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Revenging Vestments: On the Chasubles of the Bishops Ildefonsus and Adaulfus (Toledo and Compostela, Tenth–Twelfth Centuries)

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Abstract: This article will analyze the miracle of St. Ildefonsus' chasuble (606–667) from the point of view of miracles of punishment. In comparison to previous studies, on this occasion, the Toledan story will be reconsidered not only together with that of St. Bonitus of Clermont (620–700), but also in light of the similarities with the miracle of the bishop Adaulfus II of Compostela (ninth century), and the possible late antique inspiration of both from the *Libellus Precum* and from Gregory of Tours' hagiographies. The stories that involve Ildefonsus and Adaulfus have strong similarities in the development of their sainthoods and in the importance that is given to liturgical vestments. Both are sanctified as prelates, which is due to their miraculous possession of external attributes because of their merits when facing unfair trials.

Keywords: Ildefonsus of Toledo; Adaulfus of Compostela; miracle of punishment; successor; church; cathedral; chair (*cathedra*); chasuble



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1. Introduction

“with regard to your Church proper, and the Church-Clothes specially recognized as Church-Clothes, I remark, fearlessly enough, that without such Vestures and sacred Tissues Society has not existed, and will not exist.”

Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1833 (quoted in Flanagan 1991, p. 101)

The goal of this study is to make a contribution to solving the origins and inspiration of a miracle with related versions in a common early medieval culture, and thus, it is more than a description of direct literary sources. The aim is to portray the value of these accounts in light of the difficult transition between prelates of the same see, the intra-ecclesiastical competition, and conflict through liturgy (Larson-Miller 1997). The significance that is given to the attributes of episcopal investiture (*cathedra* and especially the chasuble) is related to this legitimacy of the government of the diocese, such as the *regalia* in the case of the royal and imperial ceremony. It is precisely these symbols of power, and especially dressing, that are the protagonists in the stories where these objects even become the executors of divine wrath, suffocating the successor of Ildefonsus in the see of Toledo, or trapping the perjurers in the case of Adaulfus in Galicia. In the nowadays world, a chasuble miracle would be reasonably judged as weird, but at the time it was an effective and astonishing story about the consequences of transgressing rules and authority. In the end, the liturgy is the public and ceremonial evidence of this confrontation, which was also a moral and successful miracle throughout the Middle Ages, judging by its diffusion among manuscripts and copies.

Following the *Vita*, which is attributed to Pseudo-Cixila (tenth century?), Ildefonsus of Toledo was honored with a miraculous dress that was given by the Virgin after the theological defense of her bodily integrity as the mother of God. The divine dress had a rule, which was, it could only be worn by Ildefonsus on certain special days. His successor

in the see of Toledo, Sisbertus or Syagrius (according to the account) dared to contravene the rule and therefore he was either exiled or was subtly killed for his transgression (Figure 1). In the case of Adaulfus, the bishop of Iria-Compostela had been charged with a nefarious crime (treason or sodomy) and, as a consequence, he was put on trial before the king in Oviedo. During the process, the king ordered the release of a wild bull against him after the mass, but when the animal encountered the bishop, it stopped miraculously and softly left its horns on his hands. Thus, an execution attempt became an ordeal. According to the second version in the *Historia Compostellana* (ca. 1120–1150), the chasuble that was used during the trial would have marvelous qualities such as the ability of judge those accused of false testimony: if they lied, they would never be able to take off the chasuble. Both the version of the death/exile of Ildefonsus' successor and the addition about the properties of Adaulfus's chasuble, do not appear until the twelfth century, which indicates not only a refashioning of the stories by the Gregorian and Cluniac reformers, but likely also an earlier inspiration that was taken from the *Libellus Precum* (Book of Prayers) as well as from Gregory of Tours and his *Vitae Patrum* (Life of the Fathers).



Figure 1. *Como Santa Maria deu a alva/a Sant' Alifonso et Como Siágrío se vestiu/a alva, e morreu porém* (“How St. Mary gave the chasuble to St. Ildefonso and how Siagrio put on and as a result, he died”). Alfonso X de Castilla (el Sabio), *Cantigas de Santa María*, Códice Rico Ms. T-I-1, f. 7r (1280–1284), Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, © Patrimonio Nacional.

The accounts of Ildefonsus, Bonitus, and Adaulfus (Table 1) are just the emerging stories of the unprecedented powers establishing their authority. Miracles of punishment are the large and supernatural authority that ecclesiastical writing communities tried to transmit throughout the centuries on bishops as saints. They are not just liturgical or hagiographical moralized tales; they are even more raised, with terrible divine powers that were transmitted to the land seignorial agency in the Early Middle Ages: the holy man (Brown 1971, pp. 80–101). The protection of them is based not only on the security of the people and vassals, but also on the recognition of their equality. The main element of the holiness in this article will be analyzed through clothes as a symbolic meaning in concrete social contexts (Pastoreau 1989; Dimitrova and Goehring 2014). Vestments and other regalia are not a superstitious element but are the significative portrait of power. The investments, coronations, and *adoubement* of lords, knights, kings, popes, archbishops, dukes or counts and many other authorities, make them identifiable and, thus they are reliable symbols of legitimate power (Carile 2019). However, this article focuses on clergy investments (Hayward 1971; Gordon 2001, pp. 59–95, 95–137; Piccolo Paci 2008; Miller 2014; Boesch Gajano and Sbardella 2021). Garments have been the most affordable way of making clergymen identifiable throughout the centuries (Reynolds 1983, p. 33), even

with weird parody film-scenes from pop culture, as Federico Fellini tested in *Roma* (1972) (Inglis and Thorpe 2019). In early Christian homiletics, dressing and clothes were symbols that preached to a wide audience about religious dogma. Bishop Potamius of Lisbon (ca. 350–390) wrote several homilies about some symbols, and one of them, *Epistula de substantia* (Epistle on substance), has a wide explanation about the Passion of Christ that is based on female sewing works: balls of wool are dogmas; balance is justice; weaving frame or the tunic represent the cross, white wool is pureness, and color represents the heresies. Potamius not only explained dressing in a theological sense, but also in terms of the social behavior of dressing in comparison to the latest trendy Roman attitudes; that is, the mystification and allegory on humility (Conti 1998; Yarza Urkiola 2000, pp. 274–81).

