**Leocadia’s Miraculous Veil: Witness and Testimony in Hernández, Lope de Vega, Valdivielso and Calderón**

Arantza Mayo

**1 Introduction: Leocadia**

The term martyr, from the Greek μάρτυς and literally meaning ‘witness’, came to identify a person’s choice of an imposed death over the renunciation of faith in Jesus Christ in the Christianised west. Hagiographical narratives circulating during the medieval and early modern periods offered stories of gruesomely imaginative tortures embraced with delight by triumphant martyrs: early Christians torn apart by circus lions; Catherine of Alexandria and the breaking wheel to which she would lend her name; Lawrence slowly grilling to death; the gouging of Lucy’s eyes; Agatha’s breasts being removed with pincers. However, for all their sensational elements, hagiographies of martyrdom are above all testimonies of witness which, in turn, aim to engage their readership as witnesses of the protagonist’s faith.[[1]](#footnote-1) They are, in essence, narratives *about* as well as *of* testimony and rest upon a complex web of statement and belief which operates at religious and socio-political levels. Witnesses attest to events through testimony which, as Paul Ricoeur notes, transfers a lived experience into words in a ‘dual relation which involves the person who testifies and the one who hears the testimony’; as a consequence, testimonial narratives ‘occupy an intermediary position between a statement made by a person and a belief assumed by another on the faith of the testimony of the first’.[[2]](#footnote-2) Testimony, nonetheless, need not be limited to words: objects and performative actions may also stand as evidence, playing a key role in the transmission of an event’s meaning.

Leocadia was a virtuous young woman ‘de noble linage, y estraordinaria hermosura’ born towards the end of the 3rd century.[[3]](#footnote-3) Her life, like that of many early saints, was poorly documented and much elaborated upon in later centuries.[[4]](#footnote-4) Authors differ on the extent of physical torture she endured after refusing to recant her Christian beliefs but there is agreement that she was imprisoned as a result.[[5]](#footnote-5) She is said to have followed a harsh, self-imposed fasting discipline during her incarceration and become distressed by the knowledge of the persecution and death of fellow Christians.[[6]](#footnote-6) Physically weakened, she traced a cross upon a stone in her cell and died alone in contemplation. The date was recorded as 9 December 305 or 306.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Testimonies of martyrly deaths in the early Christian milieu were visually gathered and orally transmitted within communities and, in the process, construed as history. The palm of martyrdom was generally confirmed at a later stage: an extant, incorrupt body and tradition, generally supported by a body of literature and visual works, carried the testimony through the centuries that followed. In Leocadia’s case, however, the first-hand testimony was never gathered because the act of witness that earned her the title of ‘martyr’ or, more accurately, ‘confessor’, took place in the absence of any observers.[[8]](#footnote-8) Although there was a church with her name in Toledo by the first half of the seventh century, knowledge of her precise burial place had faded.[[9]](#footnote-9) Toledo had a patron saint recognised by tradition but whose existence or indeed sanctity could not be illustrated through documents or remains. This absence of testimonial evidence changed in the late seventh century when, following a miraculous apparition, both her remains and texts referring to her death, including her introduction in the *Pasionario*, come to light. According to the hagiographical *Vita vel gesta sancti Ildefonsi*, the then-archbishop of Toledo, Ildephonsus, was joined by the Visigothic monarch Recesvindus to celebrate the ritual commemoration of Leocadia’s feast day.[[10]](#footnote-10) Although there were tensions between king and archbishop, an extraordinary event in the course of the celebration would change the standing of the saint and, alongside it, that of the prelate, the king, their mutual relationship, and the city of Toledo itself.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Although there are variations of and elaborations upon the narrative, the facts common to most accounts are that a tombstone slid open, allowing Leocadia to emerge from the ground. The saint revealed herself as a living person: her body and clothes, including a prominent veil, were intact. Leocadia singled out Ildephonsus for her address, thanking him for his defence of the perpetual virginity of Mary, but her words were heard by all present. As she was about to retreat into her sepulchre, the archbishop took or was given a small dagger by the king and boldly cut a fragment from her veil before she disappeared back into her grave.[[12]](#footnote-12) The piece of fabric was deposited alongside the knife in the *sacrarium* of Toledo’s cathedral, where relics were held.[[13]](#footnote-13) By contrast, Leocadia’s body was left undisturbed until the threat of Muslim rule prompted its removal to Oviedo around 714. From there, it was moved to Flanders in the eleventh century. It was at the Flemish abbey of Saint Ghislain that Philip the Fair and Joana of Castile worshipped her and removed a tibia to take back to Toledo in 1502.[[14]](#footnote-14) The remaining relics were visited by the third Duke of Alba, to express gratitude following a victory against William of Orange at nearby Mons in 1572.[[15]](#footnote-15) With the Protestant threat looming close, the Spanish Jesuit Miguel Hernández undertook the task of returning her bones to Toledo in a journey starting in 1583 and culminating in 1587, when Leocadia’s remains were formally, and grandly, welcomed back to her home town.

