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Relics and Holy War in the Kingdoms of León and Castile (11th-12th C.)

Carlos De Ayala

Abstract

The paper presents a brief overview of the role played by relics in the sustained fight against Islam in the Iberian Peninsula. Specifically, it focuses on the kingdoms of Leon and Castile in the second half of the 11th century and the first decades of the 12th century, during the reigns of Ferdinand I and Alfonso VI. This is a decisive moment in the process of justifying the war, in which the ideology of reconquest becomes more sacralized and acquires some of the characteristics of an authentic holy war. In this process, the use of relics was particularly intense.

Keywords

Iberian Peninsula; Leon and Castile; 11th and 12th centuries; Ferdinand I; Alfonso VI; holy war; relics; relics.

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RELICS AND HOLY WAR IN THE KINGDOMS OF LEÓN AND CASTILE (11TH-12TH C.)

Carlos de Ayala*

I. Introduction

Relics occupied a central place in medieval Christianity, shaping devotion, legitimising power, and mediating the miraculous. Patrick Geary has emphasised that their significance reached a new intensity in the central centuries of the Middle Ages. While their importance had been acknowledged since Antiquity, the Carolingian era and, later, the Peace of God movement created fertile ground for the extraordinary flourishing of belief in their miraculous efficacy around the year 1000. In the West, the influence of Cluny in the tenth and early eleventh centuries further accelerated this process, making relics not only objects of veneration but also instruments of social cohesion and political authority.[1]

This reality also extended to the Iberian Peninsula, where the martial dimension linked to the military leadership of kings assumed particular importance from the eleventh century onwards. Relics, traditionally regarded above all as channels of healing grace and as protective force against manifold dangers, acquired at that time a more overtly belligerent character, becoming guarantors of victory on the battlefield. In the earlier centuries of the Iberian Middle Ages, this latter function was associated with the *lignum crucis* granted by the papacy, which, from the reign of Reccared I, the Hispano-Visigothic monarchy carried into war.[2] The ultimate fate of this relic remains unknown, but

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[1] P.J. Geary, *Furta Sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1978): 31-50.

[2] For a general overview of this highly prized relic of the *lignum crucis* in the western Iberian context, see A. García de la Borbolla, "El culto y la devoción al *lignum crucis* en los reinos

it is clear that in the first centuries of the Christian offensive against Islam there is no reliable evidence for the military use of relics.

The situation changed substantially in the mid-eleventh century. This shift, most evident in the western kingdoms of Spain, though not confined to them, should be read against the altered balance of power following the disintegration of the Caliphate of Cordoba. Indeed, until that time, the Iberian confrontation between Christianity and Islam had developed, on the Christian side, as a just war legitimised by Islamic aggression. Its defensive nature meant that its propagandistic discourses of justification, always religious, were not excessively sophisticated. This was not necessary because the idea of defence in the face of aggression was paramount.

Against this earlier defensive framing, the decline and fragmentation of Islamic power on the Iberian Peninsula from the mid-eleventh century recast the Christian kingdoms as offensive actors. Accordingly, justificatory rhetoric grew more elaborate, and the sacral register intensified. The aim was no longer merely to vindicate defence, but to warrant victory understood as enabling the elimination - or at least the neutralisation - of Islam, construed from a Christian perspective as an intolerable evil; its subjugation, and at times even eradication, came to be framed as a moral imperative.

In addition, the climate of the Latin West into which the Iberian Peninsula was progressively integrated helped to consolidate this shift in legitimation. In the West shaped by the emergent Gregorian Reform, the crusade took shape as the most fully articulated expression of Christian holy war. Cluny and, above all, the papacy furnished the ideological foundations for this leap, a transformation that required a developed apparatus of persuasion and mobilisation to sustain warfare and justify even the most radical courses of action; sermons, synods, epistolary networks, and monastic circuits helped standardise the language of legitimation and amplify its reach.

In this regard, a telling example is the letter that Pope Alexander II most likely sent to all the bishops of Hispania in 1063, on the eve of the armed intervention in which a force composed largely of warriors from beyond the Pyrenees briefly seized the strategic position of Barbastro in 1064. In the letter, the pope wanted to make a clear distinction between Jews and Muslims. The former were not to be bothered by those who marched "against the Saracens in Hispania;" the latter, on the other hand, it was right to fight them because they persecuted the Christians and expelled them from their cities and possessions: "In illos, enim, qui Christianos persequuntur et ex urbibus et propriis sedibus pellunt, juste

occidentales de la península ibérica (vii-xv)," in *Reliques et sainteté dans l'espace medieval (Pecia. Ressources en médiévistique, 8/11),* ed Jean-Luc Deuffic, (Saint Denis, 2005), 565-600.

pugnatur."[3]

The pope not only blessed the campaign against Muslims; he also endowed it with a penitential and meritorious character by granting, apparently for the first time, a lifetime indulgence.[4] What emerges is a strongly sacralised, ideological framing of war, further intensified with the rise of the great Berber empires, whose militant identity was deeply rooted in the concept of jihad. Faced with such adversaries, the Christian kingdoms sought to respond with comparably powerful ideological instruments.

In any case, this intense sacralization and ideologization drew upon a wide range of instruments, among which the systematic use of relics for military purposes played a prominent role. This use did not typically entail bringing sacred objects onto the battlefield – as the Visigoths had once done with the *lignum crucis*, or as the Umayyads of al-Andalus would later do with the famous Qur'an of 'Uthman – but rather consisted in associating special liturgical ceremonies with the launching of campaigns against the Muslims. The transfer of relics from one place to a more solemn or appropriate one was a particularly valued circumstance, since such a transfer not only confirmed the sacredness of the body or remains being transferred, but also made their power visible through the materialisation of miracles and prodigious deeds that the hagiographic *translationes* usually report. This blurring of the natural and supernatural levels created an atmosphere favourable to considering their association with an imminent military campaign as a demonstration of the divine support that such a campaign was to receive.

II. "Religious Politics" and the Use of Relics During the Reign of Ferdinand I of León and Castile (1035-1065)

The reign of Ferdinand I of León offers a particularly illuminating example of these dynamics. Some of his more or less distant predecessors had been involved in the transfer of saintly bodies from al-Andalus to the north of the peninsula,

[3] Ph. Sénac and C. Laliena Corbera, *1064, Barbastro. Guerra sainte et djihâd en Espagne* (Gallimard, 2018), 86 and 191.