Table 1. Main references from the first accounts of Ildefonsus, Adaulfus, Florencius and Bonitus on miracles about chasubles and chairs as the bishop’s symbolic authority.

Sources	Miracle: Death/Exile	Vestment or Chair
<i>Libellus Precum</i> (380)	Death of Bishop Florencio	Chair
Sulpicius Severus, <i>Vita Martini</i>		Chasuble
Gregorio Turonensis, <i>Vitae Patrum. De sancto Nicetio</i> 8, 5, 6–9	Death of successor in diocese	Chasuble
<i>Vita Boniti episcopi Auuerni</i> (eighth century)	Expulsion from the church	Chasuble
Ps.-Cixila, <i>Vita vel Gesta sancti Ildefonsi</i>	Exile of successor in diocese	Chair
<i>Vita Sancti Ildefonsi</i> , 30 (Sahagún monastery)	Exile of successor in diocese	Chasuble and chair
Herberto de Losinga, <i>De eadem casula</i>	Soft punishment	Vestment
<i>Historia Compostellana</i> I, 2	Perjurers punished with sacred garments	Chasuble (<i>infula</i>) <i>Infula</i> is also known as <i>casulla</i> or even <i>alba</i> (Braun 1907, p. 153).
<i>Narratio de reliquis</i>	Death of successor in diocese	Chasuble and chair

Table 1. An anthology of some references quoted in the text.

2. Obscure Objects of Desire? Relics, Clothes, and Authority in the Roman and Post-Roman Era (Fourth–Eighth Centuries)

Liturgical garments were the strongest and most durable connection to the Roman imperial (consular and senatorial) tradition, the fancy inheritance of Rome by those in the Church who wanted to make themselves different and distinguish from lay people, especially, after the Gregorian reform (Miller 2014, pp. 177–206). In fact, the use of the *pallium* in Late Antiquity was a symbol of difference from the pagan Romans, and, during the Early Middle Ages, and later, it became a desirable garment (a narrow wool band) that was given by the Pope. Meanwhile, the tunic and the *paenula/poenula* became a “standard clerical vestment”, which was associated with the idea of the Roman consul and male authority in society (Harlow 2004, p. 67). If not a chasuble, the *paenula* is a likely antecessor the chasuble as the most resemblant of the identification of the high churchmen (Piccolo Paci 2008, pp. 306–20; Pazos-López 2019, pp. 257–58). However, miracles of punishments through clothes or vestments do not belong only to Catholic or Christian culture. There was a strong classical background, with well-known references, that early medieval writers would copy, transmit, and adapt in their scripts. Maybe one of the most famous legends was the one about Heracles and his *Athlon*. In fact, more than *Athlon* it is about his dead when he was poisoned with the tunic of Nessus, as Ovidius transmitted: “he overturned/those hallowed altars, then in frenzied haste/he strove to pull the tunic from his back./The

poisoned garment, cleaving to him, ripped/his skin, heat-shriveled, from his burning flesh” (Ov. Met. 9.98 in [More 1922](#)). More than a poisoned tunic, the first full contact of Christian writers with dangerous clothes was through the use of them as martyrdom tools: the *picea tunica*, also known as *tunica molesta*, “uncomfortable tunic” or the “Shirt of Flame”, which was a way of burning alive the condemned (in the words of Juvenal “to fry in the shirt of pitch” Juvenal, *Satiriae* VIII, 235 ([Green 1998](#)), and also satirized by the Hispanic poet, Martial, and his *Epigrammata*, or *Epigrams*). Very soon, this cloth became one of the most fatal symbols of suffering from Roman penal imagination, and it crossed over into the polemic Christian patristic writers, such as Tertullian in his *Ad martyres* (An Address to the Martyrs), which denounces the exhibitionism of the gladiators facing this macabre play, walking along with a burning tunic: “to run over a certain space of ground in a burning shirt” ([Mateo Donet 2017](#); [Cantarella 1991](#), p. 224). Many centuries later Christian copiers from the eleventh or twelfth centuries continued to describe the old-fashioned and non-practiced punishment in their maledictions and sanctions at the end of official and diplomatic documents as a very reliable way of making illiterate audiences tremble, and of even harming, in the same way, royals such as Queen Teresa of Portugal (1176–1250) in her daily life habits in Hell, which followed St. Isidore’s miracles in León ([Pérez Llamazares 1924](#), p. 101). The miracle is likely inspired in *formulae*; for example, *picea tunica* or *picea tunica circumtectus*, “covered with a burning tunic” ([Montero Díaz 1935](#), doc. 21; [Andrade Cernadas 1995](#), doc. 5; [Ruiz Asencio 1990](#), doc. 1226; [Herrero de la Fuente 1988](#), doc. 1022).