1. **Hernández**

Miguel Hernández not only invested over four years in his epic journey carrying Leocadia’s relics but spent the following four years composing a lengthy work in the vernacular which recounts his expedition as well as the life story of the saint and a detailed ‘relación’ of the public and private ceremonies that surrounded the translation of her bones: *Vida, martyrio y traslación de la gloriosa Virgen y martyr santa Leocadia* (1591). The text is a miscellaneous collection of hagiography, travel narrative, legal documents, ecclesiastical prayers, record of translation celebrations and literary texts submitted to the ‘justa’ organised to welcome her remains to Toledo in 1587.

Hernández’s diverse volume is held together by its consistent focus on the gathering and validating of witness and testimony around the saint’s figure.Its hagiographical section is written with the authoritative tone of a first-hand account. The travel narrative records his role in bringing to an end the saint’s travels, a journey in which her body bears witness to the dismantling and refounding of Spanish Christian monarchies. Hernández’s verbatim inclusion of legal and ecclesiastical documents ­­ underlines the importance of certified proof. Finally, paraphrasing Saint Ambrose, Hernández writes of the massive attendance at the celebrations organised to welcome the body as a sign of public testimony: ‘dio este dia España vn firme testimonio de la verdad de la fe, en que entre todas las naciones tanto siempre se auentajó, y se auentaja’ (213r).

But let us not lose sight of the veil. The association of fabric and devotion was well established by the Middle Ages and would have seemed natural to Hernández’s early modern readership.[[16]](#footnote-16) Fabrics played a key role in religious practices, not only to delimit or decorate religious spaces and mark ceremonial roles or indeed, the choice of a consecrated life, but also as votive offerings and to clothe holy images or objects.[[17]](#footnote-17) Garments which had touched holy bodies were sacralised. The bishop of Cambray’s testimony, dated 1180, which Hernández quotes verbatim, notes the fabrics found in Leocadia’s chest: a ‘panno, quo inuolutum fuit corpus’ and a ‘velo’, which the Jesuit found upon opening the ‘arca’ (105r). He agrees that the ‘paño’ was used as a ‘mortaja’ and elaborates upon the role of the veil: ‘vn lienço muy blanco, y delgado; y assi parecer ser algun velo, o toca de la santa, o el sudario, que le pondrían sobre el rostro, quando la sepultaron’ (107r). The reading of the veil as a possible virginal ‘toca’, serves the Jesuit’s purpose of underscoring the fabric as a mark of holiness. It confirms her consecrated status, proof of commitment to bearing witness to the Christian faith, and would be considered by later authors as indication that the saint professed as a Carmelite nun.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Hernández’s suggestion that the fabric could have been a ‘sudario’ ―a burial shroud which covers the face ―, underlines the relevance of the relic by implicitly linking it with elements of local tradition. The author, born and brought up in the nearby town of Mora, must have been aware of the narrative surrounding the *sudarium*, which covered Jesus’s face and had been kept at the cathedral of Toledo until the early 8th century before being taken to Oviedo, like Leocadia’s body, for safe-keeping in the face of Muslim advances.[[19]](#footnote-19) Christ’s *sudarium* was allegedly brought to Toledo by Isidore of Seville, Ildephonsus’s tutor. The devotion granted to this cloth would have served as a precedent for Toledans to welcome Leocadia’s veil; it might also explain the archbishop’s keenness to acquire a fragment from it.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Hernández is slightly uneasy when describing Ildephonsus’s boldness in cutting the veil.[[21]](#footnote-21) In the midst of the extraordinary event, the archbishop focuses on obtaining proof of the saint’s visit: ‘pedia con grande instancia el santo Pontifice, que le diessen con que cortar la parte del velo, que tenia entre las manos’ (35r). The Jesuit notes that the virgin moved her hands as in an offering to the archbishop ―‘al principio ella con ambas manos le extendió [el velo] hazia sant Illefonso’― and then retreated with it ‘para hazersele mas dessear, y estimar’ (35r). The archbishop’s deed is legitimised by the king’s decisive action: ‘dexada la pompa, y autoridad Real, olvidado de la severidad, con que solia mirar a sant Illefonso […] llorando le offrecio vn pequeno cuchillo, que consigo traya, y la cabeça inclinada, y las manos puestas rogaua, que se dignasse recebir, lo que con lagrimas le offrecia’ (35r). Through this action, the king enables ecclesiastical agency while asserting his own authority.