[4] In the papal letter addressed probably in 1063 to the clergy of San Vincenzo al Volturno it is expressly stated: "Eos qui in Ispaniam proficisci destinarunt … qui iuxta qualitatem peccaminum suorum unusquisque suo episcopo vel spirituali patri confiteatur … Nos vero auctoritate sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli et penitentiam eis levamus et remissionem peccatorum facimus, oratione prosequente." Sénac and Laliena, *1064, Barbastro*, 85 and 191. See also A.L. Bysted, *The Crusade Indulgence. Spiritual Rewards and the Theology of the Crusades, c. 1095-1216* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), 57-58.

including those of St. Eulogius[5] and St. Pelagius, but these are still relatively isolated examples. In contrast, there is little doubt that under Ferdinand I, and especially during the final decade of his reign,[6] the attraction of relics assumed the proportions of a deliberate and coherent strategic program. For Patrick Henriet, this practice was without precedent and undoubtedly constituted one of the pillars of Ferdinand I's "religious policy".[7]

There were three significant milestones in this phenomenon, all of which are closely linked chronologically to the final "military decade" of Ferdinand's reign. The first is the transfer of the remains of St. Pelayo to Oviedo at the end of 1053; the second is the reception of the relics of Sts. Vicentius, Sabina and Cristeta at the Monastery of Arlanza, probably in 1062; and the third – and most spectacular the solemn reception of the body of St. Isidore from Seville to the Leonese monastery of St. John and St. Pelagius, which was soon renamed in his honour as the monastery of St. Isidore.

A. St. Pelagius, Symbol of Anti-Muslim Resistance

The first of the milestones mentioned is that of the transfer of the remains of St. Pelagius on the occasion of the restoration, in 1053, of the monastery in Oviedo dedicated to him. The body of the martyred saint had been originally transferred from Cordoba to León a little less than a century earlier, in 967, but the threat of

[5] The transfer of his remains, together with his work, to Oviedo would have taken place at the request of the Asturian king Alfonso III in 883. The historicity of this transfer in such an early chronology presents some difficulties, among others, that of not having contemporary testimonies to support it, but the truth is that it is not possible to deny that this transfer really took place. Tradition affirms it by placing it on that date, and that date coincides, moreover, with an embassy sent to Cordoba by King Alfonso III and entrusted to a cleric of Toledo named Dulcidio, of which the *Chronicle of Albelda* informs us, and which would not have been completed at the time of the writing of the text in 883. See Ariel Guiance, "Eulogio de Córdoba y las reliquias de los mártires," *Revista Historia Autónoma*, 11 (2017): 296-297; *Chronica Albeldensis*, in *Chronica hispana saeculi VIII et IX*, ed. Juan Gil, Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis 65 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 474.

[6] Indeed, Ferdinand I's sustained offensive against Islam was largely confined to the final decade of his reign, after he had resolved the territorial and political consolidation problems that for over fifteen years had manifested as intra-Christian conflict. Following the Council of Coyanza in 1055, whose acts speak of the "restoration of our Christianity" ("ad restaurationem nostrae Christianitatis"), Ferdinand set in motion operations against Muslim polities that continued until his death. The phrase appears in one of the two surviving redactions of the conciliar acts, the Oviedo version. A. García Gallo, "El Concilio de Coyanza. Contribución al estudio del Derecho canónico español en la Alta Edad Media," *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 20 (1950): 286.

[7] P. Henriet, "La politique monastique de Ferdinand Ier," in *El monacato en los reinos de León y Castilla (siglos VII-XIII). X Congreso de Estudios Medievales, 2005* (León, 2007), 123-124.

Almanzor to the capital of the kingdom had prompted the relocation of numerous relics – including those of Pelagius – to the more secure Asturian stronghold of Oviedo. The event therefore took place at the end of the tenth century, certainly not after March 996, when Bermudo II granted a privilege to the monastery of St. John the Baptist and St. Pelagius in Oviedo. The transfer in 1053 does not imply, therefore, a change of location, but simply the transfer of the relics to a new tomb within the same church. The ceremony was an important court event in which the role of Queen Sancha was decisive. The royal chancellery wished to record the supernatural and miraculous effects of the transfer; specific reference is made to the "marvellous translation (*translationem mirificam*)".[8] The timing of this first *translatio* of Ferdinand's reign – so close to his anti-Muslim military campaigns – is unlikely to have been coincidental. Nor is the selection of the saint without significance.

St. Pelagius was, in fact, a significant martyr of the resistance against Islam. His *passio*, written by Raguel, a Cordoban priest of the mid-tenth century and a contemporary of the events, relates that the young Pelagius, nephew of Bishop Ermogius, took his uncle's place as a hostage after the prelate had been captured by the troops of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III during what Raguel describes as a brutal persecution of Galician Christians. Since, according to Raguel, it was the custom of the Christian king to take bishops with him on his campaigns, this is the reason why Ermogius had been taken prisoner, giving rise to the ransom that cost the life of his nephew Pelagius.[9] Leaving aside the ensuing hagiographic embroidery, which culminates in Pelagius's martyrdom after he refuses apostasy and the caliph's advances, the young Christian quickly became a symbol of resistance to what contemporary Christian sources construed as Islam's overbearing and seductive power.

By the time Ferdinand I ascended to the throne of León, the growing mythification of the figure of St. Pelayo had become unstoppable and seemingly limitless. The most familiar testimony is Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim's early-eleventh-century poem, composed at a Saxon abbey closely tied to the Ottonian court and in regular contact with Cordoba; by her own report, a Christian from Cordoba recounted to her the young martyr's fate.[10]

[8] P. Blanco Lozano, *Colección diplomática de Fernando I (1037-1065),* León, 1987, doc. 47, 136-138.

[9] J. Gil, "La Pasión de S. Pelayo," *Habis*, 3 (1972): 161-200; P. Henriet, "Raguel (*Passio Pelagii*)," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, II (900-1050), eds. David Thomas and Alex Mallet (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010), 377-380.