Following these Roman precedents, as a hagiographical narrative product, Ildefonsus’s chasuble miracle had a predictable background that was based on common places. Attending to the Hispanic traditions, it could be the *Libellus Precum* the main and one of the oldest sources on how to transmit, with fearful miracles, a situation of bishopric competition. In the first stage, the chasuble was not as relevant as episcopal chair (*cathedra*), which was the real symbol of status. This is the way to connect the late fourth-century *Libellus Precum* with later traditions, considering that the regalia and the symbolism of power changed over time. The *Libellus* is exceptionally well-known because of early Christian conflicts, especially between the Arianism and Nicene creeds. One of the chapters about the *lapsi* bishops (apostates who renounced their faith to save their lives) describes Florencio of Mérida (320–360), who suffered a miracle of revenge. When the heretic bishop of Merida tried to sit down on his chair, a strange power pulled him out again and again until he died, deterred by this event. *Libellus* denounces the heresy of Florencio and, partly, it justifies the event as a fair punishment in the eyes of his imperial claimants and denouncers ([Canellis 2006](#), pp. 148–51; [Fernández Ubiña 1997](#)). An early and contemporary representation of bishops using chair (*cathedra*) as the status of power is in the mosaics from Centelles (Constantí, Catalonia, Spain), which is a late antique roman *uilla*, following the Javier Arce and Amancio Isla interpretation. Both academics link the palace and the mosaics with the self-representation of the bishops from Tarragona (Tarraco), dressed in liturgical garments ([Isla 2002](#), pp. 37–51); however just as in Florencio’s dead, the *cathedrae* show the status and relevance of episcopal power.

For all that, sacred garments became a way of social distinction and sacred power, and they were not only luxury items. Overall, chasubles were the most representative liturgical garments that were, many times, used as luxurious possessions too. In fact, a few references show that the chasubles were desirable objects among Hispanic churchmen since an early time. In the collection of Visigoth epistles, the Agapius correspondence is relevant because of his information about high-class lay people ([Gil 1972](#), pp. 37–44). In one of them the epistle is addressed to an unknown bishop who begged for a promised chasuble that was given as a gift that was never delivered. However, not all churchmen saw the luxurious garments in the same way. The Visigoth émigré and reformer, Benedict of Aniane (747–821) ([Noble and Head 1995](#), pp. 222–23), refused completely any silken chasuble and, even more, any special vestment attending divine vigils, and, instead, he dressed himself in humble blankets, following Ardo’s *Vita* which is a very rare exception of extreme poverty because priests mainly desired to wear their own garments in very

personal and possessing ways. The Mozarabic priest and writer, Paul Albar of Cordoba (800–861), denounced fiercely in an epistle how Saulus gave his own chasuble to Salomon who was anathemized, which was unacceptable behavior towards personal belongings, and which had tragic consequences (Gil 1973, pp. 37–40).

The event, which is characterized by Ildefonsu's successor, and his chasuble, is an example among many others. Some clothes became main characters in sacred happenings when their owners were in danger or, at least, when they were in a struggle to maintain their authority. Liturgical vestments, such as tunics, chasubles, and stoles were desirable objects to rulers and kings, who were eager to obtain their miraculous properties of collective protection, which were used in the most holy moments by the most holy men (Tausiet 2015). Vestments are only empty signifiers that contain the idea of priesthood and rite (Haulotte 1966). The idea of luxury fits with the idea of authority to create the resemblance of a priest, who is not too elegant or too much poor in his clothes. The extreme and penitential poverty of some monks could be trouble if they were not aware of the social big picture. In the *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium* (Lives of the Holy Fathers of Merida) (seventh century) the appearance of abbot Nactus's extreme penance finished with his murder because people did not want to work for such a poor man. He does not deserve to be the master in accordance with his look: "Let us go and see what this master we have been given is like. When they went and had seen him in his wretched clothes and with his hair uncut, they despised him (. . .) It would be better for us to die than serve such a master" (Fear 1997, p. 57). In contrast, Bishop Masona of Merida (in the same *Lives*) promoted a luxurious and fashionable liturgical Easter performance, dressing a group of boys with silky clothes to pay him due homage, "as if they were in attendance on a King, and wearing this apparel, something that in those days no one had been able or presume to do" (Fear 1997, p. 76).

Representative not only of luxury, and social distinction, but also marvelous protection in judicial court, vestments were worn by the saints who were facing false charges and violence as critical ordeals. Following Gregory of Tours, Saint Brice, his predecessor in the same episcopal see in Gallia, decided to put embers in his own vestments to show that they were not harmful, despite the predictable burning effect, in order to obtain innocence after he was charged with sexual misconduct. In this way, he could avoid public execution by an enraged mob. Decades after, this account would be readapted by the same Ildefonsus in the hagiography of Montano, archbishop of Toledo (523–531). The miracle was copied with the same purpose in order to underline the powers of bishop garments (Brehaut 1916, pp. 21–22; Codoñer Merino 1972, pp. 112–13, 120–21). However, reactions such as these are not always welcomed, and particularly when they trespass on the honorable uses that are linked to the cloth and the holy man. The devotion of Saint Aemilian (473–574) in Iberia, even during his life, provoked tumultuous attempts to obtain something from his belongings. Following the hagiography that is attributed to Braulius of Zaragoza (585–651), a group of poor people robbed the clothes of Saint Aemilian, and one of them tried to wear them. In the end, they struggled with how to share the valuable new goods, and they hit those who wanted to dress in the saint vestments with presumptuous manners. The risk, attitude, and punishment are enormously relevant considering later information about the clothes of Ildefonsus and Adaulfus, and the final purpose of the miracle of punishment. Only the holy man could wear the sacred vestments; a sacred elite could enjoy divine signs far away from any poor or malicious people (Fear 1997, p. 34).