The symbolic significance of the taking of the relic would not have escaped contemporary readers. Recesvindus’s offer of the knife bears parallels with the well-known interest with which Philip II pursued the acquisition of relics for El Escorial through emissaries across Europe. Despite Hernández’s insistence on the importance of returning Leocadia’s body to Toledo, he records how the ‘cuerpo tan entero’ was divided following royal wishes.[[22]](#footnote-22) Leocadia’s remains were seen as ultimately belonging to the king, who customarily claimed a form of relic tax on these occasions.[[23]](#footnote-23) Philip, ‘con su acostumbrada clemencia y benignidad’ (248v), requested a bone for his personal collection and was granted a femur. In a symbolic illustration of hierarchy, a rib and a small bone were given to the Empress and to the future Philip III respectively while Hernández was rewarded with ‘la quixada baxa con vn diente’ (249r). The remaining bones and fabric were placed ‘en lo mas alto del Sagrario’ (261v): Leocadia literally and symbolically rose again in the presence of archbishop and monarch in an act which reinforced royal authority and its alliance with the Church.

Of course, it was not just Ildephonsus and Philip II who were interested in the possession of relics; disputes over holy vestiges were already common in medieval Europe.[[24]](#footnote-24) An important relic would transform the fate of a church, its dioceses and its inhabitants, not just in terms of the perceived spiritual protection or the fostering of civic-devotional pride, identity and cohesion, but also in terms of the economic benefits it could generate in visits and donations. Owning a relic which attracted the devotion of a powerful figure could prove useful financially and in the exercise of political influence. Beyond these factors, Hernández’s book presents an insight on how Leocadia’s relics became the material signs of an unwritten contract, underpinned by a complex web of witness and testimony, which bonded Church, Monarchy and People. All contemporary events and actions described by the Jesuit acquire meaning through their association with the past which, in the process, is interpreted anew. Leocadia rises from her grave so that ecclesiastical and royal authorities, as well as the people, can bear joint witness to her sanctity, displayed through her incorrupt body and confirmed by the relic of the veil. Her presence, in turn, validates and valorises the devotion of her fellow citizens; she can attest to their enduring faith in heaven despite the previous lack of evidence and fulfil her role as saint patron and protector. She also testifies to Ildephonsus’s sanctity, with all that would subsequently imply for the city’s and the Archdiocese’s status.[[25]](#footnote-25) The king’s offer of the dagger bears testimony to the collaborative relationship between monarchical and ecclesiastical powers as well as to the royal recognition of the intermediary role of the Church: the monarch relies on the archbishop to obtain the relic.

These actions are echoed in the arrival of Leocadia’s remains in Toledo in 1587. Their return, if the reader heeds the Jesuit’s description, is as miraculous as the saint’s original act of self-revelation. The processional entry of the bones, witnessed by archbishop, monarch and townspeople parallels the 7th-century miracle in that Leocadia can attest to the devotion of those present while, simultaneously, their faith in the holy incorruptibility of her body confirms the sanctity originally hailed by the veil. The delivery of the reliquary chest, first to Toledo by the Jesuit and then by archbishop Quiroga to the cathedral, both with the active sponsorship of Philip II and even his physical input as pallbearer of the reliquary chest, mirrors the concerted action which secured her veil for Toledo.[[26]](#footnote-26) The original miracle is symbolically re-enacted and, in the process, the bonds between archbishop and monarch, saint and people are revitalised. Past and present are mutually legitimised.

1. **Lope, Valdivielso, Calderón**

Hernández’s account must have been known to Lope de Vega, José de Valdivielso and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, all of whom penned versions of the miracle of the veil over two decades later. Lope includes it in his *El capellán de la Virgen*.[[27]](#footnote-27) It figures in *Auto famoso de la descensión de nuestra Señora en la Santa Yglesia de Toledo,* attributed to José de Valdivielso, ‘capellán mozárabe’ in Toledo.[[28]](#footnote-28) The episode is also present in Calderón’s, *Origen, pérdida y restauración de la virgen del Sagrario*.[[29]](#footnote-29)

But why should Leocadia’s miracle become a popular subject so many years after her return to Toledo? In fact, the works do not focus on her but on Ildephonsus and, crucially, on the ‘Virgen del Sagrario’, a miraculous image hidden during the Muslim occupation, then found and placed above the door of the Cathedral’s chapel of relics.[[30]](#footnote-30) With Leocadia’s bones safely back in town, interest fell on Ildephonsus, whose chosen status had been proven by the virgin’s veil and confirmed by the miraculous imposition of a chasuble by the Virgin Mary but whose relics, removed to Zamora after 711, Toledo had failed to recover.[[31]](#footnote-31) Leocadia’s apparition to the archbishop had now become a small, if important, piece of a larger stage on which the interactions between Toledan archbishops and the Crown continued to play out.

While the dating of the texts is problematic, their composition must be related to the tenure of Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas ―uncle of Philip III’s favourite, the Duke of Lerma―, as archbishop of Toledo.[[32]](#footnote-32) Sandoval, who sought to defend his archiepiscopal seat from claims that the primacy of Spain should be transferred to Santiago or Seville, was a keen patron of the arts and completed a lavish refurbishment of the Cathedral’s *sacrarium*, where he hoped the body of Ildephonsus would soon rest securing Toledo’s status.[[33]](#footnote-33) The inauguration of the chapel in 1616 was celebrated with fourteen days of festivities, including a famous ‘justa’ and the presence of Philip III.[[34]](#footnote-34)

The three dramatic pieces agree on the basic detail of Leocadia’s miracle, which they present in brief scenes as a prefiguration of Mary’s later visitation to Ildephonsus. She emerges from her grave on her feast day, presided over by a Visigothic king and the local prelate; a piece of her veil is taken as proof of her visit. But although the miraculous core of the episode remains, what is most relevant in these plays for the purposes of this essay is how the actions of those involved in the procurement of the veil―archbishop and monarch— inform those of their successors.