[10] J. Martos and R. Moreno Soldevila, *Rosvita de Gandersheim. Obras completas* (University of Huelva, 2005), 53-64. See thoughtful comments in L.A. McMillin, "*Weighed down with a thousand evils*: Images of Muslims in Hrotsvit's *Pelagius*," in *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim. Contexts, Identities, Affinities and Performances*, eds. Phyllis R. Brown, Linda A. McMillin and Katharina

What is of real interest here is the way this information was transmitted at the time. In Hrotsvitha's account, Pelagius is not the nephew of an obscure bishop but the son of the *Doge* of Galicia himself, that is to say, the political leader of the people who, being faithful to Christ, was not willing to submit to the Caliphate's sovereignty but to raise the banner of rebellion against the infidels. It is more than likely that this political-religious emphasis on the figure of Pelagius and his growing representativeness as a symbol of resistance to Islam was not alien to the Leonese environment of the mid-eleventh century. Seen in this light, when King Ferdinand and Queen Sancha made the relics of St. Pelagius the centrepiece of a solemn liturgy in Oviedo, the cradle of "reconquista" ideology, they helped revive the militant spirit against Islam, which soon broadened into a program of military initiatives

B. Sts. Vincent, Sabina and Cristeta and Their Dynastic Significance

By the time this calculated program of relic deployment had fully coalesced, a second major milestone was discernible: the reception of the remains of Sts. Vincent, Sabina, and Cristeta at the Monastery of Arlanza. According to tradition, these three siblings suffered martyrdom at Ávila during the final great persecution under Diocletian and Maximian.[11] Their *passio*, probably composed in the early seventh century, follows a familiar hagiographic template that centres on a cruel governor – here named Dacian – held responsible for their deaths. In this case, the persecutors are Roman pagans rather than Muslims; yet in popular consciousness, where the cult of these saints was deeply rooted, the two frames of enmity often overlapped.

The earliest account of the transfer of the relics of the martyrs from Ávila to the Monastery of St. Peter in Arlanza on the initiative of Ferdinand I is found in the *Vita Dominici Siliensis* by the monk Grimaldus in the final decade of the eleventh or the first decade of the twelfth century. It recounts that, during Ferdinand's reign, García, the venerable abbot of Arlanza, received a revelatory dream instructing him to recover from Ávila the neglected remains of the martyrs Vincent and his sisters Sabina and Cristeta. The abbot undertook the

M. Wilson (University of Toronto Press, 2004), 40- 56, and L.A. McMillin, "Hrotsvit of Gandersheim," in *Christian- Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, II (900-1050), eds. David Thomas and Alex Mallet (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2010), 293-297; M. Fierro, "Hostages and the Dangers of Cultural Contact: Two Cases from Umayyad Cordoba," in *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale, eds.* Rania Abdellatif, Yassir Benhima, Daniel König and Elisabeth Ruchaud (Paris: Ateliers des Deutschen Historischen Instituts, 2013), 73-83.

[11] P. Riesco Chueca, *Pasionario Hispánico (Introducción, Edición Crítica y Traducción)*, (Universidad de Sevilla, 1995), 214-225.

task, and the ensuing translation drew a great concourse of bishops, abbots, and clergy of every rank, together with princes, nobles, and commoners.[12] Strikingly, the king plays no role in the narrative.

This, unsurprisingly, is not the version shared by the court chroniclers. Although the *Historia Silense* is curiously silent, Bishop Pelagius of Oviedo does address the matter. Drawing on an unknown source, Pelagius does not report that the relics of the three saints were brought together at the monastery in Burgos. Rather, he claims that the relics were divided: those of Vincent ended up in León, those of Sabina in Palencia and those of Cristeta in Arlanza.[13] He gives no date but situates the event at the very end of the reign, after noting the translation of St Isidore's body.

Thirteenth-century accounts tend to present a more nuanced perspective. In his *Historia Gothica*, Archbishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada makes a revealing connection between Ferdinand I's expansionist campaigns and his policy of relic acquisition. He recounts that the bodies of the martyrs were rescued from the destroyed and abandoned city of Ávila, but he does not state with certainty where they were ultimately placed.[14] Rather, the archbishop records the various possibilities: that they finally remained in Ávila, that they were deposited together in St. Peter of Arlanza or that they were divided between León and Palencia. Doing this, too, he does not indicate any specific date. Lucas of Tuy, for his part, states that the king transferred the body of St. Vincent and part of the relics of his sisters to the León monastery of St. Isidore, although the bodies of the latter were also donated to St. Peter of Arlanza, though portions of their relics were also sent to Palencia. In any case, the transfer from Avila would have taken place after the *translatio* of St. Isidore to León.[15] Finally, the *Estoria de Espanna* written at the initiative of Alphonso X draws on Lucas of Tuy regarding León and Arlanza as destinations for the relics, but it also echoes Jiménez de Rada's uncertainty about their true locations. The novelty of the *Estoria* is the precise date it assigns to the event: 1050.[16]

Late accounts by the great Benedictine chroniclers of the early seventeenth century, Prudencio de Sandoval and Antonio de Yepes, supply considerably more detail about this tradition, which they justify by appealing to "ancient" documents preserved at the monastery of St. Peter of Arlanza. In their versions,

[12] V. Valcárcel, *La "Vita Dominici Siliensis" de Grimaldo. Estudio, Edición Crítica y Traducción* (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 1982), 246-249.

[13] B. Sánchez Alonso, *Crónica del obispo don Pelayo* (Madrid, 1924), 74.

[14] Jiménez de Rada, Rodrigo, *Historia de Rebus Hispaniae sive Historia Gothica,* in *Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis,* LXXII, ed. J. Fernández Valverde (Turnholt: Brepols,1987), 91-192.

[15] Lucas Tudensis, *Chronicon mundi*, ed. E. Falque (Turnholt: Brepols, 2003), 292.

[16] *Primera Crónica General*, ed. R. Menéndez Pidal and D. Catalán (Madrid, 1977) II, 491.

