

## A Precious Ancient Souvenir Given to the First Pilgrim to Santiago de Compostela

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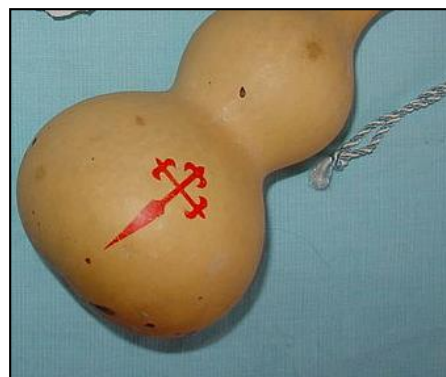
All of us who have made pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwest Spain – three for me – are often reminded of their visits by the souvenirs they bring home. One may be a cockleshell with the cross of Santiago emblazoned on it.



**Figure 1** Scallop shell from Santiago de Compostella. Photo: author.

Another may be a gourd, hollowed out as a water container.

**Figure 2** Gourd water container from Santiago de Compostella. Photo: author.



Yet a third may be a tiny silver replica of the famous botafumiero, the gigantic thurible or censer swung on ropes by eight red-robed *tiraboleiros* through the transept of the basilica at Santiago belching incense and flames.



**Figure 3** (left) Replica of botafumiero. Photo: author. **Figure 4** (right) Botafumiero, Santiago de Compostella. Photo: author.

Or it may be a book, such as a modern copy of the famous twelfth-century *Codex Callixtinus* describing the basilica, hostels and shrines along the Camino, and miracles.



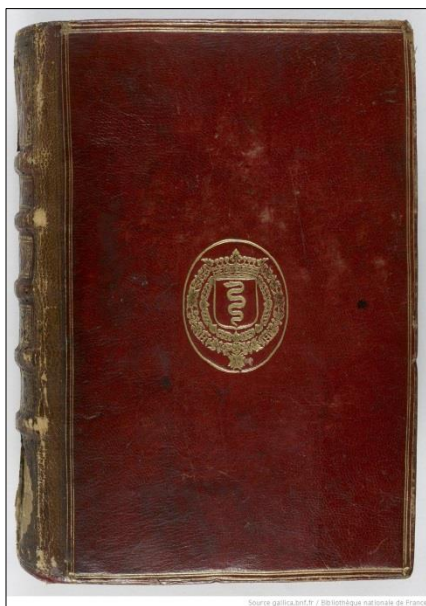
**Figure 5** Facsimile of *Codex Callixtinus*

Also important is a Camino passport with stamps of many of the stops one has made on the route demonstrating that one has walked at least 100 km. to Santiago.

**Figure 6** Camino passport with stamps.  
Photo: author.



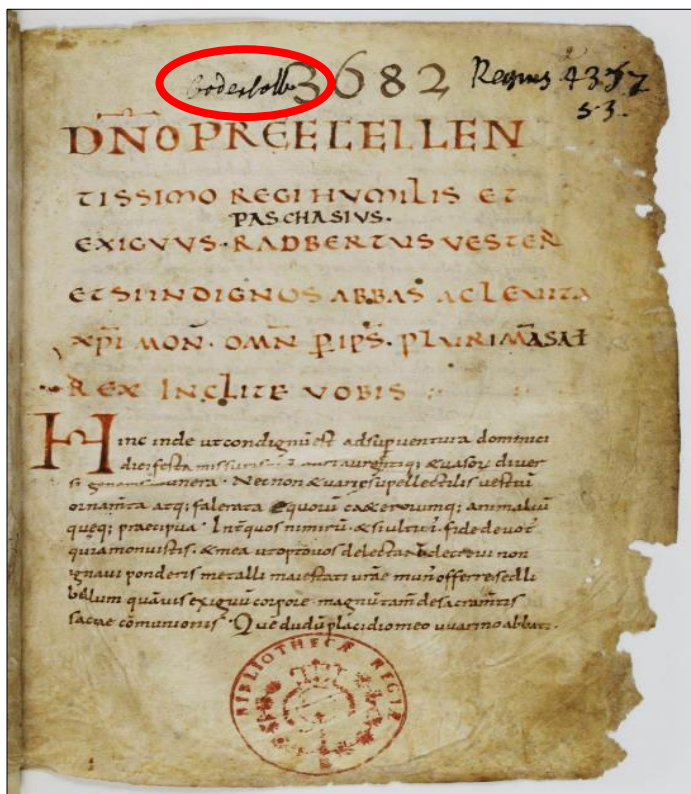
All of these souvenirs are modern, but there still exists a precious souvenir of over 1,000 years old that one may hold in one's hands by going to the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris and ordering MS Latin 2855.



**Figure 7** Paris BNF lat. 2855. Photo: Paris BNF.

This manuscript, as is now bound, is actually in three parts and only the third part is this souvenir. The first two sections have the works of Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie on the real presence of Christ in the host and an unusual

treatise on the making of Eucharistic hosts and their distribution on the altar.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript as a whole is widely known as the Godescalc manuscript, described as such on the first page of the manuscript as a whole.



**Figure 8** Paris BNF lat. 2855, fol. 1r. Photo: Paris BNF

This reference is to Bishop Godescalc of Le Puy, the first recorded pilgrim to Santiago, who on his way to Santiago in 950-951 made a detour in order to request and then pick up the manuscript from the abbey of San Martin de Albelda, south of Logroño.

Our story begins at Le Puy itself, now the starting point of one of four major pilgrimage roads in France, the so-called the Via Podiense. Prior to the arrival of Christianity an enormous dolmen, or single standing stone, stood atop the sacred hill in Le Puy. Sometime between the 3rd

<sup>1</sup> On this see my "Christ's Money: Eucharistic Azyme Hosts in the Ninth Century According to Bishop Eldefonsus of Spain: Observations on the Origin, Meaning, and Context of a Mysterious Revelation," *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art & Architecture*, 4.2 (2013) 25 f.

and 4th centuries AD, a local woman suffering from an incurable disease had visions of Mary who instructed her to climb Mt. Corneille, where she would be cured by sitting on the great stone. Doing this the woman was miraculously cured. The Virgin appeared to her a second time and gave her instructions that the local bishop should be contacted and told to build a church on the hill. According to legend, when the bishop climbed the hill, he found the ground covered in deep snow even though it was mid-summer, and saw a deer walking through the snow, tracing the ground plan of the cathedral that was to be built. The bishop, convinced by these miracles of the authenticity of Mary's wishes, completed the construction of the church. The great pagan dolmen was left standing in the center of the Christian sanctuary and was consecrated as the Throne of Mary. By the eighth century, however, the pagan stone, popularly known as the "stone of visions," was taken down and broken up. Its pieces were incorporated into the floor of a particular section of the church that came to be called the *Chambre Angelique*, or the "angels' chamber." Most of the early structures of the church have disappeared and were replaced by the



current basilica, a composite construction dating from the 5th to 12th centuries. While primarily an example of Romanesque architecture now, the massive cathedral of Notre Dame shows strong Arabic or Mozarabic influences in both its construction and decoration that are at times compared to the great mosque in Cordoba.

**Figure 9** Notre Dame of Le Puy. Photo: author

As time passed this church and city became the most famous Marian shrine in France. Charlemagne visited

it twice, as did other important civil and ecclesiastical rulers, who have and continue to do so. As a Marian shrine, it was necessary to have all manner of artistic monuments to attract pilgrims, and one of these would have to be a liturgical office to use on Marian feast days – and perhaps on other days. What might be used? One could compose a liturgical office or look elsewhere for one already composed. Undoubtedly, the clerics of Le Puy had heard of such a text composed in the seventh century by a bishop of Toledo, Ildefonsus. How had these clerics heard of this? Likely through their contacts with Spain, because we know that numerous clerics (and laypeople) in Aquitaine were Visigoths who had come to the south of France to escape the encroachment of the Muslims in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>2</sup>

