark of Oviedo (one of whose copies dates from the 11th century) mentions the "*pallium quod dedit ipsa regina celi Ildefonso toletane sedis archiepiscopo*", a clear indication that the tradition had already spread by that time.¹⁰¹

If we accept this dating, the most probable hagiographer among the possible candidates that have appeared until date, according to my hypothesis (and in line with Díaz y Díaz), is the bishop of León, Cixila, who would have lived in the first half of the 10th century, and who would have had the valid ideological and material resources to promote or write a hagiography of this kind. However, there is nothing in our current state of knowledge to back this latter suggestion. If we add the manuscript tradition that assigns this tale to one Heladio, and other elements that could have had an effect on the construction of this work, I believe it would be much more reasonable to identify its author as the Pseudo Cixila and place it, as mentioned above, in the mid or late-tenth century. The fact that a character from these times (perhaps an educated Mozarabic equipped with good reading material) should wish to exalt Ildephonsus and, in passing, the glory of Toledo, was not at all unusual in this context.¹⁰² It has been suggested, with a degree of reason, that I should perhaps search for our author not in León (as Díaz y Díaz wished) but in Zamora.¹⁰³ In fact, we know that the seat was restored in the times of Alfonso III, its first bishop being Attilanus, Attila or Adtila. This appears to have been in the monastery

100. Díaz y Díaz, Manuel. "De patrística...": 44. The Vigilanus and Emilianus calendars from the late 10th century note the 23 of January as "ildefonsi epi" –Vives, José; Fábrega, Ángel. "Calendarios hispanos anteriores al siglo XII". *Hispania Sacra*, 2 (1949): 141. The same occurs with the 1039 version from Silos, the 1055 from Compostela and the two from Silos in Paris (all transcribed by Marius Férotin, as an appendix to *Le Liber Ordinum en usage dans l'Eglise wisigothique et mozarabe d'Espagne du Ve au XIe siècle*. Paris: Fermin Didot. 1904: 452-453).

101. Gaiffier, Bauouin de. "Les vies de Saint Ildephonse...": 243. The text can be seen in Bruyne, Donatien de. "Le plus ancien catalogue des reliques d'Oviedo". *Analecta Bollandiana*, 45 (1927): 94.

102. Linehan, Peter. *History and Historians...*: 97-100.

103. My thanks to Adeline Rucquoi for this suggestion, which I should go into in greater depth in the future.



of Sahagún, “donde escribió el tratado *De Virginitate Sanctae Mariae de san Ildefonso*”.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Attilanus himself took charge of founding the famous monastery of San Salvador de Tábara, “centro de una notable escuela de copistas y miniaturistas” in the 10th century.¹⁰⁵ We should also remember that the city was repopulated with Christians from Toledo at the end of the previous century, that from this date on, it had a church dedicated to St Leocadia and that it was there, much later, that the remains of St Ildephonsus were discovered during the episcopate of Suero (13th century). Whatever it was, from an early date Zamora, claimed a certain inheritance from Toledo, the city that our unknown author took care to exalt through Ildephonsus. With that, he managed to construct a tale that would become the most successful Spanish hagiographical legend throughout the Middle Ages, and that would soon spread to the rest of western Christianity. Thus, as happened with the subject of his biography, his work spread through “*omnem Spaniam*”, shining “*por su doctrina como el sol y la luna*”.¹⁰⁶

104. “where he wrote the treatise *De Virginitate Sanctae Mariae of Saint Ildefonso*” (Sánchez Herrero, José. “Historia de la Iglesia de Zamora. Siglos V a XV”, *Historia de Zamora. T. I.- De los orígenes al final de Medievo*. Zamora: Diputación-Instituto de estudios zamoranos “Florián de Ocampo”, 1995: 692-93); Pérez de Urbel, Justo. *Historia de los monjes...*: II, 298-99, who understands that this presumed copy by Atilano refers to Ambrosio de Morales.

105. “centre of a notable school of copyists and miniaturists”. (Sánchez Herrero, José. “Historia de la Iglesia de Zamora...”: 696).

106. “through his doctrine like the sun and the moon” (Pseudo Cixila. *Vita...*: 61).