St. Peter emerges as the principal beneficiary of the king's initiative, while royal agency is reconciled with the prominent role of Abbot García, portrayed as the providential inspirer of the royal decision. As for the date of the *translatio*, Sandoval places it before 1062,[17] whereas Yepes proposes 1049.[18]

What can be said with some certainty about this event? As for the date, the most convincing option is 1062.[19] In a royal charter issued on 20 April of that year, the names of Sts. Vincent, Sabina and Cristeta appear for the first time alongside the traditional titles of the monastery.[20]

This probable date – spring 1062 – also follows a certain political and strategic logic. At that moment, Ferdinand I had just emerged victorious from the confrontation with his nephew, King Sancho Garcés IV of Pamplona, a conflict over protectorate and taxes (*parias*) of the Taifa of Saragossa which ended with a resounding and lucrative success for the king of León. In the wake of this triumph, Ferdinand I planned a decisive intervention against Muslim possessors of Toledo, which took place in the summer of 1062 and culminated in the subjugation of al-Ma'mūn of Toledo. Between these major episodes – the victories over Pamplona and Saragossa, and the offensive against Toledo – Ferdinand and Sancha are documented as having made a brief stay at the monastery of St. Peter in Arlanza.[21] Only one month later, the royal document mentioning the Avilan saints for the first time was issued.

At this precise juncture – when all spiritual collaboration was deemed essential for the success against the Muslims – the attention given to the newly acquired relics of three widely venerated saints offered a considerable source of legitimizing assurance.[22] Arlanza monastery was undoubtedly the main beneficiary of this sacred initiative, though by no means the only one. The event was framed as a solemn and highly publicized court act, underscoring its political and religious significance. Perhaps the rationale for this initiative should be understood in relation to the dynastic role the monastery had come to play. It housed the tomb of Count Fernán González, a mythologized hero of the wars against Muslims, and would later receive the remains of King Ferdinand

[17] Quoted in M. Risco, *España Sagrada*, vol xxxv (Madrid, 1786), 85.

[18] A. de Yepes, *Crónica General de la Orden de San Benito*, ed. Fr. J. Pérez de Urbel (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Madrid, 1959) I, 128.

[19] A. Sánchez Candeira, *Castilla y León en el siglo XI. Estudio del reinado de Fernando I* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1999), 213-214.

[20] P. Blanco, *Collection of Ferdinand I*, 163-165.

[21] L. Serrano, *Cartulario de San Pedro de Arlanza: Antiguo Monasterio Benedictino* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1925): 124-125.

[22] TH. Deswarte, *De la destruction à la restauration. L'idéologie du royaume d'Oviedo-León (VIII^e^-XI^e^ siècles)* (Brepols, 2003), 171.

himself.[23] This dynastic and symbolic significance was undoubtedly cultivated by Abbot García, a close advisor to the monarch. His proximity to the throne, and possibly even his presence at decisive events such as the victory at Atapuerca in 1054, a crucial turning point that marked the beginning of Ferdinand's final decade of military successes, situates him as a major actor in this convergence of relic policy, royal ambition, and ideological projection.

C. Saint Isidore: the Failed Invocation of the Kingdom

In the use of relics as a sacralising element of the aggressive military attitude of Ferdinand I, the crucial episode is undoubtedly the well-known *translatio* of the body of St. Isidore from Seville to León. This event stands as the most significant initiative of this kind, and, as with previous cases, it is closely linked with an anti-Muslim offensive – specifically the offensive on the *taifa* of al-Mu'tamid of Seville in 1063.

The evidence suggests that this campaign was not conceived as a routine military expedition. Rather, it was designed to signal continuity with the zeal of Ferdinand's Leonese predecessors for territorial expansion. Within the ideological framework of the *Reconquista*, that expansion was cast as the recovery of the unity of the ancient Hispano-Visigothic monarchy. The campaign was preceded by two actions of deep symbolic resonance: the creation of a funerary chapel in the Leonese basilica of Sts. John and Pelayo, where the remains of former monarchs were gathered; and the decision by Ferdinand and Sancha to designate this same chapel as their own burial place, thereby abandoning their earlier choice of St Peter of Arlanza.

With these two decisions in place, King Ferdinand opened a campaign against Seville in the summer of 1063. The *Historia Silense* is the principal source. It relates that the king mustered an army and advanced into Baetica and Lusitania, ravaging fields and burning farmsteads. Confronted with this devastation, ʿAbbād al-Muʿtaḍid of Seville approached the Christian ruler with lavish gifts and begged him to halt the offensive. Moved by pity for the "old barbarian", Ferdinand relented and convened his most trusted men to deliberate on the plea. The counsellors agreed to accept al-Muʿtaḍid's offer on two conditions: that he deliver the promised gifts and consent to the transfer of the

[23] The king's decision dated from 1039, in the context of a generous donation to the monastery (P. Blanco, *Collection of Fernando I*, 66-68; Th. Deswarte, *De la destruction à la restauration,* 174). A document dated March 1062, on the eve of the revocation of the decision, referred to the funerary destination of Kings Ferdinand and Sancha in Arlanza (L. Serrano, *Cartulario de San Pedro de Arlanza*, doc. 61, 124-125).

relics of the martyr St. Justa to León. The Sevillian ruler assented.[24] The *Silense* breaks off at this point, but Ibn Bassām's *al-Dhakhīra* adds that al-Muʿtaḍid entrusted the negotiations to Sisnando Davídiz, a Christian from the Coimbra region who had been captured by the Sevillian ruler and subsequently rose to high office at his court.[25]

The sources indicate that the *parias* – tribute payments that Christian kingdoms in medieval Iberia demanded from Muslim *taifas*, usually in exchange for military protection or political recognition – negotiated between al-Muʿtaḍid and Ferdinand I took the form of a one-off tribute in kind, supplemented by the relics of the Sevillian saint. A pecuniary component is plausible; nevertheless, the salient elements were the material gifts and, above all, the relics, which signalled political submission.[26] Why, then, the specific demand for the body of St. Justa? Unlike many martyr cults, the *passio* of Justa and her sister Rufina appears to be of comparatively late origin, most likely Visigothic and perhaps even fostered by Isidore of Seville. In any case, it was already widely disseminated, not only in Baetica but across other regions of the Iberian Peninsula. Their liturgical prominence is evidenced by their inclusion in the León *Antiphonary*, compiled in the mid-tenth century at the Leonese monastery of San Cipriano del Condado.[27]

[24] J.A. Estévez Sola, ed., *Historia Silensis. Corpvs Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaeualis,* LXXI, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018) § 41, pp. 220-221. On the chronology, see A. Sánchez Candeira, *Castilla y León enel siglo XI*, 177.