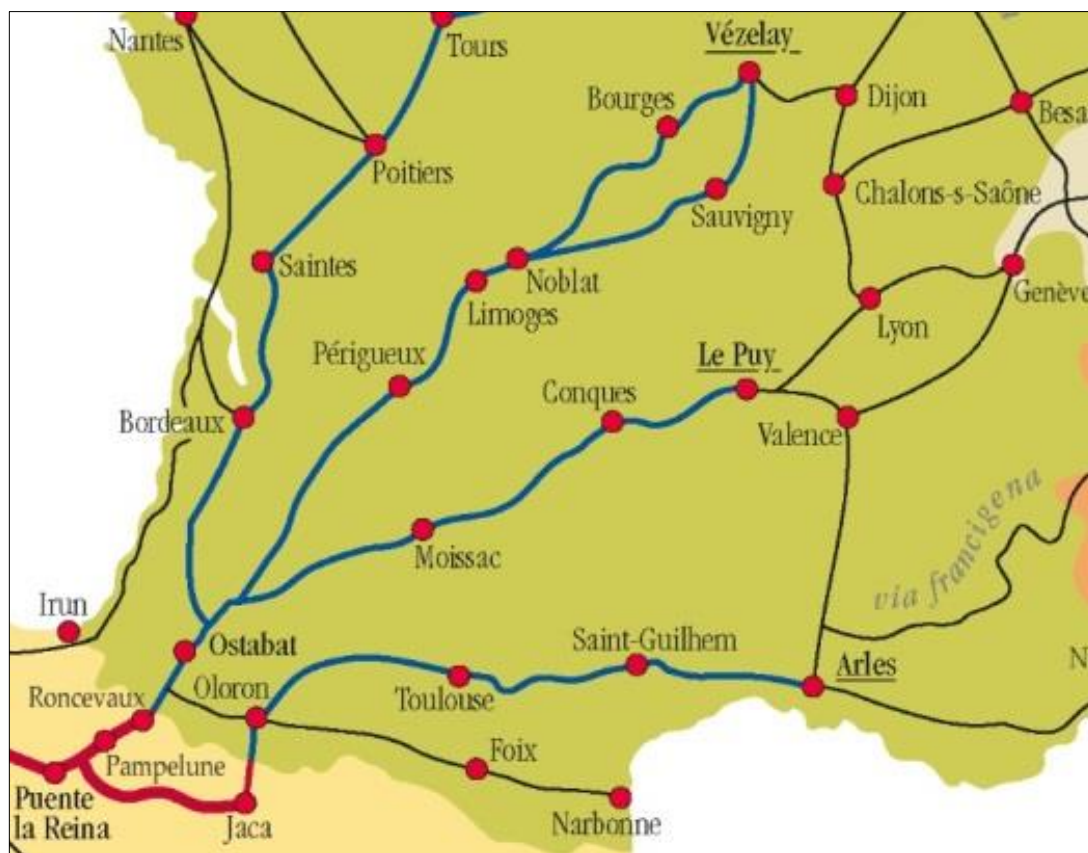
This text of Ildefonsus on Mary, entitled *De virginitate perpetua Mariae Virginis*, is an extraordinary one. So famous it was that Ildefonsus is called the first Spanish Mariologue, and it was cited in the histories of Spain and Toledo from the seventh century and beyond. Perhaps it was written before the tenth Council of Toledo (which Ildefonsus attended as a reporter) that instituted a feast for Mary on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December. The work is actually a polemical tract against two heretics and the Jews who rejected the idea of Mary's perpetual virginity. It is based on an earlier tract on the same by St. Jerome in the fourth century. The style of the tract, often called bombastic, has fascinated Latin literary specialists for years. It is a style not often employed by theologians – ornamental rhetoric, marked by a multiplication of synonyms and poetic pretensions. Ildefonsus utilizes Isidore's "synonymous method" (or *Synonyma Ciceronis*) for theological purposes, wherein he repeats every phrase several times in different, although

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<sup>2</sup> On this see my "The Visigothic Liturgy in the Realm of Charlemagne," in *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794: Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur (Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte 80)*; Mainz, 1997), 919-945.

purportedly identical, ways. But most important for us, the work is broken into six parts to be used in liturgies of the office, something the clerics of Le Puy may have known. So probably knowing about the existence of this Marian text, where could they find it? To this we shall return in a moment.

Now back to Le Puy and Bishop Godescalc. We know from a tenth-century source, to which we will return, that Godescalc was proud that it was on the day that Santiago ascended to heaven, that is, his heavenly birthday (presumably 25 July), that he also was born. And to make things even better, it was also on that day that he was made bishop of Le Puy. So what was more appropriate than to celebrate those facts by making a pilgrimage together with a sizable group of pilgrims (our source does not say how many, just many) to Santiago?



**Figure 10** Map of pilgrimage routes. Map: author.

Along the way they would likely have stopped at such important sites as Conques, with the shrine of St. Foi, then the monastery of Moissac. Thereafter they had to pass over the Pyrenees mountains into the Iberian peninsula.



**Figure 11** Map of Route from le Puy to Santiago de Compostela. Map: author.

Once there when they passed through Pamplona and on to Logroño, something unexpected happened. Rather than continuing westward toward Santiago, Bishop Godescalc and his entourage turned south taking a detour of some 15 km. along the Rio Iregua. As they proceeded, they passed a number of caves on the hills overlooking the valley of the Iregua.

What was in those caves? Recent excavations have found that many were inhabited since Visigothic times by hermits or small monastic communities. That this was the case is not





**Figures 12-13** Monastic caves. Photo: author

surprising since there was a strong tradition in northern Spain of eremitic and rupestrian monasticism.<sup>3</sup>

One thinks, for example, of the famous cave monastery of San Millan de la Cogolla, originally inhabited by the hermit St. Emilion that eventually grew into one of the most important monasteries in northern Spain. One can still visit the cave and the unusual church therein. Bishop Godescalc may not have been so interested in these caves along the Rio Iregua, but rather in a newly founded monastery in Albelda, which indeed was surmounted with caves.

This monastery was founded only in 924, that is, just a quarter century before Godescalc's visit. It is reported that by the time of Godescalc's visit in 950, there were 200 monks (perhaps an exaggeration), yet this is a remarkable number of monks in one monastery. Albelda had been a Muslim town called Albaida (white in Arabic – for the white cliffs around it).

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<sup>3</sup> A. González Blanco and T. Ramírez Martínez, "El Monasterio De San Martín De Albelda Y Sus Columbarios," *Los columbarios de La Rioja, Antig. Crist.* (Murcia) XVI, 1999, 179-185; Eugenio Riaño Pérez, "Eremitorios Rupestres Y Colonización Altomedieval, *Cave hermitages and colonization in the Early Middle Ages*," *Stud. hist., H.a mediev.* 13 (1995) 47-58; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Eremitical Life in Visigothic Spain," *Classical Folio* (1969) 209-227. Justiniano García Prado, "Las cuevas habitadas de Arnedo," *Berceo* 12 (1949) 341-364.



**Figure 14** Landscape with cave churches marked. Photo: author

But in 924 Ordoño I (King of the Asturias) conquered the Muslim ruler, Muza, in the battle of Monte Laturce near Clavio, not far from Albelda. Odoño drove the Muslims out and wanted to restore the devastated town and repopulate the region with Christians. One of the best ways to do this was to found a monastery to attract Christians and supporting businesses and institutions for the monastery; this was done by Sancho Garcia I. But where does one find monks to found the monastery? From other monasteries not far from Albelda. It is thought that some monks came from Cardeña, and perhaps some came from trans-Pyrenean monasteries in Aquitaine.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps that would explain the name given the monastery at Albelda – San Martin -- revered as the great founder of monasticism in the West who lived first as a hermit and then founded a monastery at Tours. Clearly some of his relics were brought to Albelda and were kept in the atrium of the monastery, according to a tenth-century source we will look at later. If relics of St. Martin were brought to Albelda, it is likely that some of the great manuscripts made at Tours in the late ninth century were also brought there. This is clear in three manuscripts, one

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<sup>4</sup> M. C. Díaz y Díaz, 'Escritores del monasterio de Albelda. Vigilán y Sarracino' in *Códice Albeldense, 976: Original Conservado en la Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (d.I.2) (Colección Scriptorium 15; Madrid, 2002), 75.*

from the ninth century and the others written in in the mid-tenth century where the same Franco-Saxon interlace is used to decorate an initial.

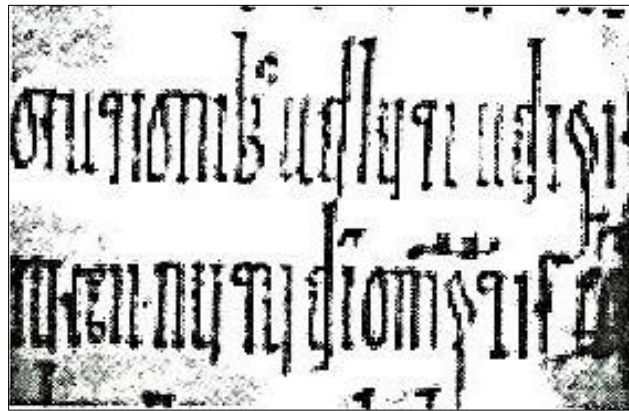


**Figure 15, 16, 17** (left) Second Bible of Charles the Bald, Paris BNF Lat. 2 (s.IX) fol. 8r; (center) Paris BNF Lat. 2855 (950) fol. 73v; Codex Vigilanus Escorial d.1.2 (976), fol. 23r. Photos: Paris BNF and author.

Hence, it is likely that some of the monks brought to Albelda were from the north, bringing the name of St. Martin, some of his relics, and some of the manuscripts made at Tours.