This works more clearly for relics. The use of non-corporeal relics, but of related objects with a saint or a martyr, is well known in Hispanic accounts during the Visigoth period. Two relevant cities, Zaragoza and Merida, looked forward to special protection with the clothes of their saints' patronages, Saint Vincent Levite and Saint Eulalia, respectively. Gregory of Tours (*Historiae* or History of the Franks) made and approximated a portrait of this situation after the siege of Zaragoza by the king Childebertus, during the Merovingian wars in Hispania. Although the pious account hides a hard Merovingian defeat, the episode shed light on how the people of Zaragoza protected the city walls with a procession of Saint Vincent's tunic and a penance performance (Brehaut 1916, p. 67), such as the Biblical

Nineveh. In Merida, Saint Eulalia was the most important martyr in Iberia during the Early Middle Ages. The wide and fast spread of her devotion also shared a shakable miracle, even against the royals. Leovigildus (died 586), the Arian King, claimed for the saint girl a tunic against the Catholic bishop of Merida. The Bishop, Masona refused to hand over the cloth and, immediately, he was exiled as punishment. However, just as in Aemilian's precedent episode, the martyr, Eulalia, appeared in a vision to Leovigildus, deterred him from taking her tunic, and ordained not to own it ever. Of course, her speech was adorned with a warning of hard blows of lashes on the king's back (Fear 1997, p. 85). The situation of religious beliefs in Hispania was more difficult than in Gallia if the critical situation between Arianism and Catholicism inside society is considered. On the contrary, the use of all these sacred vestments could be use in a different manner: to denounce demons treats in advance of heavenly vestments sent by miracle. Sulpicius Severus (363–425) wrote the first life of Saint Martin of Tours (316–397), and he included, in one of the chapters, the forgery of a sacred vestment. In the miracle, Anatolius was a monk (but only in appearance) who tried to convince the rest of his companions in the monastery that a marvelous garment had been sent to him from Heaven. It was depicted as a “white robe out of heaven” with “glittering purple” (similar to some high-class and imperial Roman clothes) and he showed it as the main evidence of the miracle. However, the prodigious vestment suddenly disappeared when some suspicious men like Clarus decided to send the garment to Saint Martin. The garment was not a heaven robe but a demonic work (Noble and Head 1995, p. 25).

3. Reused Vestments, Memory, and Symbolism (Ninth-Thirteenth Centuries)

The real and factual provenance of these textiles had a human origin which was not even purely Christian. Despite the rare material survival of vestments from the early medieval period, there are great examples that are preserved as relics (Pazos-López 2019, pp. 274–75) or in museums (Miller 2014, pp. 153–76), and especially from Late-Antique Near East and Egypt (Gervers 1983, pp. 279–316). During Early and High Middle Ages, the most tantalizing textiles in West Latin Europe came from Eastern Asia and the Muslim dominions and, in detail, via Al-Andalus. The combination of exquisite handcraftsmanship, deep colors, geometrical patterns, and even Kufic scripts linked these precious objects to the relevant twelfth-century hagiographies of bishops across Europe such as St. Aldhelm, St. Thomas Beckett, or Edmund, not only through hagiographical creations, but also through very-well-preserved garments as relics in the Fermo Cathedral (Italy) and in Saint-Quiriace Church in Provins (Île-de-France, France). With regard to St. Aldhelm one of his first hagiographers, William of Malmesbury (ca. 1080–1143), describes in the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (Deeds of the English Bishops), the precious chasuble designs and how the monks carefully preserved it:

“Now this vestment, which may have accompanied Aldhelm from England, or may have been lent to him in Rome for the occasion, is still kept in our monastery. An item of apparel that played a part in such a miracle is preserved with all care; the sacristans do everything to ensure that it will go on feeding the eyes of the passing generations unimpaired. It is of the most slender thread, that has drunk its purple hue from the juices of shellfish; and on it black roundels contain within them pictured peacocks. It is long as well as beautiful, which tells us that the saint was a tall man.” (Winterbottom 2019, p. 551)

Perhaps, one of the most relevant by his huge size that is the chasuble attributed to St. Thomas Beckett, which is preserved in Fermo Cathedral, and which has an Andalusian origin, according to the most recent iconographic analysis and market exchanges from Iberia to southern Italy (Shalem 2017). The chasuble shows the same origin and a similar design to the relic-chasuble of St. Edmund of Canterbury in Saint-Quiriace (after Edmund's exile from England), with an Iberian connection as John Williams argues (Williams 1993, p. 107). The route and origin of these vestments from distant countries is also described in the first hagiography of Martinus of León (d. 1203), who was a prestigious Hispanic theologian. After his pilgrimage to Constantinople, Martinus decided to buy a magnificent

silky chasuble (*pallium* or *planetae*) as a gift to his monastery in León, San Marcelo. However, in Beziers (*civitate Veterensi*) the pilgrim Martinus was put in prison because the judge of the city thought that he had robbed the sacred clothes from another place (*Vita Sancti Martini*, 7 written by Bishop Lucas of Tuy) (Viñayo González 1948, p. 230). The punishment is a perfect topic, and it shows the relevance of luxury garments as a social distinction, as well as the exotic origins of some of these clothes in Western Europe from the Byzantine or Muslim dominions.