[25] E. García Gómez Emilio and R. Menéndez Pidal, "El Conde mozárabe Sisnando Davídiz y la política de Alfonso VI con los taifas," *Al-Andalus,* 12 (1947), 29-30. Mention of the high responsibility achieved in Seville can be found in a document from 1086 containing the constitution of the chapter of the Coimbrian church, preceded by a description of the conquest of the city by Ferdinand I. There it says that this conquest had been advised by Count (*consul*) Sisnando *qui antea honorifice in urbe Hispali morabatur et sublimis habebatur*: *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica*. *Diplomata et chartae*, I, fasc. iii, (Lisbon, 1870), 392. Sánchez Candeira describes him as a vizier: A. Sánchez Candeira, *Castilla y León en el siglo XI*, 178.

[26] There are many studies on sumptuary gifts from the Taifa kingdoms, especially sumptuous textiles. For example, see J. Senra Gabriel y Galán, "Dos telas islámicas encontradas en el monasterio de San Zoilo de Carrión de los Condes," *Goya. Revista de Arte*, 303 (2004): 332-340. It is true that the *Memoirs* of ʿAbd Allāh also provide evidence of Alfonso VI's apparent indifference toward such luxury goods: E. Leví-Provençal and E. García Gómez, eds. *Las "Memorias" de 'Abd Allāh, último Rey Zīrí de Granada destronado por los almorávides (1090)* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial,1982), 160.

[27] A. Fábrega Grau, *Pasionario Hispánico (siglos VII-XI)* (Madrid-Barcelona, 1953). I, 131; P. Riesco Chueca, *Pasionario Hispánico,* xii; C. García Rodríguez, *El culto de los santos en la España romana y visigoda* (Madrid: Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1966), 232-234.

An anonymous account incorporated into the *Historia Silense*,[28] relates that when Ferdinand I's envoys failed to locate the relics of St. Justa, they instead discovered, miraculously, those of St. Isidore, the quintessential figure of the old Visigothic kingdom. The narrative further reports that al-Muʿtaḍid, "although an infidel," did not oppose the translation of the saint's body, although he deeply regretted parting with a relic he regarded as extraordinarily beneficial to his city. His cooperation with Ferdinand's delegates becomes especially apparent at the moment of departure, rendered with a touch of drama: in a gesture of marked reverence, the "king of the Saracens" is said to have draped the sarcophagus with a richly embroidered cloth and to have recited a prayer aligning himself with the saint's cause, expressing the hope that the saint's beneficent favour would never depart from him.[29]

For María Judith Feliciano, the rich embroidered cloth should be understood in connection with the *khil'a* ceremony – an investiture ritual in which a garment, often a luxurious cloak previously worn by a figure of high status, is bestowed as a mark of honour.[30] What is particularly striking is that this relatively sympathetic depiction of the Muslim leader, found in a Christian text almost contemporaneous with the events, remained unaltered when the account was incorporated shortly thereafter into the *Historia Silense* – a chronicle otherwise unequivocally committed to constructing a discrediting image of Islam.

Regardless of other considerations that might be drawn from this episode, what remains clear is the central role of the relic as a guarantor of peace and as an instrument of vassal subjugation of considerable symbolic weight. Once transferred to León, the relics were deposited in the dynastic pantheon, which from that moment onward would assume the name of the Basilica of St. Isidore. On the occasion of the *translatio* – in December 1063 – King Ferdinand I convened an extraordinary assembly, during which two decisions of great importance were taken: the conquest of Coimbra and the formal regulation of the succession to the throne.

That this convergence of elements was no mere coincidence is borne out by the charter narrating the *translatio*. In its preamble, the text links St. Isidore directly to the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, which occurred seventy-five years after his death, then recounts the deeds of Pelagius and

[28] J.C. Martín-Iglesias, "La *Translatio S. Isidori Legionem anno 1063* (*BHL* 4488): Introduction, study and critical edition," *Exemplaria Classica. Journal of Classical Philology*, 15 (2011): 225-253.

[29] *Ecce recedis abhinc, Ysidore, uir uenerande / Ipse tamen nosti tua qualiter et mea res est / Vnde mei memorem te semper deprecor esse*. J.C. Martín-Iglesias, "La *Translatio S. Isidori*", 251.

[30] Mª J. Feliciano, "Sovereign, Saint and City: Honor and Reuse of Textiles in the Treasury of San Isidoro(León)," in *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Cultural Interchange*, ed. Therese Martin (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2020), 123-124.

Covadonga and extends their legacy to the kings of León, singling out Ferdinand as a true persecutor of the Saracens. There is little doubt that, in these instances, the presence and perceived efficacy of the relics functioned both as a catalyst for the anti-Islamic offensive and as a guarantor of its success.

III. Reign of Alfonso VI: A Further Step in the Sacralization of War and the Military Use of Relics

A not dissimilar dynamic can be observed during the reign of Alfonso VI, the conqueror of Toledo. Under his rule, the sacralization of the war against Islam advanced further, coinciding with the emergence of a formidable adversary: a reinvigorated al-Andalus under the leadership of the Almoravids, whose military resurgence was driven by a powerful ideology of jihad. Their arrival on the Iberian Peninsula triggered widespread alarm, including at the highest levels of the Church. In the early years of the twelfth century, the chronicler Guibert of Nogent, in his *Dei gesta per Francos*, noted that Pope Urban II, on the eve of launching the universal crusade, was paying close attention to the troubling reports reaching him from Hispania.[31]

It is therefore not surprising that in the new sacralising turn in attitudes to war, discernible during the reign of Alfonso VI, the influence of the contemporary Eastern Crusade was particularly evident. This influence extended even to the way relics were employed, not merely as objects of veneration, but as potent instruments of legitimacy for the war against Islam.