In Lope’s *El capellán*, the burial place of Leocadia’s body is known to Ildephonsus prior to her miraculous appearance.[[35]](#footnote-35) After Ildephonsus gives a florid account of her ‘martyrdom’, a curtain is drawn revealing ‘el sepulcro de la santa con dos candeleros de plata, y sus velas encendidas’ (153r). The archbishop prostrates himself in front of it praying for Toledans and, immediately, Leocadia emerges, addressing herself to Ildephonsus over seven lines. The king reacts by wishing that the saint could be physically retained, to which the archbishop replies with a command ― ‘Dame Rey ese cuchillo’ (153) moving swiftly to cut the veil, uttering lines more fitting to a ‘galán’ than an archbishop:

 Mi cielo,

 perdona, Leocadia hermosa,

 que por memoria en el suelo,

 de hazaña tan prodigiosa,

 tengo de cortarte el velo. (153r)

Leocadia vanishes to the sound of music as the king asks to kiss the relic. Ildephonsus rules that veil and knife be deposited in the Cathedral’s *sacrarium*, illustrating his desire to officialise, publicise and safeguard the evidence of both Leocadia’s sanctity and of his own newly-sanctioned status, while king Recisundo asks to accompany him to deposit the relics, ‘que bien puede un Rey seruir, / a quien el cielo corona’ (153v).

Through these characters, Lope succeeds in flattering Sandoval y Rojas almost at the expense of Philip III, although he is careful to preserve an element of royal agency in the detail of the knife, and records Recisundo as wishing to retain Leocadia in their midst (‘Quien pudiera detenella?’, 153r).[[36]](#footnote-36) The archbishop’s prayers are answered by heaven; the king’s desires are, in turn, addressed by Ildephonsus when Recisundo endows him with the tools to fulfil them. Each action attests to their respective powers and performs, for all spectators to witness, the interdependence of spiritual and political power. The archbishop’s central role would not have been lost on Sandoval.

A similar scene is developed by Valdivielso in his *Auto.* Leocadia’s saintliness is displayed through her attributes as she emerges covered by a ‘velo de plata, con una cruz en la mano derecha y en la otra una palma’ (8v).[[37]](#footnote-37) The archbishop’s saintly status, which Philip III cannot have failed to notice, is given particular relevance and his lavish praise is sung by Leocadia over ninety lines in a clear departure from her limited verbal role in Hernández’s and Lope’s texts.[[38]](#footnote-38) The prelate kisses her feet and abruptly grabs the king’s ‘puñal, o daga’, prompting an on-looking ‘ereje’ to observe that ‘en caso tan admirable / las almas se vuelven locas’ (10r). Ildephonsus is mesmerised by the veil: he equates the fabric with a curtain ―in a possible link with the staging of *El capellán*― which prevents the sacred body from being profaned, also with a cloud that stops those witnessing the miracle from being blinded as well as with the glass which covers the host in a monstrance:

 del cendal delgado hiciste

 viriles a la custodia

 que guarda un cuerpo de virgen

 tan entero que me asombra (10v)[[39]](#footnote-39)

By linking the sepulchre to a monstrance, Ildephonsus underlines the relevance of the object he has acquired, but it is the monarch, with more agency than in Lope’s play, who decides that knife and fabric be kept in the *sacrarium*. Royal action, nonetheless, is qualified by the context of the play’s representation: the 1616 inauguration of the new Sagrario chapel, commissioned by Sandoval.

Finally, in Calderón’s work, Leocadia also emerges from her sepulchre wearing attributes of sanctity: ‘vna cinta encarnada en la garganta, y en la manovna palma’ (249). In the course of a brief scene, she praises Ildephonsus for his defense of Mary’s virginity after which he tentatively grabs hold of her veil:

 Espera, Martyr hermosa,

 y si mi mano piadosa

 se puede atrever al Cielo,

 he de tenerte del velo,

 que vistes. (250)

Significantly, and in distinct contrast with the other plays, it is not Ildephonsus who cuts the veil but the king himself:

 Por milagrosa

 Reliquia se ha de quedar

 con él; y aunque yo al Altar

 me atreva, con justo zelo,

 aquel milagroso velo

 con la daga he de cortar.

 Vn cuchillo se atrevió

 a esse marfil de tu cuello,

 quando con vida te vio;

 y oy en espiritu bello

 me atrevo al vestido yo.