Now that the origin and precedents have been partially explained, it is time to ask about ecclesiastical symbolism. The relevance of hagiography and of the miracles of chasubles is linked to rich symbolism. The reading of the chasuble's liturgical meaning was provided in early medieval Iberia by a particular writer: the Mozarabic priest, Leovigildus of Cordoba (ca. 800–850). His writing, *De habitu clericorum* (On priesthood clothes), was the first on the topic in Iberia since Isidore of Seville attributed to Ossius of Cordoba (†360) a lost work on the interpretation of sacred vestments following the Old Testament (Haulotte 1966; Codoñer Merino 1964, p. 39). Even the same Isidore in his widespread compendium of *Liber Etimologiarum* (Etymologies), wrote about the chasuble as a little house where men remain: "The *casula* is a hooded garment, named as a diminutive of 'hut' (*casa*), because it covers the whole person, like a small hut. Whence also the 'hood' (*cuculla*), as if it were a smaller chamber (*cella*)" (Barney 2006, p. 387). As the *casula* covers the man, it becomes a little house for him (see example in Figure 2). Isidore's antique interpretation could be quite innocent if it is compared with the ninth-century writings of Leovigildus. The chasuble symbolism of Leovigildus is macabre and obscure, and it relates the vestment to a shroud that covers the body, and even the head, as the last cloth inside the coffin. A few decades before, the monk, Beatus of Liébana (730–798), following garment symbolism, defended the use of it as a clerical discipline cloth for penance, linking the Tunic and Christ, and Christ and the Church, in his book, the *Apologeticus* (liber II, 45–49 in Löfstedt 1984), which was written against the archbishop, Elipandus of Toledo (715–802). Despite the very recognized authority of Isidore and his famous patristic background, Leovigildus did not build his writing on Isidore's knowledge, and, instead he credits St. Torcuatus as the founder of the monastic use of the cloth (*pelliza*) which later became a secular clergy garments (*casulla*) (Gil 1973, pp. 667–84). Even more, and this is relevant for further information, the chasuble makes the difference: it individualizes bishops and distinguishes them from the rest of the priests. When, in Ildefonsus's miracle, Siagrio is dead after his unrespectable attitude, at first, the chasuble is only a vestment, but it suddenly became, according to Leovigildus's understanding, a shroud. The symbolism of clothes, and miracle's purpose are connected in order to terrify the audience's hearts, and cause them to remember through the chasuble, the shortness of life, which deterred them (*uisum eorum terrificet*) (Schmitz-Esser 2020). Leovigildus' symbolism is linked with a famous precedent passage in the same *Vita* of Ildefonsus, when St. Leocadia, the martyr, rises miraculously from the dead, giving a piece of her own shroud to the bishop as a relic. In a purer liturgical sense, the stole is symbolized as a strong garment against the original Sin (*preuaricatione primi parentis*) and the chasuble as the simile with Christ's yoke (*iugum meum suave est*), following the blessings of church the garments in the *Liber Ordinum sacerdotal*, which was the more important liturgical book in Iberia before the Roman reform at the end of eleventh century (Janini 1981, pp. 91–92). The transition of the Gregorian reform relinquished some old-fashioned theological readings in favor of a new scholastic point of view (Pazos-López 2015, pp. 12–13). However, in general, the chasuble became more and more important as a restricted and privileged cloth for archbishops (Braun 1907, pp. 149–83).



Figure 2. A pope wearing a chasuble (in a Isidorian meaning of *casulla*) or an alb. *Siricius papa*. Detail from Codex Albeldensis (976), Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de el Escorial, cod. d-I-2 (2^o), f. 254r. ©Patrimonio Nacional.

4. Copying Gregory? Gregory of Tour's Accounts and the Bonitus Connection

The precedents and symbolism were not only an Iberian issue, but, in fact they were strongly connected to early French hagiographies, which created a common inspiration in Iberian late narratives. Gregory of Tours, when he wrote the life of his own uncle, Nicetius, bishop of Lyon (513–573), he decided to describe the most relevant events after his dead in order to revenge attitudes of his successors. In this way, the miracles after Nicetius's dead followed the same pattern of competitiveness inside the diocese, against his successor, the bishop, Priscus, who humiliated and dishonored the inheritance of Nicetius by using his sacred vestments as daily clothes. The public display was a very fine show that provoked the saint's wrath when Priscus cut the huge hood to make a pair of socks with it. Nicetius's miracle stretched Priscus's feet in extreme pain, until the successor realized his fault and begged pardon (James 2007, p. 56). Local traditions about Nicetius are also strongly connected to the bishop of Lyon, Saint Bonitus, as Nicetius's successor and with chasuble prodigies. Some versions of his life were widespread after his death until the thirteenth century, but the oldest life of this bishop was written earlier, in the eighth century.

The tradition of Bonitus's hagiography appears in later references, and it obtained specific details throughout the centuries, which has been mostly linked since the early times with Ildefonsus in the great High and Late medieval Marian compilations (Mussafia 1887–1898; Kjellman 1922; Lozinski 1938), and, in fact, starting seventeenth-century, Catholic and erudite scholars like Tomás Tamayo de Vargas (1588–1641), put on the scene of this relationship between both (Lozinski 1938, p. 15). In the first *Vita* of the saint, there are no references about miracles that are linked with his chasuble, and the list of relics in Clermont Cathedral (tenth century) did not include the chasuble in the treasure (Lozinski 1938, p. 8). The first evidence appears in a hymn that is attributed to Herbert de Losinga, the first bishop of Norwich (†1119), in which Saint Bonitus receives the chasuble from the Virgin, as did Ildefonsus. The successor of Bonitus, a drunk man, dishonored the church and as a consequence, he was miraculously expelled from the sacred building, by way of a little exile. As a result, the comparison between Ildefonsus and Bonitus has a similar hagiographic tradition that seeks to maintain their authority against the dishonor of sacred objects. The importance of these objects, as vestments, could be linked with the translation of Nicetius relic from Lyon to Clermont, which inspired Bonitus's life from

before the Nicetius accounts of Gregory of Tours. French writers from the eleventh and twelfth centuries were aware of Gregory's heritage in Auvergne (*Arvernus*), and precisely along the cultural border between the Goths and the Gauls in the lands of Bonitus's diocese (*Gothorum et Gallorum limes*) (Lozinski 1938, p. 111; Kjellman 1922, p. 158). In latter versions from the thirteenth-century (in Vincent de Beauvais and Gautier de Coincy), the topic of Bonitus's chasuble and chair appears again, which underline Herbert's old references on the dignity of garments, and on the punishment of drunk misconduct in the church of his successors:

Venit igitur procax, præsumptuosus intrauit illam officinam sobrietatis, cibo & potu ingurgitatus. Et quia laborabat ebrietate, subito sepultus est graui sopore. Et tamen in his omnibus non est conuersus in sacrilegum furor Domini, sed flagitiosum sine flagello dimittens, miraculose eum a sanctificationis suæ domo longe fecit (So he came, impudent and presumptuous, and entered in this school of sobriety full of food and drink. Being drunk, he suddenly fell into a deep sleep. Yet, despite all this, the Lord did not unleash His fury on the sacrilegious one: He sent the scandalously behaved individual away without lashing him and miraculously removed him from the dwelling where He was being sanctified). (Société des Bollandistes 1965, Acta Sanctorum, p. 1076)

Despite some theories on the Cluniac origins of the Ildefonsus miracle, it is likely that Bonitus's hagiography was built on Hispanic references because very early Ildefonsus devotion in the north of the Pyrenees was linked with to his relics and specially the famous chasuble (Lozinski 1938, p. 21; Rucquoi 1998, p. 120). In this way, when the Cluniac Bernard de Sedirac (French clergyman, archbishop of Toledo, died 1128), arrived in Toledo, there was a huge background on Ildefonsus's work, devotion, and relics.

5. Why Exile and Death? Adaulfus and Ildefonsus in Judicial and Political Contexts

Once this Hispanic and Gallic hagiographical tradition is clear, it is easier to understand in context Adaulfus and his traditions. The first reference appears in the *Historia Compostellana* (The History from Compostela, or more properly, the Deeds of archbishop Diego Gelmírez, from the second part of twelfth century), but not in the older short chronicle that is known as *Cronicon Iriense* (Chronicon from Iria Flavia, near Santiago and the original place of the see), (García Álvarez 1963, p. 111). The reference is as follows:

Cuius equidem infula, cum qua ipse in die prefati examines Missam celebravit, tante uirtutis diuinitus extitit, quod, si quis alicui sacramentum daturus illam indueret et forte periurus existeret, ea profecto exui nullatenus ualeret (Falque Rey 1988, p. 10) (By divine miracle the chasuble with which he celebrated mass on the day of judgment was of such great virtue that, if anyone wear it making an oath to another and by chance were a perjurer, he could by no means take it off.)

Despite the triumph of Adaulfus against the king, the bishop was exiled and died in Asturias, far away from his diocese. Then, in the Adaulfus tradition, his chasuble was used as an ordeal instrument, as a practical relic, and as a wonderful garment not only against his successors, but also any perjurer judged in the dioceses in the future, who could also be trapped by the *infula*. Regarding the reverence, another episode in the same *Historia Compostellana* shows how the robberies and attacks against the archbishop, Diego Gelmírez, focused on his valuable possessions, and especially on the chasuble. A group of rebel knights raided the chapel and cut off the vestments in order to adorn their own lay robes (Falque Rey 1988, p. 93; Martínez Sopena 2013, p. 273). Even more, the vestment is called in the Adaulfus and Gelmírez episodes, as *infula* which establishes a connection between both. In the Adaulfus story, the references fit very well with the cauldron, or hot iron trials, and with the relevance of garments to the sacralization of the process until 1215. If, in many writings, rituals appear as interesting references to unclasp the accused from their secular wearing, in just a few Hispanic mentions, the ritual explains how to proceed carefully when dressing them with clerical vestments. This fact, which

was quoted in nineteenth-century by the historian Villaamil y Castro shed light on the different rituals that were linked with the cauldron and cold water in the Codex of Cardona and Ripoll, from eastern Iberia, and that were, at the same time, strongly connected with Judge Bonhomo of Barcelona starting eleventh century (Villaamil y Castro 1881, pp. 34–36). In both the Cardona and Ripoll ritual books, dressing in sacred clothes is related to the ordeal of the exorcism ritual, and precisely to an exorcist or deacon, who were members of the minor ecclesiastical orders. However, not all the mentions of rituals from Iberia show this interest in undressing and dressing the blamed people; in fact, the ritual from Tortosa Cathedral (Villanueva 1803–1806, p. 24) mentions that they must be nude (*exuat illos vestimentis eorum*), but it does not mention how to dress them again or with what. The only comparative writing was found in Bamberg, Germany, in which the ritual explains that the accused must wear sacred vestments, but not the chasuble (Zeumer 1886, pp. 613–14, 650). Furthermore, clothes are used to completely protect the innocent, not only just as conducted by churchmen, but also the clothing itself. However, these are, in fact, exceptions; Iberian ritual does not fit with the main references, as Dominique Barthèlèmy defends: “Elle ne se prête pas ou peu au trucage—l’homme ou la femme sont nus—” (Barthèlèmy 1988, p. 17). The mention of judging the chasuble as it relates to this is very well known, specially, in Iberian ordeal rituals and, in this way, Adaulfus’s chasuble does not seem to be a weird reference against perjurers. Adaulfus miracle is not only an Iberian issue. In fact, it is probable that Girald of Beauvais, one of the *Compostellana’s* three main writers, was responsible for modifying and expanding the first reference from the *Cronicon Iriensis* and for the information about bishops before Gelmírez, following a previous Nuño Afonsus work in the same chronicle (Falque Rey 1988, pp. XV–XVI). The reference on Girald’s discourse fits very well with the precedent tradition of not only Nicetius and Bonitus, but also Ildefonsus on the supernatural powers of chasubles and garments.