In any case, discussion of relics under Alfonso VI chiefly concerns the celebrated Holy Ark (*arca sancta*) of San Salvador de Oviedo. Tradition places the solemn opening of the chest by the king in the year 1075. The charter attesting to this event is of doubtful authenticity, but the tradition to which it alludes may be based on relatively plausible foundations and, in the document, itself could be dated before the end of the eleventh century. Notably, the event to which it refers most probably occurred during the pontificate of Bishop Arias, who left the see of Oviedo in 1093.[32] On the other hand, the evidence indicates that the oak chest, sheathed in silver plaques and bearing a Latin inscription that foregrounds Alfonso VI and his sister Urraca, was most likely produced for this

[31] R. B. C. Huygens, ed., *Guibert de Nogent. Dei gesta per Francos et cinq autres textes*, *Corpvs Christianorvm. Continuatio Mediaeualis*, cxxvii A, (Turnholt: Brepols, 1996), II, 107.

[32] R. Alonso Álvarez, "El obispo Arias y la apertura del Arca Santa de Oviedo: la reforma litúrgica antes del concilio de Burgos (1080)," *Medievalia*, 17 (2014), 79-102, especially 92-95.

purpose in the final decade of the eleventh century.[33] This dating is supported by the presence of Kufic inscriptions along the edges of the lid as well as on the front and sides, which accords with the stylistic and chronological markers of the period.[34]

The early stratum of the *arca sancta* tradition does not explicitly refer to Jerusalem: the ark, first placed in Toledo, contained relics which the Christians hid there after the Islamic conquest; and then, when the persecution against them increased, they moved it to a safer place in the north. Even so, the inventory of relics, including fragments of the True Cross, and of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Shroud of Christ, among others, plainly evokes Jerusalem associations. Moreover, there exists intriguing evidence that, albeit indirectly, supports the *translatio* of Jerusalem relics to Oviedo before the end of the eleventh century: a letter sent by Bishop Osmundo of Astorga, probably written between 1087 and 1096, to Countess Ida of Boulougne, mother of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I, the first rulers of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem.[35] Finally, although its chronology remains uncertain, the famous Codex of Valenciennes 99 points to a Jerusalem provenance for the Oviedo relics; its first editor, Donatien de Bruyne, cautiously dated it to the closing years of the

[33] C. García de Castro Valdés, "Datos y observaciones sobre el Arca santa de la Cámara santa de la catedral de Oviedo," *Nailos. Estudios Interdisciplinares de Arqueología*, 3 (2016): 121-163, especially pp.158-160. A reliable testimony of bishop Pelayo of Oviedo places the ark in the Holy Chamber in 1102: R. Alonso Álvarez, "*Patria uallata asperitate moncium*. Pelayo de Oviedo, el *archa*de las reliquias y la creación de una topografía regia," *Locus Amoenus*, 9 (2007-2008), 17-29, especially p.22; R. Alonso Álvarez, "La obra histórica del obispo Pelayo de Oviedo (1089-1153) y su relación conla *Historia legionensis* (llamada *silensis*)," *e-Spania*, 14 (2012): 5.

[34] This ornamental script features phrases of blessing and praise to God, which were common on Andalusi luxury objects from the eleventh century onward. In this case, the inscriptions were likely executed by goldsmiths with limited knowledge of Arabic, drawing inspiration from the epigraphic style found on the tombstones of the Banū Dhī l-Nūn dynasty in Toledo. Mª A. Martínez Núñez, "Inscripciones árabes en la Catedral de Oviedo: El Arca Santa, la Arqueta del obispo Arias y la Arqueta de Santa Eulalia," *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, 11 (2016): 23-62, especially 43-44.

[35] Ida had learned that a large number of the Virgin's hairs were kept in Astorga, and she approached Alfonso VI to request that some be sent to an abbey she had founded. The countess, however, demanded proof of their authenticity. When the bishop of Astorga was consulted, the king was able to provide both assurances and a portion of the relic, explaining that the hairs had originally been brought to Toledo by the Apostolic Men – disciples of St. James and, like him, evangelizers of Spain. Following the Islamic conquest, the relic had been transferred to Astorga. P. Henriet, "La lettre d'Osmundus, évêque d'Astorga, à la comtesse Ide de Boulogne (avant 1096)," *Territorio, Sociedad y Poder*, 11 (2016): 63-75.

eleventh century.[36]

Shortly afterwards, around 1120, both Bishop Pelagius of Oviedo, in his *Liber Testamentarum* and the *Corpus pelagianum*, together with the author of the *Historia Silensis*, consolidated the version that traced the ark's origin from Jerusalem,[37] while simultaneously diminishing the role of Alfonso VI that is evident in almost all of the earliest testimonies.[38] In any case, by the mid-twelfth century the magnetism of the Oviedo relics was such that the author of the *De expugnatione Lyxbonensi*, probably an Anglo-Norman who took part in the conquest of Lisbon in 1147, could assert that the church of San Salvador at Oviedo housed the most precious relics in all of Spain.[39]

With regard to relics connected to the Holy Land, special mention should be made of the fragment of the *lignum crucis* that Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) is said to have presented to King Alfonso in 1101. Setting aside the relics associated with the arca sancta tradition, the matter of the *lignum crucis* appears in the *First Anonymous Chronicle of Sahagún*, which records that the sacred relic was given to Alfonso VI in that year by the Byzantine emperor.[40] The

[36] D. de Bruyne, "Le plus ancien catalogue des reliques d'Oviedo", *Analecta Bollandiana*, 45/1, (1927): 93-96.

[37] F.J. Fernández Conde, *El Libro de los Testamentos de la Catedral de Oviedo* (Rome: Iglesia Nacional Española, 1971), 111-118; J.A. Estévez Sola, *Historia Silensis* § 16, pp. 158-159. The dating of all these works remains a matter of debate; in particular, the *Liber testamentorum* is now thought to have been produced between 1109 and 1112: Mª J. Sanz Fuentes, "Estudio codicológico," in *Liber testamentorum Ecclesia Ovetensis (*Barcelona, 1995), 77-84.

[38] A useful account of all the manuscripts containing versions of the tradition of the Holy Ark in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: P. Henriet, "Oviedo, Jérusalem hispanique au XIIe siècle. Le récit de la Translation de l'*Arca Sancta* selon l'évêque Pélage d'Oviedo," in *Pèlerinages et lieux saints dans l'Antiquité et le Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Pierre Maravall,* eds. Beatrice Caseau, Jean-Claude Cheynet and Vincent Déroche (Paris, 2006), 235-248, especially pp. 246-248. The collection of nearly all these testimonies in M. Guscin, *The History of the Sudarium of Oviedo*, (Ayuntamiento de Oviedo, 2006), 198-229, is also very useful.