*Cortale el bolante, y quedando el Rey con vn pedazo, y con otro Ildefonso* (250)

Recisundo acts decisively to procure the relic for the archbishop (‘se ha de quedar con él’) by daring (‘me atreva’) as Ildephonsus himself dares (‘si mi mano […] se puede atrever’), to grab it. The monarch makes a surprising if ultimately self-justifying link between the hand who, according to his interpretation, martyred Leocadia with a knife and his own action which was, unlike that of the pagan hand, inspired by an ‘espíritu bello’. In a powerful symbolic image, king and prelate each hold a fragment of Leocadia’s veil which Ildephonsus indicates will be placed in the virgin’s church (250). This reduced archiepiscopal agency and the more cooperative relationship between monarch and prelate may be explained by the context in which Calderón produced the play. A post-1618 dating would explain the different treatment afforded to the scene in comparison to the plays by Lope and Valdivielso, who sought Sandoval y Rojas’s patronage and implicitly suggested links between the learned, decisive and saintly Ildephonsus and his eminent archiepiscopal successor. Sandoval, who died in 1618, was succeeded by the ten-year-old Ferdinand of Austria, Philip III’s son, the ‘Cardenal Infante’, who was not in a position to offer patronage to the young Calderón. The playwright was clearly keen on underlining royal agency on religious matters, a power which the appointment of the ‘infante’ to the primacy of Spain abundantly illustrated. Context demanded a rebalancing of focus in the telling of the miracle of the veil, underlining how the representation of past, even when it referred to holy events, was ultimately at the service of the present’s political needs.

By watching the plays, as well as by attending the translation ceremonies or reading Hernández’s account, Toledans were reminded of the abundant presence of saints upon their soil, of how their ancestors bore testimony with their actions to the holiness of a local virgin as well as that of a Visigothic archbishop. They were also reminded of how the actions of their ecclesiastical and royal rulers, not least their securing of relics for the greater good of a city and its inhabitants, were informed by the testimonial actions of their predecessors. The dramatic representations, the processions and the ‘relaciones’ turned spectators and readers into witnesses: witnesses of Leocadia, of Ildephonsus, of the ecclesiastical and royal agency of past and present prelates and monarchs and of their institutions’ intimacy with the divine. Their shared witness enabled the saints and their relics to be valorised as such and become sources of a local identity, orchestrated and paternalistically preserved by Church and monarchic state and sustained by an unwritten contract between people and institutions.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The various narratives of the miracle of the veil show that acquiring and possessing the sacred mattered as much, if not more, in 1587 and 1616 than in the seventh century. The material was spiritual as well as political; it made the sacred tangible and it embodied divinely-sanctioned power. As Ildephonsus evidently realised when he came face to face with the resurrected virgin, as archbishops Quiroga and Sandoval as well as Philip II and Philip III were well aware and, indeed, as the young Leocadia of Cervantes’s *La fuerza de la sangre* must have learnt in her native Toledo, when the extraordinary happens, grabbing hold of physical proof can determine your destiny.[[41]](#footnote-41) Words, as the works of Hernández, Lope, Valdivielso and Calderón prove, ensured that the testimony offered by Leocadia’s veil had its meaning and witnesses renewed and would continue to serve Toledo’s interests.