The medieval ordeal rituals were entangled with the liturgy of purification, (as a part of the exorcism), and it was used also to confess in judicial courts. One of the best miracles about the power of liturgical clothes against demonic possessions is the *Narratio de reliquis* (History of the relics of Oviedo, ca. 1180) (also known, as *Translatio reliquiarum Ovetum* (Translation of the relics to Oviedo), which is a short miracle story about the most valuable relics of Oviedo Cathedral and how they arrived there. In the last part of the story, the *Narratio* tells of the birth and struggle against the demon of Oria, who is a young girl who had been possessed by the demon since she was born. Oria’s mother was pregnant after a rape; therefore, she was cursed, even before her birth. The exorcism was performed in the church of Oviedo and the priests put the stoles and liturgical garments on Oria healing her from demonic influence. The first step was the burning of the polluted clothes of the young girl, which the *Narratio* describes as smelling like burned bones and the eggs of dragons, with the same stink, which is unelidable proof of demonic possession (Martín-Iglesias 2020, p. 104). Just as in the ritual of monks who relinquished their lay clothes to dress in monastic robes, the performance of the exorcism and ordeal is to argue over who is the owner of Oria, the demon or the Church. The monks faced with the ownership of the soul, and they burnt the clothes to favor the battle against the demon. Nevertheless, exorcism became assimilated with property litigation. The priests of Oviedo, who put on their stoles in a tour de force, of course, successfully solved the problem in favor of the cathedral, strangling with the stole the neck of the possessed girl until the demon gave up: *Iniecta igitur stola collo eius, cepit gemendo dicere: «Tu me strangulas» Archidiaconus dixit: «Exi!»* (Martín-Iglesias 2020) (“Putting the stole on her neck, fighting with it, and shouting: *You strangled me!* The archdeacon said: *Go out!*”) In the *Narratio*, also, appears also the first evidence of the death by suffocation of Siagrius-Sisbertus, after the offense against Ildefonsus, and it is not casual. There is a strong connection between the same punishments that resembles the ecclesiastical authority over dominions, people, and the hierarchy. The tradition of this miracle’s uses, and the healing results, have grown up since the early references of passionaries, the sacred dialogues, and the lives of the saints (Yarza Urkiola 2020, p. 521). Moreover, from the thirteenth-century book of miracles of

Saint Aemilian (*Liber Miraculorum Beatissimi Emiliani*), in Castile, a possessed Galician knight was healed after being protected with the presbyter's chasuble, which repelled demon influence: *aufugit et se inter sacerdotem qui celebrabat intromisit et de casula presbyteri et de aulea altaris* (he went out and between the priest and the presbyter's chasuble and the place of the altar) (Button 1967, p. 43). Moreover, the superstitious and excessive beliefs on the use of garments on corpses were punished with strong penances in the *Silense Penitential* (tenth century) which banned the use of them on the body as a protection in the afterlife (Bezler 1994, p. 234).

The *Narratio* is a marvelous work, and it is the product of an exquisite and high-culture hagiographical expertise, with binding precedents; however very similar stories could be found in real life through documents (with judicial, not historical intentions). In some cases, reality is extraordinary linked with these facts. Starting in the thirteenth century, the canon of the Cathedral of León, Pedro Lambert, charged a priest with murder. The priest, Iohannis, was accused of the murder of a woman after (or during) her exorcism. Witnesses explained how, just as Oria before, the possessed woman was tied with a stole around her neck while the priest took her nose, and immediately after, the woman was found dead in her own house (*ipse teneret stolam ad gulam eius et faceret ei exorcismum*). Ten years later, a group of neighbors told, in court, how the demoniac woman was found dead and of the suspicious behavior of Iohannis, who flew rashly to Rome and desisted from celebrating mass in the following years. Two of the witnesses, Petrus Fecuz and his wife Maria, told how the priest hold the nose of the woman while she was dressed in the stole (*misit stolam ad gulam cuiusdam mulieris demoniace*). The trial shows the reality of this very violent process of superstitions about demoniac possessions, and what is interesting here, of the miraculous and dangerous power that is attributed to garments (Fernández Catón 1991, doc. 1912, doc. 404–405).

It seems clear that all this cultural and social background affected the transformation of the stories and their transmission. The first reference to Ildefonsus's miracle is in the *Vita*, which was written by, or is attributed to, Ps-Cixila. This first hagiography has two different chronological frames: one defends the Mozarabic origin in the tenth century, and the other links the *Life* with a Gregorian French writer after the Toledo defeat by Christians (Gil 1973; Yarza Urkiola 2006). Juan Gil and Valeriano Yarza defend opposite theories, but over-all, a relevant aspect here is how the story changed throughout the decades, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries with new and very violent details. In this early version (Cixila's), the successor of Ildefonsus is called Sisbertus (not *Siagrius*), and he is not dead, but he was exiled after sitting on his predecessor's chair. Halfway between the early and later versions, the *Narratio de reliquis*, from Cambrai manuscript (a. 1180), inserts a version with new facts. The successor of Ildefonsus is now called Siagrius (*Insiagrius*) and the consequences of his irresponsibility are worse because he is not exiled, but dead. As soon as Siagrius puts the chasuble on him and sits him on the chair, he immediately falls onto the ground, fulminated (Martín-Iglesias 2020). This last version would be the most successful over time, especially in thirteenth-century Marianism legends and poems such as the *Vitae Sanctorum* (Lives of the Saints) of Rodrigo Cerrato; the *Cantigas de Santa María* (Songs of Saint Mary, see Figure 1); *De rebus Hispaniae* (On Hispania's deeds) by Jimenez de Rada; the *Miracles de Notre Dame* (Miracles of Our Lady) by Gautier de Coincy; or Juan Gil de Zamora and his *De liber Mariae* (Book of Saint Mary). For example, one of these earlier canon collections of Marian miracles describes the miracle of punishment: *Illo sacro uestimento induit. Sed statim, ulciscente Deo presumptionem eius, intactus, eodem uestimento arcus constrictus, mortuus cecidit* (He put on that sacred vestment. But God punished his arrogance, because, untouched, he fell dead, suffocated by his own garment) (Carrera de la Red and Carrera de la Red 2000, pp. 170–211).