[39] *... Distat autem a ciuitate Oueti miliaria X, in qua est ecclesia Saluatoris et totius Hyspaniae preciosissimae reliquiarum*. A.A. Nascimento, *A Conquista de Lisboa aos Mouros. Relato de um Cruzado* (Nova Vega, 2007), 58. P. Linehan, *Historia e Historiadores de la España Medieval,* (Salamanca, 2012), 299. This is not the earliest attestation of the "fame" surrounding the Oviedo relics. The previously mentioned text from Codex 99 of Valenciennes may in fact be a kind of "certificate" issued by the ecclesiastical authorities of Oviedo to a pilgrim from what is now northern France, where the manuscript is preserved: A. García de la Borbolla, "El culto y la devoción al *lignum crucis*," 577.

[40] According to the text, in that year the emperor sent the king a large, intricately carved, and richly decorated cross made from the *lignum crucis*. As noted in the accompanying inscription, the wood came from one half of the True Cross that Constantine had taken to Constantinople after his mother, Empress Helena, decided to divide it into two parts.

precise dating of the *First Anonymous Chronicle* is difficult to establish, since the text clearly underwent a complex process of compilation: an initial version seems to have been written in the second decade of the twelfth century, with later additions incorporated over time. According to Carlos Reglero, the passage concerning the *lignum crucis* likely derives from one of these early interpolations.[41] Yet it cannot be much later, since the same episode appears in the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, composed in the mid-twelfth century and likely dependent on the Sahagún chronicle for this detail.[42] Whether or not the donation occurred,[43] what is beyond doubt is the importance that Castilian-Leonese historiography in the first half of the twelfth century attached to this emblematic Christian symbol, an emphasis that vividly reflects the crusading spirit of the age.[44]

A further issue is to unveil the explanatory background of such a singular event. As a hypothesis, we might think that the Byzantine emperor, accused of hindering the crusade as it passed through his lands, was using this gesture of generosity to counteract this image, by giving a gift to a western monarch who was not part of the expedition but related to the most distinguished of all the crusaders. It should be remembered that Count Raymond of Toulouse, towards whom Alexius I showed less animosity than towards the other Christian warlords, had become the son-in-law of Alfonso VI.[45]

Carried in a solemn procession, the cross was eventually placed in the monastery of Sahagún. A. Ubieto Arteta, *Crónicas Anónimas de Sahagún (*Zaragoza, 1987), 17-18.

[41] C.M. Reglero de la Fuente, "Estructura y proceso de elaboración de la *Primera Crónica Anónima de Sahagún*," in *Histoires, femmes, pouvoirs. Mélanges offerts au Professeur Georges Martin*, (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018), 255-269, especially 268-269.

[42] As is well known, according to the *Chronicle* of Sahagún, the relic was stolen from the monastery by the Aragonese king Alfonso "el Batallador." It is precisely this episode of the plundering that the emperor's chronicle takes up, with both texts displaying evident connections. S.H. Martínez, "Arnaldo, bishop of Astorga (1144- 1153) and the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*," *Argutorio* 38 (2017): 4-29, especially 20-21.

[43] In principle, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the imperial donation. B. Reilly even speculates on who might have served as the emissary responsible for ensuring its delivery: Count Fernando Díaz of Asturias, a participant in the First Crusade. B. Reilly, *El Reino de León y Castilla bajo el Rey Alfonso VI (1065-1109)* (Toledo: Instituto Provincial de Investigaciones y Estudios Toledanos, 1989), 331. Count Fernando, who was El Cid's brother-in-law, signed as a witness a Sahaguntine document stating that it was the *anno quo uenit ex Iherosolimis*. See S. Barton, *The aristocracy in twelfth-century León and Castile* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 235.

[44] E. L. Bowerman, "The Spanish Emperors and the True Cross: The Variable Uses of the 'lignum crucis' of Sahagún in Early Twelfth-Century Iberia," *Comitatus* 55.1 (2024): 29–61.

[45] C. de Ayala Martínez, "On the Origins of Crusading in the Peninsula: The Reign of Alfonso VI (1065- 1109)," *Imago Temporis. Medium Aevum* 7 (2013): 225-269. The truth is that the granting of

In sum, Alfonso VI can be linked to several traditions, some securely attested, concerning relics of Jerusalem origin. Among the best documented is that of the "Holy Ark," associated with the year 1075. This was also the year in which the ideological renewal connected to St. James began, marked by the construction of the cathedral in Compostela, and the year that saw the launch of Alfonso's first major anti-Islamic campaign. This offensive took some time to materialise. Bernard F. Reilly attaches great importance to a royal assembly that likely convened in October 1077. The surviving documentary evidence from that gathering is the earliest in which Alfonso VI adopts the title *imperator totius Hispaniae*;[46] according to the British historian, it may have been on this occasion that the decision was formally made to colonise and militarily secure the region of Tras-Duero.

In sum, Alfonso VI can be associated with several traditions, some securely attested, concerning relics of Jerusalem origin. Among the best documented is the "Holy Ark", linked to 1075. That same year witnessed an ideological renewal centred on the cult of St. James, marked by the construction of the cathedral at