Another source of monks to populate the monastery of Albelda were the small monasteries and hermits who had survived under the Muslims in their caves near Albelda along the Rio Iregua. We know of one of the very small monasteries near Albelda which commended itself and its monks to Albelda. This was the monastery of St. Prudencio of Monte Laturce, and the commendation still exists. It is a remarkable document dated to 950 in the Diocesan Archive in nearby Logroño. In it the abbot and six monks commend themselves to San Martin de Albelda. “Ego Adica abba cum fratribus mei Christoforo, Furtunio, Sarracino, Dato, Stefano Rapinato ... tibi patri spirituali Dulquito abbati et fratribus tecum in amore Christ Albilde in cenobio Sancti Martini ... contradimus animas nostras simulque corpora ut vestris orationibus

adiuti adipiscamur vobiscum premia poli.”<sup>5</sup> One of these six monks named is Sarracino, whom we will meet again at Albelda. The document is signed by a scribe named Vigila, who says at the conclusion of the document that he is adding his “signum” or sign (likely a cross). “Vigila scriba manu mea signum feci (t or †).” It is important to note that Vigila calls himself “scriba” or scribe – his “professional title.” But perhaps the most interesting thing about this parchment document is that Vigila wrote it in a strange style, called Visigothic longaria.<sup>6</sup>



**Figure 18** Logroño, Arch. Dioc. Pergaminos, núm 1, ter Original. Photo: Florez

This is precisely the style he used in one of the most famous manuscripts created in medieval Spain, the *Codex canonum Albeldense* (El Escorial d.I.2).

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<sup>5</sup> Antonio Ubieto Arteta, *Cartulario de Albelda* (Zaragoza, 1981) 28 f.

<sup>6</sup> See José Antonio Fernández Flórez and Marta Herrerro de la Fuente, “Copistas y colaboradores en el Monasterio de Albelda,” in *La collaboration dans la production de l’écrit médiéval, Actes du XIIIe colloque du Comité international de paléographie latine (Weingarten 22-25 septembre 2000)* (Paris 2003) 112, 119.

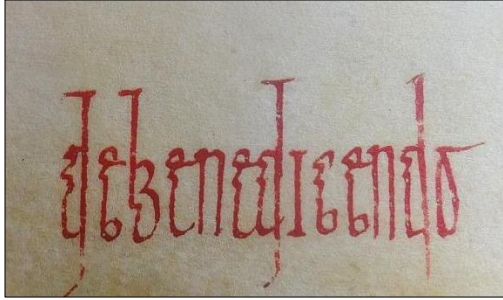


Figure 19 El Escorial d.I.2, fol. 44v. Photo: author

That brings us to this unbelievable legal manuscript made in Albelda, perhaps in planning or progress, as Godescalc arrived. Its creators were Vigila and Sarracino, both of whom we met in the document from San Prudencio. They were helped by a “discipulus” or disciple named Garcia, who may have cut and prepared the parchment. There exists a wonderful self-portrait of Vigila in his manuscript.

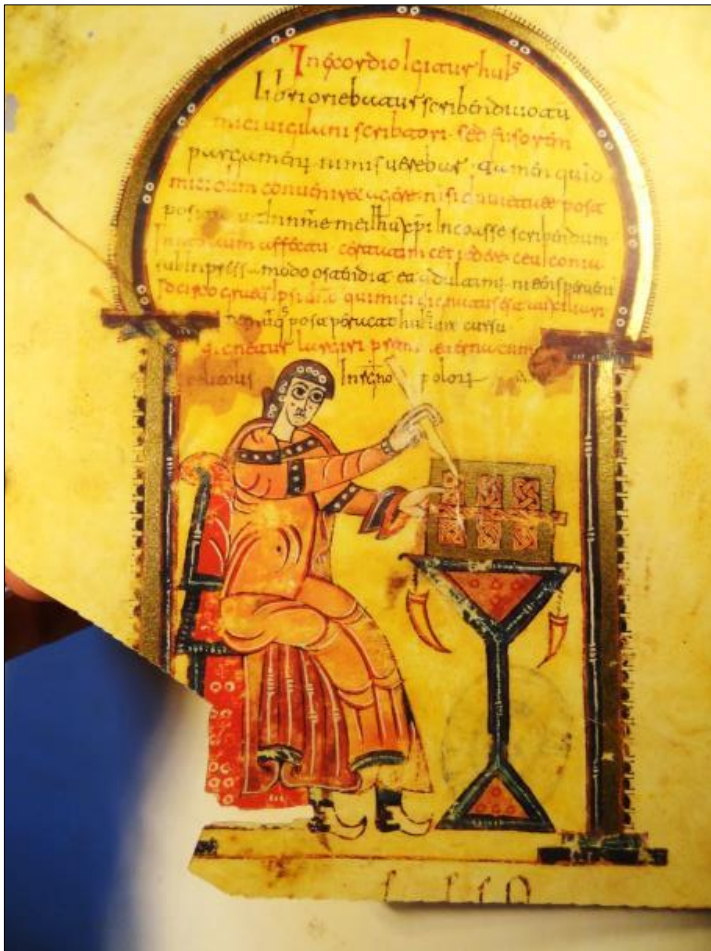
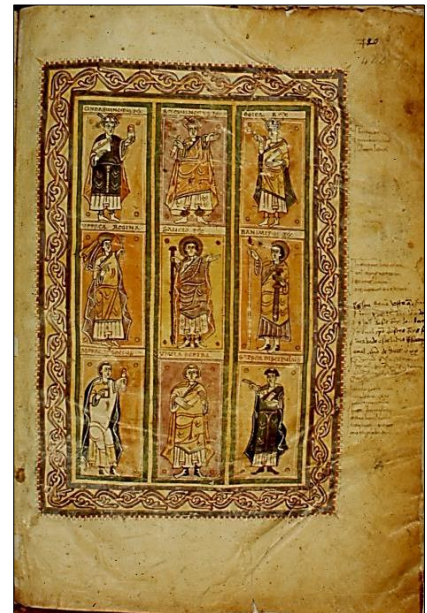


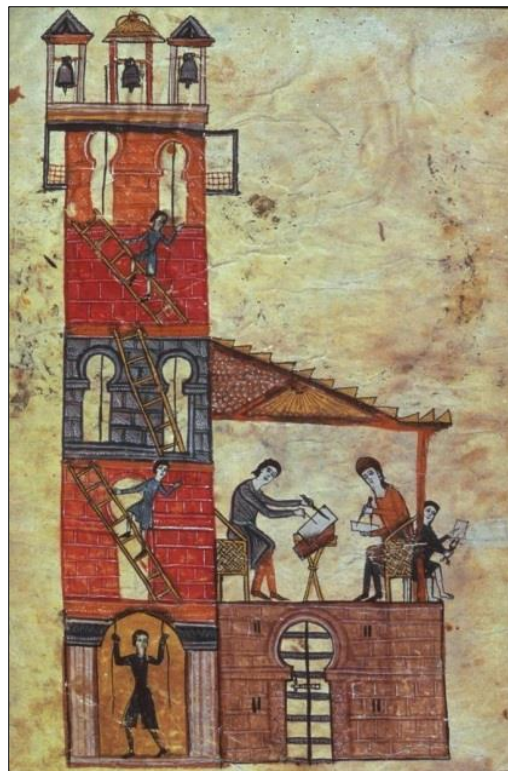
Figure 20 Self-portrait of Vigila, El Escorial d.I.2, facing fol. v. Photo: author

and another portrait of the three workers at the end of the manuscript.



**Figure 21** El Escorial d.I.2, fol. 420r. Photo: author

These three likely worked together in the monastic scriptorium, as can be seen in an illustration of a scriptorium in several Beatus manuscripts.



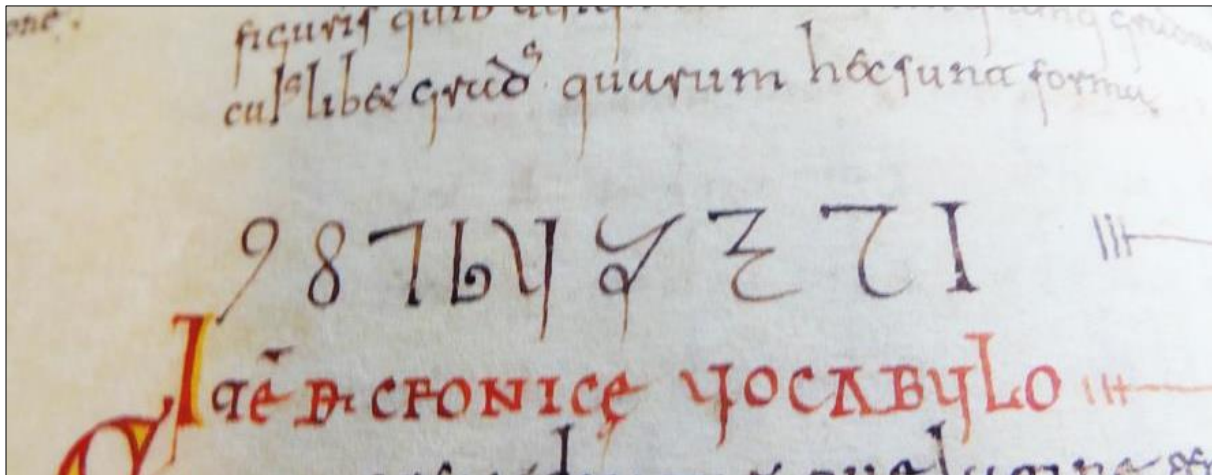
**Figures 22-23**  
(left) Madrid  
Archivo Histórico  
Nacional. Ms  
1097 B (1240)  
fol. 169r; (right)  
New York,  
Pierpont Morgan  
Library MS  
M.429, fol. 183r.  
Photos: author

The Codex Albeldense is a marvel of organization, illustrations, and information. It is an enormous codex of nearly 450 pages (24 x 48 inches and weighing nearly 45 pounds).