1. For a general introduction to the literary lives of saints see A. Louth, ‘Hagiography’, *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 358-361. For a study of the conventions of hagiographical texts in Spain see A. F. Baños Vallejo*, La hagiografía como género literario en la Edad Media* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1989) and *Las vidas de santos en la literatura medieval española* (Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto, 2003). See also *Saints and their Authors: Studies in Medieval Hispanic Hagiography in Honor of John K. Walsh*, ed. J. Connolly, A. Deyermond and B. Dutton (Madison: Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1990) offers a varied range of approaches to lives of saints produced and/or circulated in Spain while C. Vincent-Cassy, *Les saintes vierges et martyres dans l’Espagne du xviie siècle. Culte et image* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011) considers aspects of ritual and representation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Paul Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. L. S. Mudge (London: SPCK, 1981), 122-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. F. de Pisa, *Descripción de la Imperial ciudad de Toledo* (Toledo: Pedro Rodriguez, 1605), 86v. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘solo ay la memoria que los Concilios Toledanos hazen de su nombre, y templo a el dedicados: no haziendo mencion de su vida, y martyrio.’ M. Hernández, *Vida, martyrio y translacion de la gloriosa Virgen, y Martyr santa Leocadia* (Toledo: Pedro Rodríguez, 1591), 25 v. References to Hernández’s text throughout will be given by folio number in parenthesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hernández notes that she was ‘publicamente desnudada y cruelmente açotada’ (28v) and is critical of those who do not record her flogging (31v). Pisa concurs with the lashing in his *Descripción* (85r) and its appendix, *Historia de la gloriosa virgen y martyr Santa Leocadia*, where he cites the matins of St Ghislain and ‘Flos Sanctorum viejos’ as a source (6r). Antonio de Quintanadueñas records it in his *Santos de la imperial Ciudad de Toledo y su Arçobispado* (Madrid: Pablo de Val, 1651), 216-17. By contrast, the *passio* of Leocadia, probably written in the seventh century, simply mentions that she was chained and imprisoned; Riesco Chueca, *Pasionario hispánico* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1995), 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hernández affirms that she afflicted ‘su flaco cuerpo con asperos ayunos’ (30r). Pisa writes of her grief upon receiving the news of martyrdoms and her desire to become a martyr herself (*Historia de la gloriosa virgen* 2v). The *Pasionario hispánico* links her death with the receipt of the news of Eulalia’s martyrdom; Riesco Chueca, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hernández claims it was 305 (31v); Pisa notes 306; *Descripción*,86 v. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Pisa indicates that Leocadia should be considered a martyr as her suffering in prison was an act of witness even if no-one was present at her death (*Historia de la gloriosa virgin*, 6v). J. M. Ferrer Grenesche disagrees, explaining that the notion of a confessor martyr is atypical and, in the fourth century, the difference would have been clear; *Contribución al estudio del oficio festivo de los santos en el rito hispánico: el ‘Corpus Leocadiae’ del oficio catedral hispánico* (Toledo: Estudio Teológico San Ildefonso, 1993), 30-33. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The 4th Toledan council was held in a church with her name in 633; C. Codoñer Merino*, La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe: dos épocas en su literatura* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2010), 306. Evidence of the belief in the existence of physical remains is, to the best of my knowledge, first provided by the 17th Council of Toledo (held in 694, after her apparition to Ildephonsus) in whose *Constitutiones* it is stated that ‘in ecclesia gloriosae uirginis et confessoris Christi sanctae Leocadiae, quae est in suburbio Toletano, ubi sanctus eius corpus requiescit’; I. Velázquez and G. Ripoll, ‘Toletum: la construcción de una urbs regia’ in *Sedes Regiae (Ann. 400-800)* ed. G. Ripoll and J. M. Gurt, (Barcelona: Reial Academia de Bones Lletres 2000), 521-78 (p. 554). The Codex Veronensis LXXXIX, a Visigothic prayer-book copied in Tarragona around 700, refers to an annual commemoration at her resting place and the Mozarabic Antiphonal from León’s Cathedral uses the formula ‘ad sepulchrum’ in the office dedicated to her; Ferrer Grenesche, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The *Vita* has been attributed to the eighth-century archbishop Cixila of Toledo although recent studies suggest a later date of composition, probably the eleventh-century; V. Yarza Urquiola , ‘La *Vita vel gesta sancti Ildefonsi* de P. S. Eladio: estudio, edición, crítica y traducción’, *Veleia*, 23 (2006), 279-325 (p.285); A. Barcala Muñoz, *Biblioteca antijudaica de los escritores eclesiásticos hispanos*, 2 vols, (Aben Ezra, 2003), II, 477; M. Tausiet, ‘The Prodigious Garment’ in *Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Reformation Europe*, ed. J. Willis and E. C. Tingle (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For details of their relationship see Yarza Urquiola, ‘La *Vita’*, 320. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Yarza Urquiola, La *Vita’*, 318-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Hernández indicates that veil and dagger remained in ‘el sagrario de la santa Iglesia de Toledo’ from the point of Leocadia’s appearance to the time of his writing (35v). This statement is problematic: the Visigothic cathedral was turned into a mosque and subsequently demolished to make room for the building familiar to Hernández. I have found no record of the fortunes of the reliquary which held the veil during Toledo’s Islamic era. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Hernández,67v. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. J. Vicente de Rustant, *Historia de don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo*, 2 vols (Madrid: Pedro Joseph Alonso y Padilla, 1751), II, 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. The role of textiles in Christian religious practices across Europe is explored in *Weaving, Veiling, and Dressing: Textiles and their Metaphors in the Late Middle* Ages, ed. K. M. Rudy and B. Baert (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2007). Relics were generally wrapped in cloth (see, for instance, S. Kinoshita, ‘Almería Silk and the French Feudal Imaginary’ in *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings*, ed. E. J. Burns, (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 165-176) and many were, as is the case with Leocadia’s veil, textile items associated with a holy person (see, for example, E. J. Burns, ‘Saracen Silk and the Virgin's Chemise: Cultural Crossings in Cloth’, *Speculum*, 2006, 81(2), 365-397). Useful studies of textiles in Spanish religious contexts are: L. K. Twomey, *The Fabric of Marian Devotion in Isabel de Villena’s ‘Vita Christi’* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013), M. J. Feliciano, ‘Muslim Shrouds for Christian Kings? A Reassessment of Andalusi Textiles in Thirteenth-Century Castilian Life and Ritual’ in *Under the Influence: Questioning the Comparative in Medieval Castile¸* ed. C. Robinson and L. Rouhi (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 101-131, and J. Yarza Luaces, *Vestiduras ricas: el Monasterio de las Huelgas y su época, 1170-1340* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Hernández describes how a Toledan square was ‘colgada de muy rica tapicería de oro, y seda’ to welcome Leocadia’s body (225r). The reliquary chest was ‘guarnecido de baqueta negra, por defuera, y dentro de terciopelo carmesi, puesto en vna funda de terciopelo, assi mismo carmesi, guarnecida con vn liston de oro’ (254v). The *sacrarium* was ‘colgado de muy ricos paños y el suelo cubierto de alhombras, y en medio hecho vn trono muy alto cubierto de brocados de tres altos’ to receive the ‘arca’ (260v). For an extensive study of fabrics in the devotional context, see L. K. Twomey’s *The Fabric of Marian Devotion in Isabel de Villena’s ‘Vita Christi’* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Quintanadueñas, *Santos,* 223. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Hernández, 252v. Toledo had a wealth of Christological textile relics: swaddling clothes, the towel with which he dried the feet of the disciples, the robes of the Passion, and a fragment from the shroud had been given to the Cathedral by Saint Louis of France in 1248; S. Ramón Parro, *Toledo en la mano*: *ó descripcion histórico-artística de la magnífica Catedral y de los demas célebres monumentos y cosas notables que encierra la famosa ciudad* (Toledo: S. Lopez Fando, 1857), 618. For details of the Toledan *sudarium* see P. Salazar de Mendoza, *El glorioso doctor San Ildefonso, Arzobispo de Toledo, Primado de las Españas* (Toledo: Diego Rodríguez, 1618), 189-90 and [G. Gory](https://www.google.co.uk/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Grzegorz+Gory%22), [J. Rosikon](https://www.google.co.uk/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Janusz+Rosikon%22), *Testigos del misterio: investigaciones sobre las reliquias de Cristo* (Rialp, 2014), 150-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Hernández notes that the ‘velos’ were delivered to Toledo alongside Leocadia’s ‘santas reliquias’ but does not indicate whether they were mutilated, as Ildephonsus’s cut would suggest (246r). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. This uneasiness can also be sensed in Hernández’s main source, the *Vita vel gesta*; Yaiza Urquiola, ‘La *Vita*’, 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Hernández, 248r; 67v and 248v-249r. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Gaspar de Quiroga y Vela, archbishop of Toledo at the time of the translation, replied to Philip II’s request of a relic by noting that ‘todo es de vuestra Magestad, tome lo que fuere seruido’; Hernández, 248v-r. Although the relics were given to Toledo’s cathedral, the king took with him one of the chest’s four keys, which guaranteed his access to what was considered his property; Hernández, 256v-57r. See G. Lazure’s ‘Possessing the Sacred: Monarchy and Identity in Philip II’s Relic Collection at the Escorial’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60:1 (Spring 2007), 58-93 (pp. 80-81). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Lazure, ‘Possessing the Sacred’, 65-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Toledo was designated the peninsula’s leading metropolitan diocese at the 3rd Toledan Council in 589. Its cathedral would be granted the primacy of Spain by Alphonse VI in 1085; L. M. F. Bosch, *Art, Liturgy, and Legend in Renaissance Toledo: The Mendoza and the Iglesia Primada* (Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 2010), 24 and 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Philip II ensured that his heir was involved in the delivery of the relics to the Church: ‘Y porque el principe nuestro señor no podia llegar con sus ombros [a las andas que llevaban el arca], le mando su Magestad, que asiesse de las borlas de vn cordón, que para este effeto se puso en vn braço de las andas’; Hernández, 244v. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Lope de Vega, ‘El capellan de la Virgen’, in *Decima octaua parte de las Comedias de Lope de Vega Carpio* (Madrid: Iuan Gonçalez a costa de Alonso Perez, 1622). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Francisco de Rojas proposes the attribution in a 1643 MSS kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de España: *Auto famoso de la Descension de Nta señora en la santa iglesia de Toledo*; MSS RES/80. Rojas’ attribution is supported by J. T. Snow in his edition of the play: *Auto famoso de la descensión de nuestra Señora en la Santa Iglesia de Toledo* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1983). Valdivielso is the author of a long poem entitled *Sagrario de Toledo: Poema heroico* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1616) which develops the same story as the attributed ‘auto’ over 2918 octavas. The poem cannot be considered here due to limitations in space. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Parte segunda de comedias del celebre poeta español don Pedro Calderon de la Barca* [*...*] *que nueuamente corregidas publica don Ivan de Vera Tassis y Villarroel* (Madrid: Francisco Sanz, 1686), 243-82; Valdivielso signed the ‘aprobación’ for this volume. Critics agree that Calderón found inspiration in Valdivielso’s poem *Sagrario de Toledo*, with Menéndez Pelayo affirming that he was also familiar with Lope’s *El capellán*; *Estudios sobre el teatro de Lope de* Vega, ed. E. Sánchez Pérez, 6 vols (Santander: Aldus, 1949), II, 49. See also E. E. Marcello, ‘De Valdivielso a Calderón: Origen, pérdida y restauración de la Virgen del Sagrario’, *Criticón,* 91 (2004), 79-91 (p. 81). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Bosch, *Art*, 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The struggle between Toledo and Zamora for Ildephonsus’s relics illustrates the transcendent potential of the possession of holy remains for the status of a city; F. Martínez Gil, ‘Religión e identidad urbana en el Arzobispado de Toledo (siglos XVI-XVII)’, in *Religiosidad popular y modelos de identidad en España y América*, ed. J. Carlos Vizuete Mendoza and Palma Martínez-Burgos García (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2000), 15-58 (pp. 28-29). M. Tausiet writes about Ildephonsus’s chasuble as a relic as well as Toledo’s struggle to repatriate his remains in ‘The Prodigious Garment’ and *El dedo robado: reliquias imaginarias en la España moderna* (Madrid: Abada, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Lope probably produced *El capellán* between 1613-16 although it was published in 1623; M. Trambaioli, ‘Lope de Vega y la casa de Moncada’, *Criticón*, 106(2009), 5-44 (p. 36). See also Snow, XXXII-XXXV. The *Auto de la descensión* was likely written for the 1616 celebrations organised by Sandoval y Rojas and is one of the two plays by Valdivielso performed in October in the king’s presence and mentioned by P. de Herrera in his *Descripcion de la capilla de N. S. del Sagrario que erigio en la Sta. Iglesia D. Toledo el Illmo. Sor. Cardenal D. Bernardo de Sandoual y Rojas* (Madrid: Luis Sanchez, 1617), 87v-88v. Calderón’s work has been variously dated 1617-1618 and 1629; Marcello, ‘De Valdevielso’, 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. M. Ratcliffe, ‘San Ildefonso de Toledo: modelos medievales y ejemplos aúreos’, *Teatro de palabras*, 6 (2012), 83-107 (p. 93). R. López Torrijos, ‘Iconografía de San Ildefonso en el manuscrito Ashburham’, *Anales Toledanos*, 14 (1982), 7-20 (pp. 10-11). See also Snow, IX and XL. For details of Sandoval’s literary patronage see R. Laínez Alcalá, ***Don Bernardo de Sandoval y Rojas, protector de Cervantes* (Salamanca: Anaya, 1958), 175-224.** [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See Herrera, *Descripcion de la capilla*; Góngora wrote his ‘El favor que San Ildefonso recibió de Nuestra Señora’ and ‘Esta que admiras fábrica, esta prima’, for the ‘justa’; See *Canciones y otros poemas de arte mayor*, ed. J. M. Micó (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1990), 235-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Lope appears to confuse the ‘arca’ he may have seen in Toledo with Leocadia’s original grave: Duke Fabila, king Recisundo’s aid, notes that Ildephonsus is to show the monarch an ‘urna’ in which the saint’s remains rest. In the following scene, however, a sepulchre covered by a ‘losa’ is revealed (154r and 153r respectively; note error in pagination). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The nature of Lope’s relationship with Sandoval is not clear. The archbishop was present at his taking of orders and Lope included a laudatory *canción* to the prelate (‘Humillen a tu nombre soberano’) in his *Rimas sacras* (1614). The writer was nonetheless excluded from the 1616 ‘justa’. Snow argues that Lope wrote *El capellán* to improve his standing in the archbishop’s eyes; XXXV. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Although the miracle is presented in a single scene, various characters, including some who had not been present, retell the action throughout the play illustrating how acts of witness can follow the production of testimony; fols. 12r, 14r, 15v, 16v and 18v. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Valdivielso served Sandoval as ‘capellán mozárabe’ from around 1604 to the prelate’s death in 1618. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The bodies of martyrs were deemed by the Council Trent to be ‘temples of the Holy Ghost’, hence the author’s identification of the veil with a monstrance’s ‘viril’; *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred
and Oecumenical Council of Trent,* J. Waterworth ed. and trans. (London: Dolman, 1848), 234. A converted heretic later explains that only Ildephonsus was allowed to see under the virgin’s veil ‘por su virtud y pureza’ (11v). The surprise at the wholeness of the body echoes Hernández’s account of the response of king and prelate at the opening of the ‘arca’ in 1587; see footnote 22 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. ‘la gente no cae en la cuenta de lo que deue a las cosas sagradas [reliquias], hasta que vee la reuerencia que les hazen las cabeças, y luego estos se esmeran en esta veneracion’; A. Cervera de la Torre**, *Testimonio autentico y verdadero de las cosas notables que passaron en la dichosa muerte del Rey N.S. don Felipe II* (Madrid: Luis Sanchez, 1600), 41.** [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. C. Vincent-Cassy considers the possible links between Cervantes’s Leocadia and St Leocadia in her paper ‘*La fuerza de la sangre* and the hagiographic literature of the time’, read at the Renaissance Society of America’s 2013 conference. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)