such a central relic of the faith was by no means a routine matter. It has been suggested that the German Emperor Henry IV had also received the same relic from Alexius I in the 1080s, as a way of forging ties in response to the threat posed by the Normans, a common adversary. (A. Frolow, *La relique de la vrai Croix. Recherches sur le développment d'une culte* (Paris: Institute Français d'Études byzantines, 1961), 83-84); although Robinson does not explicitly mention the *lignum crucis*, he does mention the gifts of great value that Henry IV received from Alexius I, relying, among others, on the text of Benzo of Alba which speaks of the shroud, wood of the cross and crown of thorns: I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056-1106* (CambridgeUniversity Press, 1999), 223). But it is now known that Alexius I probably never made this donation to the German emperor. In fact, this appears to have occurred only in the imagination of Bishop Benzo of Alba, Henry IV's panegyrist. In his *Liber ad Heinricum*, Benzo crafted a parallel narrative between Henry and Charlemagne to justify the emperor's aspiration to "universal dominion", a narrative in which the relics of the Passion of Christ – previously received by Charlemagne from the Patriarch of Jerusalem – played a role of extraordinary symbolic significance. A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World. Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800-1229* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013) 103-108. In fact, the only documented shipment of relics through the *Alexiad* made by Alexius I to the German emperor did not contain any fragment of the cross of Christ (H.A. Klein, "Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West," *Dumbarton Oaks*, 58, 2004: 283-314). Whatever the case may be and even admitting that the reception of such a sacred relic was historical – and that it was returned to the Sahaguntine sanctuary after its plundering by the Aragonese king (J. Pérez-Embid Wamba, *Hagiología y sociedad en la España medieval. Castilla y León (Siglos XI-XIII)* (Huelva: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Huelva, 2002), pp. 64-65), the fact is that it has left very little trace in the tradition of the monastery, which is suspicious given the extraordinary category of the relic (L. Agúndez San Miguel, "Memoria y cultura en la documentación de Sahagún: la respuesta de las fórmulas 'inútiles' (904-1230)," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 40/2, 2010: 847-888, especially pp. 866-867).

[46] A. Gambra, *Alfonso VI. Cancillería, Curia e Imperio*, II. *Colección diplomática* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación "San Isidoro", 1998), doc. 50, 129-132.

Santiago de Compostela, and the launch of Alfonso's first major campaign against Islam. Although the offensive took time to materialise, Bernard F. Reilly assigns particular weight to a royal assembly likely convened in October 1077: the surviving documents provide the earliest instance of Alfonso styling himself *imperator totius Hispaniae*,[47] and, as Reilly argues, the decision to colonise and secure the Tras-Duero region may have been formalised on that occasion. In any case, Alfonso's realms were becoming a veritable arsenal of relics, many bearing the prestige of a provenance linked to Jerusalem and to the Islamic world; the kingdom of León, long a bulwark against Islam, increasingly presented itself as a vast reliquary suffused with Jerusalem associations.

IV. Relics and Warfare in other Iberian Christian Kingdoms?

To place the Castilian-Leonese monarchy in a broader setting, this section considers parallel developments elsewhere on the Peninsula. In the neighbouring Crown of Aragon, the intensified military deployment of relics appears later than in Castile and León and is already closely bound to an explicitly crusading ideology present in royal discourse from the reign of King Sancho Ramírez (1063–1094). This chronology is intelligible considering the monarch's special ties with Rome, forged during his visit to Pope Alexander II in 1068 and reinforced two years later through his marriage to Felicia, sister of Count Eblo II of Roucy, one of the Apostolic See's most prominent military supporters.[48]

From that point, the attraction exerted by relics linked to Rome or associated with military initiatives intensified. Sancho Ramírez brought from Urci near Almería the relics of St. Indalecius, one of the Seven Apostolic Men said to have evangelised the Iberian Peninsula at St. Peter's behest and deposited them at the monastery of San Juan de la Peña. More significant still were the remains of St. Demetrius, a Byzantine military saint whose cult gained renewed prominence during the First Crusade after a reputed apparition at Antioch, credited with aiding Bohemond of Taranto against the Turks. Prior to this, his body was kept in the chapel of St. Peter at the fortress of Loarre, at the very moment when operations against Zaragoza's Banu Hūd were intensifying in the 1080s.[49]

[47] A. Gambra, *Alfonso VI. Cancillería, Curia e Imperio*, II. *Colección diplomática* (León: Centro de Estudios e Investigación "San Isidoro", 1998), doc. 50, 129-132.

[48] C. Laliena Corbera, *La formación del Estado feudal. Aragón y Navarra en la época de Pedro I* (Huesca, Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses, 1996), 82-86; A.I. Lapeña Paúl, *Sancho Ramírez. Rey de Aragón (¿1064?-1094) y rey de Navarra (1076- 1094)*, (Gijón, Editorial Trea, 2004), 73-84.

[49] M. Poza Yagüe, "Byzantine echoes at the end of the eleventh century in the kingdom of Aragon," *Romanesque Saints, Shrines and Pilgrimage* (2020), 173-185.

The association of relics and war was further intensified in the days of one of the archetypal crusader rulers, King Alfonso I the Battler (r. 1104-1134), son of the above-mentioned Sancho Ramírez. In the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* it is stated that his campaigns were always accompanied by a chest of pure gold in which were kept fragments of the Cross of Christ, which he had stolen from the monastery of Sahagún, as well as other chests full of other relics. During the expeditions, they were placed in the tent in which the chapel was erected, guarded by clerics, and very close to the tent occupied by the king.[50]

V. Conclusion

The points developed in these pages may be summarised in five key conclusions. Firstly, the prominence acquired by relics in the central centuries of the Middle Ages and their effective presence, directly or indirectly, in contexts of war. Secondly, this connection between relics and war played a particularly important role in the legitimising process that accompanied, in the Iberian Peninsula, the change in the balance of power that took place in the mid-11th century: faced with the hegemonic predominance of Islam until then, the Christian powers, and in particular the powerful Castilian-Leonese monarchy took the lead in the conquering offensive. This implied a further step in justifying war, no longer as a just defence against aggression, but as the moral requirement of those who had to impose the predominance of their creed. In this process of justification, relics become an indispensable tool in reinforcing the change that has taken place with supernatural elements. Thirdly, this change is clearly shown during the reign of Ferdinand I of León and Castile, whose policy in relation to the use of relics and their link with key moments of military expansion is a significant novelty. Fourthly, this novelty was inherited and strengthened by his successor, King Alfonso VI, giving it a distinctly crusading orientation with a Jerusalem focus. Finally, the pattern observable in Castile and León appears to have no close parallel elsewhere in Iberia. The Aragonese material points in a different direction. Whereas in Castile and León sacred objects were deployed to consolidate royal leadership of a holy war while maintaining a certain distance from the papacy, in Aragon the political–military use of relics tended, not exclusively but with greater intensity, to reinforce the kingdom's legitimating dependence on Rome.

[50] A. Maya Sánchez, "*Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*", in *Chronica Hispana saeculi XII(Corpus Christianorum, LXXI)*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 174.

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