**Figure 24** El Escorial d.I.2, Photo: author's copy

Both Vigila and Sarracino wrote and illustrated the manuscript. It contains all the laws of the church and secular rulers in early medieval Spain, and it is famous because it contains the first example of Arabic numbers known in the West, histories of Spain, poems by Vigila, and so forth.



**Figure 25** El Escorial d.I.2, fol. 16v. Photo: author

Here are several decorative pages and illustrations:



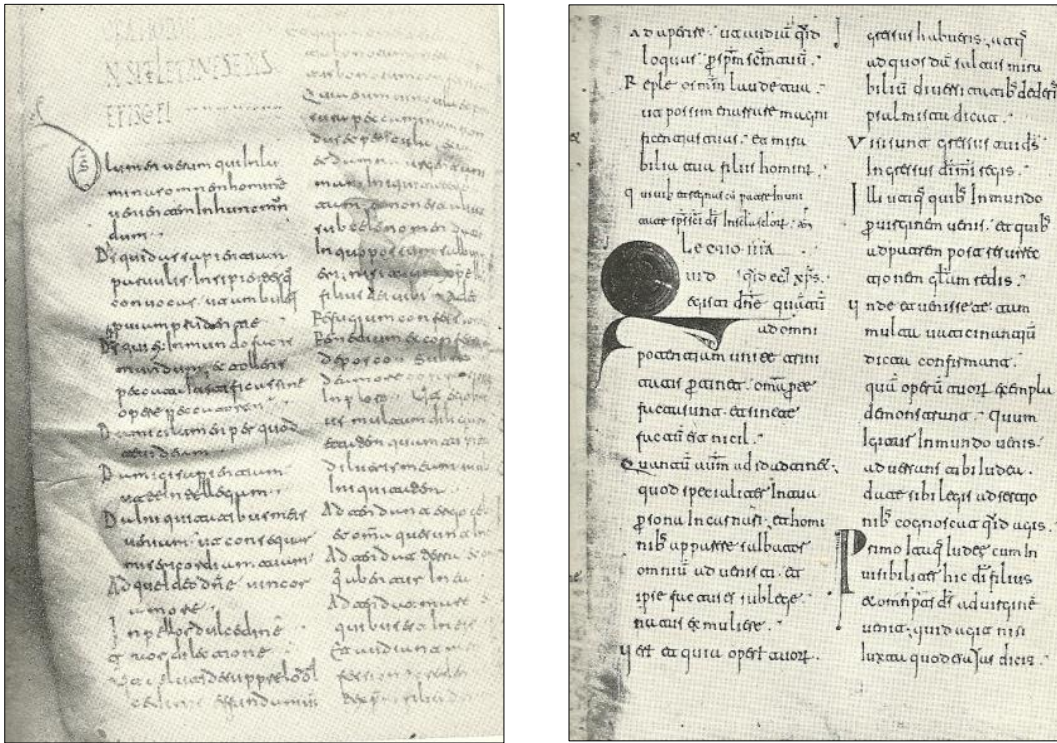
**Figures 26-27** El Escorial d.I.2, fols. 16v and 18v. Photos: author

We have met two of the great scribes of the monastery. But that meant that there had to have been manuscripts there to copy, and surely Albelda was building a large library of these for the scribes to copy. Among these would have been texts known in Spain at that time.

Returning to our story of Godescalc. Why did Godescalc visit Albelda? Some scholars said he wanted to cement ecclesio-political ties with this newly liberated area. Yet he could have done that elsewhere, such as Logroño, and not taken the detour to Albelda. More likely he went because he had heard that there was a manuscript there of the *De virginitate* of Ildefonsus. How did he know? Probably one of the Visigothic monks or clerics in Le Puy had told him that one was there or that they suspected a library as large as Albelda would have one.



At that time, there seem to have been very few manuscripts of the *De virginitate* in Spain, if one can judge by the extant manuscripts before 950 – only two.<sup>7</sup>



**Figures 28-29** León Arch. Cat. 22, fol. 9v and El Escorial a.II.9, fol. 22v. Photos: author

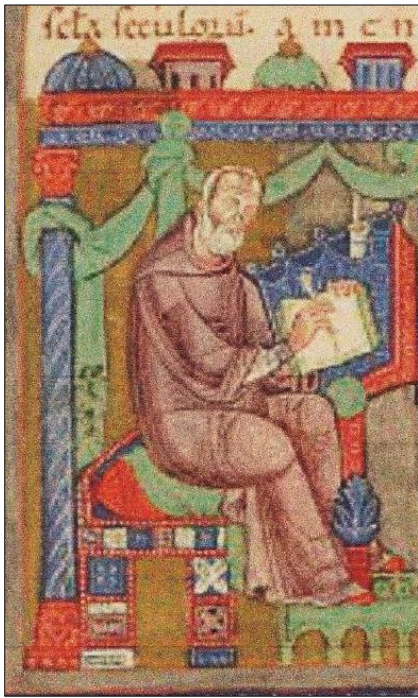
But we surely know at least one was at Albelda, to which we will return in a moment. In any event, Bishop Godescalc arrived at Albelda with his retinue<sup>8</sup> and undoubtedly was introduced to the Abbot Dulquitus, a man known for his culture and love of books. Godescalc must have asked him if the monastery had a copy of the *De virginitate*, and if so, could he have a manuscript made for him as he was traveling on to Santiago and that he would pick it up on his return back

<sup>7</sup> On an early tenth-century manuscripts of the *De virginitate* possibly in northern Spain, see M. C. Díaz y Díaz, “La circulación des manuscrits dans la Péninsule Ibérique du VIIe au XIe siècles,” *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 12 (1969) pp. 388 f.

<sup>8</sup> For an imaginative account of Godescalc’s impressive retinue as it arrived at the monastery see Julián Cantera Orive, <http://www.vallenajerilla.com/berceo/canteraorive/gotescalco.htm>.

to Aquitaine. Dulquitus, impressed by an important bishop from Aquitaine, said that such was possible and he had exactly the scribe to do this.

Hence we meet another scribe of Albelda: Gomez, perhaps the experienced teacher of the scribe Vigila.<sup>9</sup> We do not have any contemporary pictures of him as we do of Vigila and



Sarracino. But we do have one made some 150 years later in a manuscript of the *De virginitate*, the famous Parma Ildefonsus.

**Figure 30** Gomez. Parma Bibl. Palat. 1650, fol. 102r. Photo. author

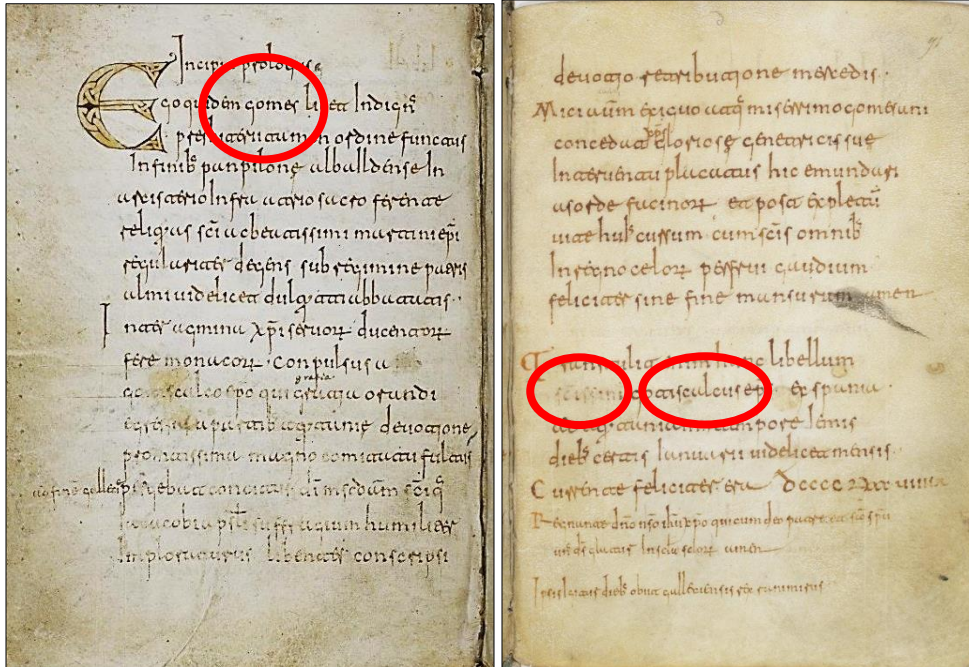
This scribe, we know, was a priest, whose age must have been at least twenty-five (for him to be ordained as a presbyter), making it likely that he had been at Albelda almost since its founding. So, Gomez began his work, knowing that the manuscript he was copying had to be done rapidly since

Godescalc intended to retrieve it after his return from Santiago back to Le Puy.