What could be the reason for charging one of the Ildefonsus's successors with this punishment? After 711, the situation of the Toledan diocese became harder and harder. The end of the Visigoth Kingdom and the Islamic conquest implied a new order, where bishops were not as relevant as before; however Islamic invasions were not the reason to exile a

bishop. The problems went farther than religious beliefs. Sisbertus is likely identified as the archbishop, Sisbertus (690–693), who was a well-known high officer in the Toledan court who was charged with conspiring and plotting against King Egica (690–693). After that, the king imprisoned him, putting an end to his rule. Even during many decades, some scholars have identified the bishop as the author of *Lamentum poenitentiae* (Penitential lament), and of *Oratio pro correptione uitae* (Prayer to Life Amendment); however, nowadays the latest research proves that the former archbishop was not the writer (Cancela Cilleruelo 2021). Sisbertus was the symbol of a treacherous courtesan in the last days of the Visigoth kingdom, and it was an excellent model to oppose Ildefonsus's canonical and wonderful deeds in the bishopric. Even more, after the Islamic conquest, other bishops in Toledo fled in order to avoid of the cruelest consequences of power struggle not only between Muslim and Christians but also between Berbers and Arabs. Sisbertus was the reference name, but during the thirteenth-century new protagonists were added to the last versions, even in different episodes. In the *Vita Ildefonsi* of Pseudo-Cixila, in the *Vita* of the twelfth century from Sahagún monastery, in the version of Jimenez de Rada and Juan Gil de Zamora, and in the king of Castile, Alfonso the Wise's *Estoria de Espanna* (History of Spain), Sisbertus is exiled after the miracle, with no more consequences. However, the tradition starting the *Narratio de reliquis*, the *Vitae Sanctorum* by Rodrigo Cerrato, the Marian miracles of Gautier de Coincy, Caesarius of Heisterbach, and Juan Gil de Zamora, and the *Cantigas de Santa María* describe the punishment and death of Siagrius because of his sinful attitude. Two characters and two versions at the end of 1200, mixed in the same story to fit the argument that more than a bishop suffered divine anger and was exiled or murdered by the divine wrath.

6. Conclusions: The Bishop's Authority and Sacred Deterrence via Objects

The city of Toledo was during all of the first part of the Middle Ages, a melting and conflictive pot throughout the centuries of Arianism vs. Catholicism, Christians vs. Jews, Christians vs. Muslims, Mozarabic Christians vs. Gregorian reformers, and even of French, Castilians, and Galician people racing to establish their own and recognized spaces of power and influence. In this atmosphere it is easy to know how hard being an archbishop, with wide responsibility over this situation, could be. Since the first steps of the city, as the main political center of the Visigoth era, the same Ildefonsus painfully recorded and grieved the accounts of his predecessors. For example, Iustus of Toledo (†633) was murdered by his own servants after insulting the archbishop, Eladius (Codoñer Merino 1972, pp. 112–13). Hagiography seeks a strong contrast between sanctity and sin, good and bad and there is the same dark contrast among the predecessors of archbishop of the Archbishop Gelmírez in the diocese, who were looking not only for the perfect bishops, such as Adaulfus and his chasuble, but also for cruelest attitudes in many others.

After the very famous miracle tales about revenging chasubles, healing garments, and textile relics, there existed the significance, from a very deep sense, of ecclesiastical authority in Iberia that was performed through the liturgy. Clothes prevented the evil consequences of demons, healing garments protected against diseases and revenging chasubles executed the divine wrath. How can we reconcile the idea of these very miracle-effective garments with the social reality? Primarily, because the idea of sanctuary immunity is not only based on places but also on clergymen and their clothes. Liturgy, in this sense, is more concerned with social problems than with only performativity and religious esthetics (Flanagan 1991, pp. 99–103). Touching only one of these textile fibers could represent the difference between death and life in the seizure of criminals. In the end, churchmen were, in some way, sanctuaries in motion with double privileges: one for the criminal and the absolution, the other for the priest himself, in his distinction from the rest of society. In stark contrast to fantasy models, there is a reality that is very fond inside to a society that faces unfair punishments and, overall, flight from imprisonments, executions, and blood feuds. However, these garments could be a relief or, in contrast, the fatal punishment cloth. Finishing the eleventh century in Aragón, King Sancho Ramírez of Aragón sanctioned

the privileges of Alquézar clergymen and defended the reverence of their garments in pardoning criminal offences. A murderer could be safe from his enemies if he touched clergy clothes when the priests were in travel. In this way, the result of touching clothes was identical to being inside the church as a sanctuary, and it stopped any future executions or corporal revenge against criminals, if their enemies did not want to face a stiff monetary penalty (Barrios Martínez 2010, p. 12).

The miracle's narratives show dynamic and conflictive social relations. The more the story is spread, the more the coincidence with the social concerns are founded. Stories are based on common places, but this does not imply only unreal accounts. In this case, the use of oaths and ordeals during trials, and the reverence towards body and clothes relics, builds up the image of the bishop as a holy man with deterrent powers. The Cluny reform, and the stronger power of dioceses, reinforced a new sense of bishops and their struggle with monks and the regular clergy dominion on ecclesiastical issues before the twelfth century. The violent echoes from the past in the old stories of Montano's murder were re-enacted in High Middle Ages with the same troubles, were repeated once and again and were adapted with harder punishments against those who crossed the Church's social authority. The most relevant miracles that are related with judicial proofs show a strong relation with the ordeal rituals that were assimilated with the liturgy until the first decades of the thirteenth century. Particularly, ritual was processed via garments in order to change status from lay to religious as a way of protection. If miracles were, in this sense, an imaginative answer, ordeals and proofs represented a factual dimension. Nevertheless, miracles had the purpose of spreading the power to judge, and that is the key to the success of these narratives.

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