In 951, when Godescalc returned, with his large retinue, from Santiago, he again detoured to Logroño, some fifteen kilometers down to Albelda. There he was presented with the manuscript of the *De virginitate*. And what a manuscript it was – and remains so till today! The manuscript is in a beautiful Visigothic script, the script of Visigothic and Mozarabic Spain, used there until the 12<sup>th</sup> century when it was replaced by the northern European Carolingian script.

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<sup>9</sup> M. C. Díaz y Díaz, 'Escritores del monasterio de Alvela. Vigilán y Sarracino' in *Códice Albeldense, 976: Original Conservado en la Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (d.I.2) (Colección Scriptorium 15; Madrid, 2002) 78.*

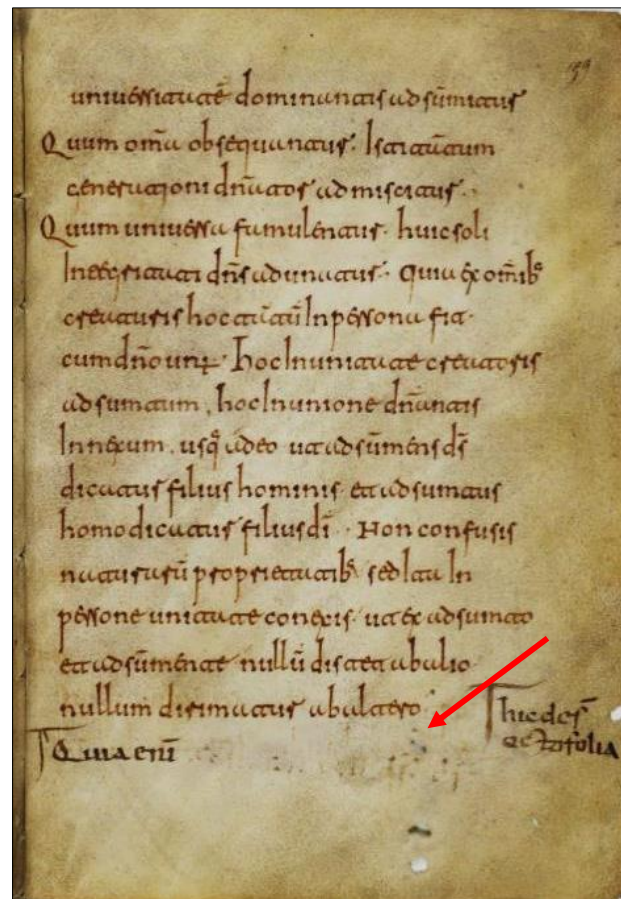


**Figure 31** Paris BNF lat. 2855, fols. 69v and 71r. Photo: Paris BNF. Left: Gomez; Right: erasure and Godescalc

The text in the manuscript is indeed that of the *De virginitate* of Ildefonsus. But there are many extraordinary things about the manuscript. First, it lacks the final section of the *De virginitate* as we know it from other manuscripts and it ends on the recto side of a folio in mid-sentence.

**Figure 32** Paris BNF lat. 2855, fol. 159r. Photo: Paris BNF

What did that mean? It was not that the next folios were missing from the manuscript we



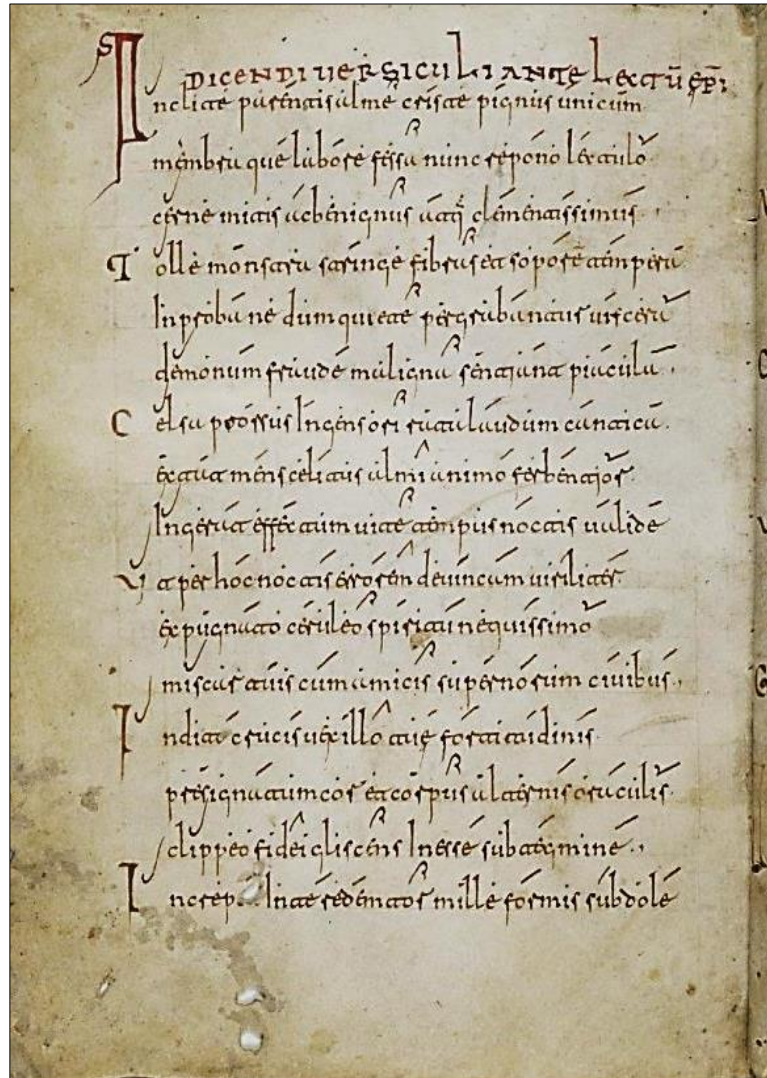
now have because there is writing on the verso side of the folio. So, it means that the manuscript Gomez was copying was defective at the end and hence Gomez stopped there. Later, on the folio someone noted that the text was defective and wrote that eight folios were lacking as well as the next two words of the missing text, *Quia enim*. This hand is not in Visigothic script, but rather the Carolingian script used in the North. So, the manuscript must have been taken back to Le Puy, where it was being copied and compared with other complete manuscripts of the *De virginitate*, and it there it was recognized that Gomez's manuscript was incomplete and this was noted in Carolingian script on the recto folio.

Yet another puzzling thing about our Gomez manuscript is that on the verso side after the incomplete *De virginitate* text is written a rhythmic exorcism or incantation against Satan, and this continues on with yet another exorcism in the next final pages of the manuscript.<sup>10</sup> These exorcisms are written in Visigothic letters smaller than the *De virginitate* text and have simple musical notation written "in campo aperto" above the words as is usual for Visigothic notation. The notation is quite basic (consisting of just four types of neumes) because it indicates a syllabic melody in which just one note is sung to each syllable of text.<sup>11</sup> The rhythmic exorcisms would have been chanted or sung over the demon-possessed person, and as a cross was held above him, words in the text were loudly repeated, "Flee Satan by the sweet cross." In the space above the exorcism text it is written that it is to be used before the reading is done by a bishop. Could this text have been intended for the Bishop Godescalc or for another bishop?

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<sup>10</sup> For a partial edition of the texts see Ludwig Traube, *Poetae latini aevi Carolini, Monumenta Germaniae historica. Poetae latini aevi Carolini*; v. 3 (Berlin, 1896) 149 f.

<sup>11</sup> I thank my friend and musical historian, Susan Boyton, for this observation.



**Figure 33** Paris BNF lat. 2855, fol. 159v. Photo: Paris BNF

We do not know. And was the text of the exorcism written by Gomez? The writing is certainly similar to his in the remainder of the manuscript. But why would Gomez have “spoiled” his beautiful manuscript of the *De virginitate* by adding these seemingly unrelated exorcisms? Perhaps Godescalc, on picking up the manuscript, remembered that the cathedral of Le Puy was a place of healing, and asked that an exorcism text be added by Gomez before he left. Or perhaps later a scribe who could write like Gomez added it – in Spain or in Le Puy. That the exorcisms

were written in Spain is probable because we have the same texts in another tenth-century Visigothic script manuscript likely from northern Spain, the Codex Azagra,<sup>12</sup> and there is no evidence that they existed outside Spain.

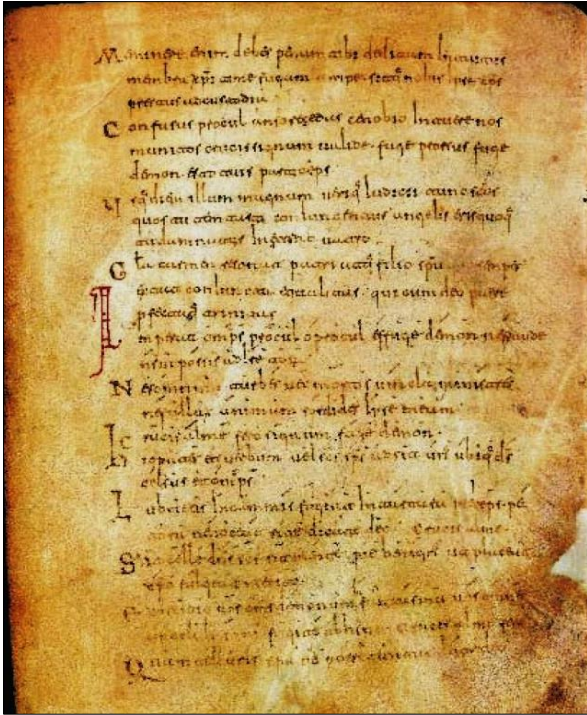
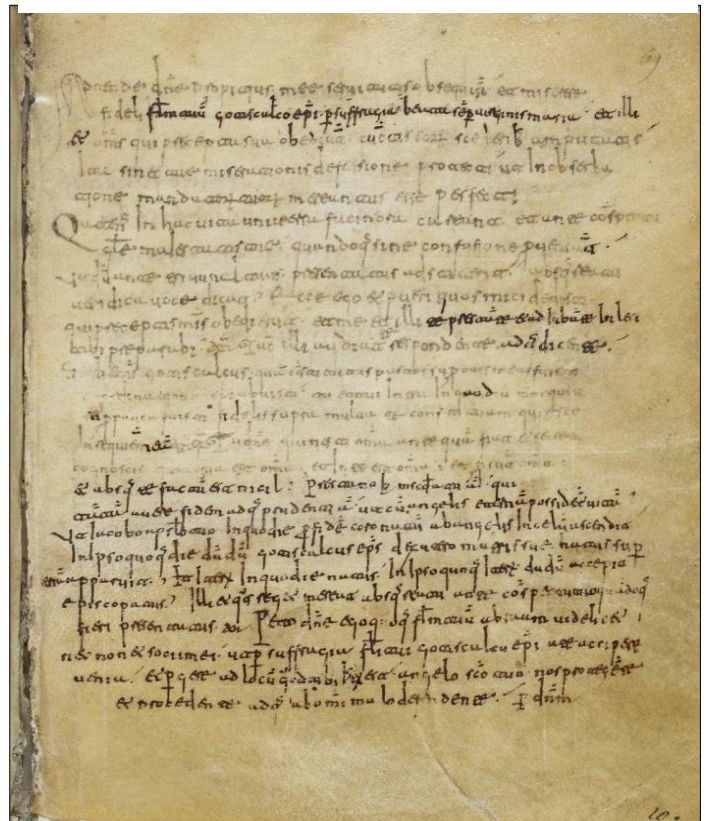


Figure 34 Madrid Bibl. Nac. de Esp. 10029, fol. 158r. Photo: author

Figure 35 Paris BNF lat. 2855, fol. 69r. Photo: Paris BNF

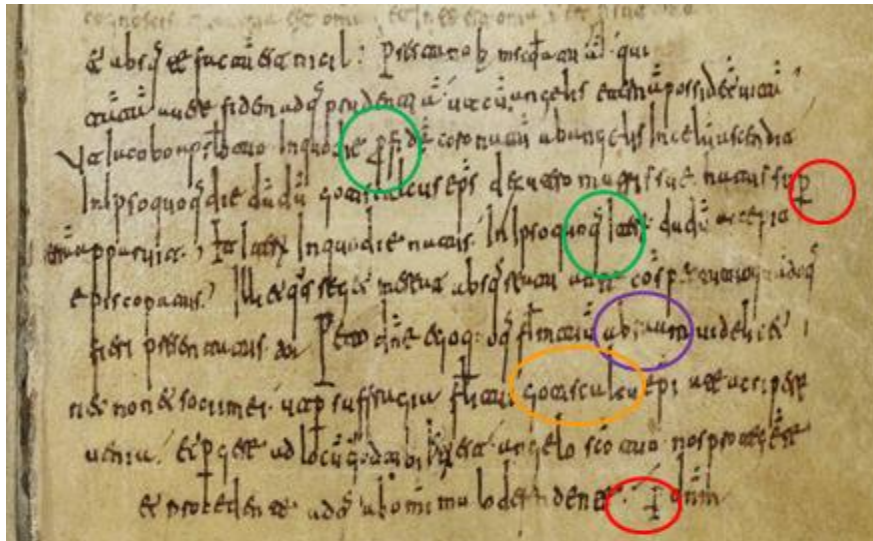


Yet another puzzle – the outside covering page or first recto folio of the manuscript.

<sup>12</sup> On the pages of this manuscript with the exorcisms, see *Hispania Vetus. Musical-Liturgical Manuscripts from Visigothic Origins to the Franco-Roman Transition (9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, ed. Susana Zapke (Cambridge, 2007) 296.

The text here is written in a sloppy Visigothic script with cursive, hurried features. The text is a long prayer for Bishop Godescalc and his company. The text gives us the information about Godescalc's reason for his pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James, mentioned above, and other details. Then the text closes by naming its author as Abraham, a servant of Godescalc. So, we have here a Visigoth who likely accompanied Godescalc from Le Puy. And perhaps it was he who knew or suggested a text of the *De virginitate* could be found at Albelda. As one analyzes the writing, it is almost wholly in Visigothic script including abbreviations – except for an abbreviation mostly used for the word “per.” This abbreviation for the word “per” is not in Visigothic, but in Carolingian, suggesting that Abraham had learned this in France. Nonetheless, he did occasionally use the Visigothic abbreviation for the word “per.”

#### ABRAHAM'S USE OF CAROLINGIAN AND VISIGOTHIC FORMS



**Figure 36** Paris  
BNF lat. 2855, fol.  
69r. Photo: Paris  
BNF

VISIGOTHIC  
'PER'

CAROLINGIAN  
'PER'

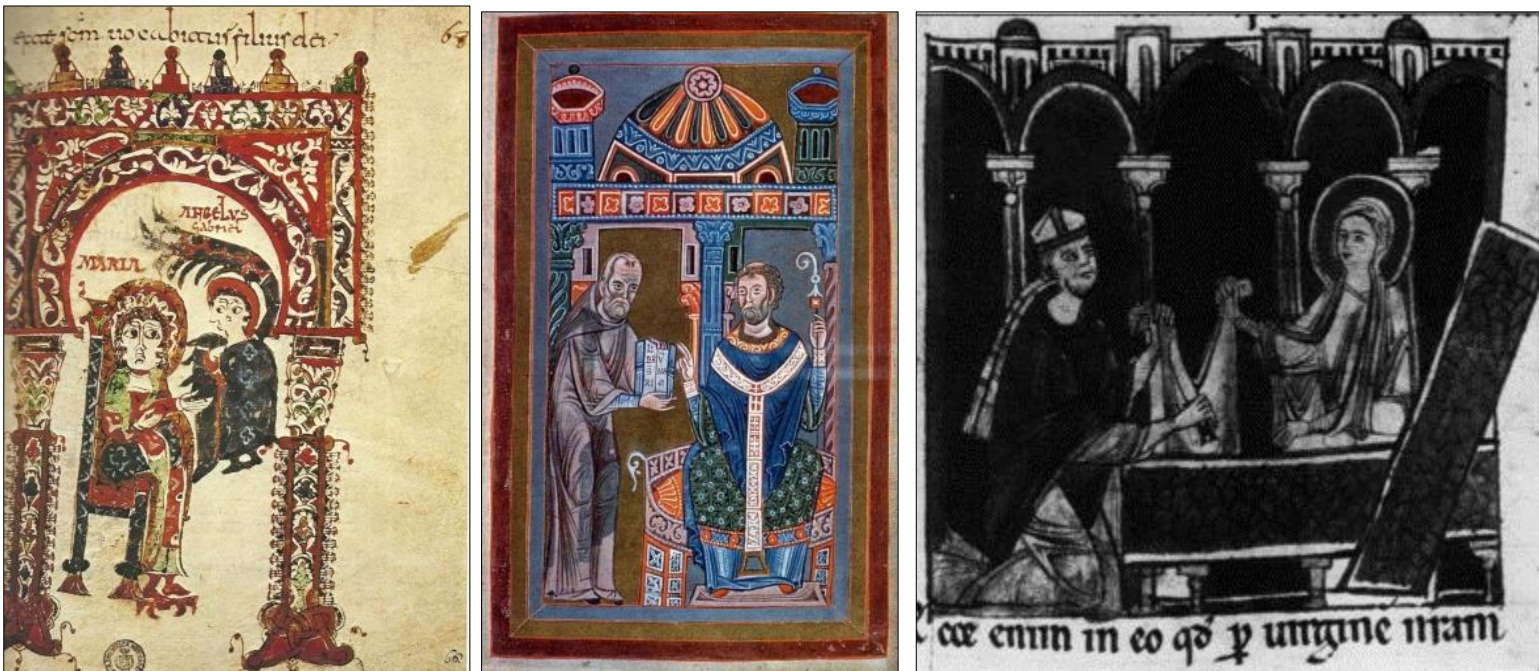
CAROLINGIAN  
'PRO'

ABRAHAM  
GODESCALC EPI

The next question is why did he write this text on the outside cover of the manuscript? Was it he who delivered it to his master Godescalc or who carried it with him back to Le Puy?

We now come to the heart of the manuscript itself, the souvenir from Godescalc's trip to Santiago. It contains three sections, a Prologue by Gomez explaining why the manuscript was

written for Godescalc; a history of the life of Ildefonus written by Julian of Toledo (one of Ildefonus's successors there), and third, the major work, the *De virginitate perpetua sancte Marie*. The manuscript is a beautiful one, large letters in a beautiful Visigothic script, and few abbreviations in Visigothic script that might confuse a northern user like Godescalc of Le Puy. Surprisingly there are no illustrations that one might expect in a manuscript made at Albelda with such great illustrators as Vigila and Sarracino present. We know that later manuscripts of the *De virginitate* were highly illustrated – the Ashburnham, Parma, and newly discovered Madrid manuscripts, but why not Gomez's manuscript? The reason probably is that Gomez had little time to complete the manuscript before Godescalc returned from Santiago in 951. But there are several beautiful interlace initials. Was it Gomez who made them, or could it have been Vigila, who had made similar initials in his Codex Albeldense? (**figure 17**)



**Figures 37, 38, 39** Florence Bibl. Laur. Ashb. 17, fol. 66r; Parma Bibl. Palat. 1650, fol. 102v; Madrid Bibl. Nac. de Esp. 21546, fol. 49r. Photos: author, Raitzman



We come first to the Prologue of Gomez, which may bear the influence of another famous scribe who early worked at Albelda before transferring to San Millan de la Cogolla, Jimenez.<sup>13</sup> Gomez says:<sup>14</sup> “I Gomez, although unworthy, in the priestly (or presbyteral) order, at the confines of Pamplona in the monastery of Albelda where rest the relics of the most blessed bishop Martin in the atrium of the monastery, under the order of sweet Dulquitus, abbot over 200 monks -- Bishop Godescalc, on his way to the extremities of Galicia with a large retinue to plead for the mercy of saint James, asked that I freely copy a little book by blessed Ildefonsus of Toledo written some time ago praising the virginity of holy Mary, perpetual virgin and the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Gomez goes on to say that it is Godescalc who wants to bring

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<sup>13</sup> M. C. Díaz y Díaz, ‘Escritores del monasterio de Alvelda. Vigilán y Sarracino’ in *Códice Albeldense, 976: Original Conservado en la Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (d.I.2) (Colección Scriptorium 15; Madrid, 2002) 78, and his Libros y Librerías en la Rioja altomedieval, (Logroño, 1991) 115 ff.*

<sup>14</sup> For the various attempts to edit this text see Léopold Victor Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, 1 (Paris, 1868), 516.f. (fol. 69v) Ego quidem Gomes, licet indignus, presbyterii tamen ordine functus, in finibus Panpilonae, Albauldense in arcisterio infra atrio sacro ferente reliquias sancti ac beatissimi Martini episcopi regulariter degens, sub regimine patris almi videlicet Dulquitti abbatatis (sic), inter agmina Christi servorum ducentorum fere monachorum, compulsus a Gotiscalco episcopo, qui gratis orandi egressus a partibus Aquitaniae devotione promptissima magno comitatu fultus ad finem Galleciae pergebat concitus, Dei misericordiam sanctique Jacobi apostoli suffragium humiliter imploraturus, libenter conscripsi (fol. 70r) libellum a beato Ildefonso, Toletanae sedis episcopo, dudum luculentissime editum, in quo continetur laudem virginitatis sanctae Mariae perpetuae virginis Jhesu Christ Domini Nostri genetricis, ubi predictus Ildefonsus episcopus, divino inspiramine afflatus, oraculis prophetarum inbutus, evangeliorum testimoniis roboratus, apostolorum documento instructus, celestium simul et terrenorum contestatione firmatus, gladio vervi Dei Jubeniani perfidiam vulneravit et pugione verissimae rationis Elbibii errorem destruxit: judeorum quoque durtiam non solum adstipulatione angelorum et hominum, sed etiam demonum prolata confessione, jugulavit. (fol. 70v) Jam vero quam dulcia quamque divino munere compta promiserit eloquia, quisquis in hoc libello sollerter legerit facile pervidebit, ex quo et credulus auriat suabitatem, et anceps reperiet unde a se procul reppellat erroris prabitatem. Unde extimo incunctanter ut pari gloria ditetur a Christo pontifex Gotiscalcus, qui hanc laudem genetricis Domini nunc Aquitaniae sanctae Mariae initio in propriam sedem specialiter advexit, sicut Ildefonsus episcopus, qui eam universe ecclesie catholice dudum generaliter tradidit, quia, etsi materia defuit laboris, equiperatur tamen sacra (fol. 71r) devotio retributione mercedis. Mici autem exiguo atque miserrimo Gomesani concedat Christus, gloriosae genetricis suae interventu placatus, hic emundari a sorde facinorum et post expletum vite hujus cursum cum sanctis omnibus in regno celorum perfrui gaudium feliciter sine fine mansurum. Amen. Transtulit enim hunc libellum sanctissimus (ras.) Gotiscalcus episcopus ex Spania ad Aquitaniam tempore iemis, diebus certis, januarii videlicet mensis, currente feliciter era DCCCC LXXX VIII, regnante Domino Nostro Jhesu Christo, qui cum Deo patre et sancto Spiritu unus Deus gloriatur in secula seculorum. Amen. Ipsis igitur diebus obit Galleciensis rex Ranimirus.

the praise of Mary to Aquitaine through this little book, just as Ildefonsus brought the glory of Mary to the world. At the end of the Prologue Gomez writes: “The most holy (erased) Bishop Godescalc has taken this little book out of Spain to Aquitaine in winter time, precisely in January of the year 951 (989 acc. to the Spanish calendar).” This is a remarkable Prologue filled with unusual historical references. At the end of it when he called Bishop Godescalc the most holy, the word “most holy” (*sanctissimus*) has been erased, probably by Godescalc himself, not wishing to be referred to in such high praise. **(figure 31)**

After this Prologue Gomez copies the text of Julian of Toledo on the life of Ildefonsus, and in this the works of Ildefonsus are listed, including the *De virginitate sanctae Mariae*. Thereafter follows the Preface and text of the *De virginitate* down to the recto folio on which the text breaks off in mid-sentence.

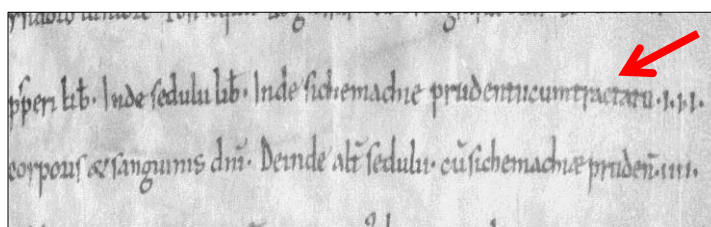
So, in January 951 Bishop Godescalc appears to have picked up his handsome manuscript from Gomez to take back to Le Puy to spread abroad the glory of the Virgin Mary. There is an illustration of that famous scene showing Gomez giving the manuscript to Godescalc in the Parma Ildefonsus. **(figure 37)**

What happened to the manuscript along the way back to Le Puy is shrouded in mystery. Did Godescalc stop along the way to have other scribes copy it, or did he go directly back to Le Puy? Did he keep the manuscript at Le Puy or loan it out for others to copy? Did he keep it as a separate manuscript or did he keep or combine it with other short manuscripts? We know that by the seventeenth century it was combined with two other short manuscripts, one with the famous *De corpore et sanguine Christi* by the ninth-century theologian (also a Mariologue) Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie, whose works at times in manuscripts were listed as Ildefonsus.<sup>15</sup> The other

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<sup>15</sup> On this see my “Christ’s Money,” p. 26, n. 32.

short manuscript with which the Ildefonsus text was combined was a tract on the making of Eucharistic hosts and how they were to be laid out on the altar, which in other manuscripts was attributed to Ildefonsus or a mysterious Bishop Eldefonsus of Spain.<sup>16</sup> At any event, there still exists an eleventh-century catalog of books at Le Puy. Unfortunately the catalog lists mainly books of science, not theology. But there is one small entry that perhaps indicates that our Ildefonsus manuscript was combined with the *De corpore et sanguine* of Radbertus. The little intruded text says “tractatu corporis et sanguinis domini.”

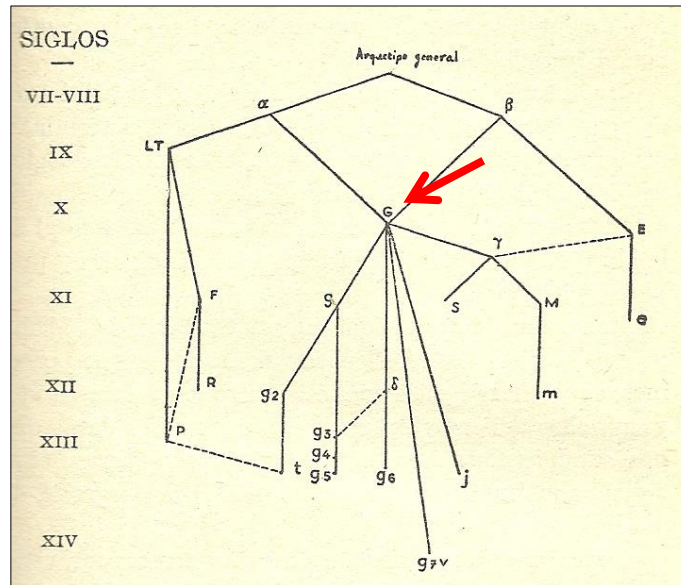


**Figure 40** Paris BNF lat. 7581, fol. 59r. Photo: author

But whatever, the Godescalc’s manuscript was copied multiple time by scribes in Europe – including the Prologue by Gomez. In fact, there are fourteen manuscripts still extant that have the Ildefonsus text with the Gomez Prologue.

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<sup>16</sup> On this see my “Christ’s Money.”



**Figure 41** V. B. García San Ildefonso, *De virginitate beatae Mariae*, p. 31, G (Gomez) and its derivatives

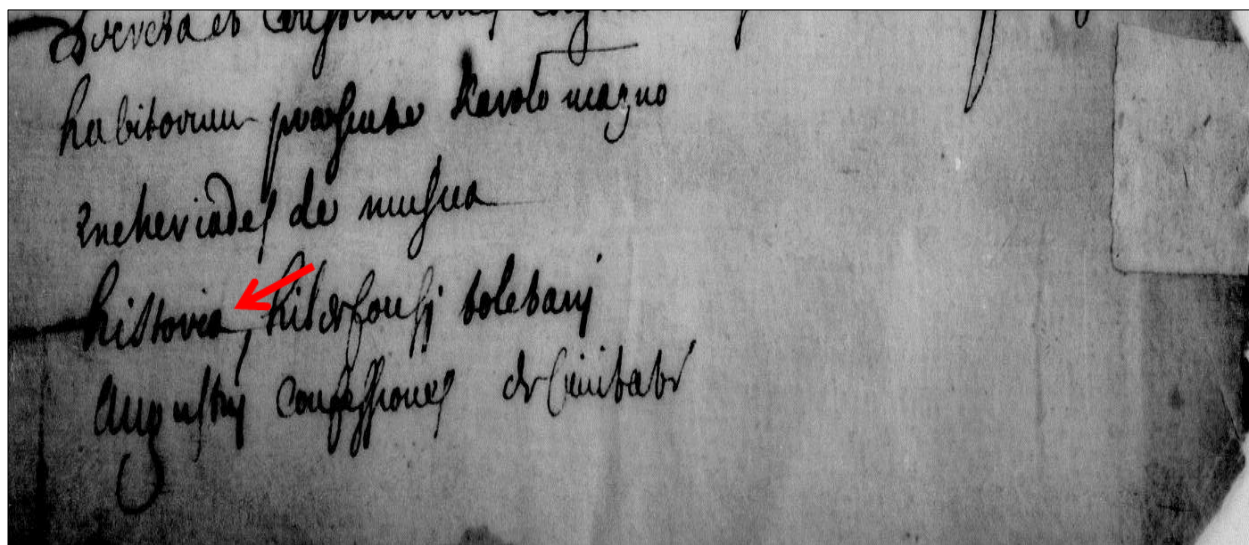
Two of these seem to have been directly or one copy away from the Gomez text without the final section, but these two added the missing text likely from a Spanish source.<sup>17</sup> Hence, Godescalc's wish that the fame of the Virgin through the text of Ildefonsus was abundantly fulfilled.

The manuscript itself appears to have been kept in Le Puy throughout the later Middle Ages and into the early modern period. We again hear about it from a list of manuscripts at Le Puy by the Maurist bibliophile, Dom Claude Estiennot, who was in regular contact with the great

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<sup>17</sup> Madrid, Bibl. Nac. de Esp. 10087 and Paris, BNF lat. 2833, on which see Meyer Schapiro, *The Parma Ildefonsus: a Romanesque illuminated manuscript from Cluny, and related works*, (College Art Association of America, 1964) 62, n. 269. It has been argued that Toledo Bibl. Cap. 15-13 (Codex Ameliano of 1388) was directly copied from Paris 2855 with the conclusion of the Ildefonsus text. How this could have been is a mystery since the 2855 text ends on the recto side of the folio and on the verso is the exorcism. Also it would have meant that 2855 was taken to Toledo from Le Puy to have been copied. On this see Julian Cantera Orive in <http://www.vallenajerilla.com/berceo/canteraorive/gotescalco.htm>

Benedictine diplomatist and paleographer, Dom Jean Mabillon.<sup>18</sup> This list by Estiennot was sent to another great bibliophile in Paris, the politician and lawyer, Étienne Baluze, who was also the librarian for Cardinal Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a famous and wealthy collector of manuscripts and Minister of Finances of France. The list of Estiennot still exists in Paris and in it there is listed the history of Ildefonsus of Toledo, likely our manuscript with the tract of Ildefonsus.

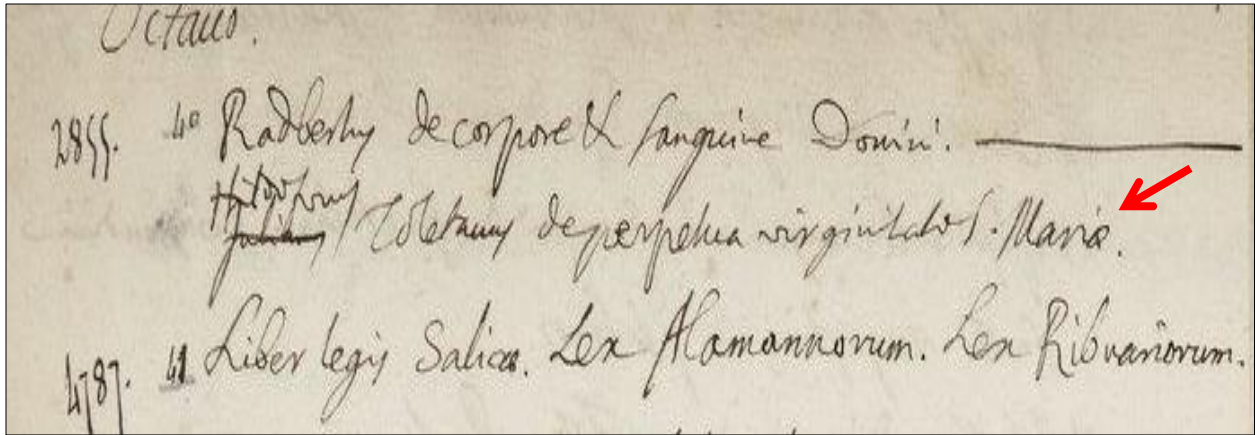


**Figure 42** Mss of Le Puy by Dom Estiennot, PARIS BNF Lat. 13068, fol. 10 r. Photo: author

There were, it was reported, forty-nine manuscripts sent to Paris for Cardinal Colbert's library,<sup>19</sup> and our manuscript is noted in the Baluze's inventory of manuscripts of Colbert from Le Puy dated 5 August 1681.

<sup>18</sup> On Estiennot, Mabillon and Paris 2855, see my "Christ's Money" p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> See Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, 1.473.



**Figure 43** Baluze Inventory of Mss from Le Puy, Paris BNF Lat. 9364, fol. 72v. Photo: author

Our manuscript in three parts was bound in a handsome leather cover with Colbert's golden seal imprinted on it. (**fig. 7**) The manuscript was eventually left to Colbert's grandson who gave it to the Royal Collection. The first page of the manuscript bears several notations. (**fig. 8**) The first is Colbert's number 3682. Then there is the Royal collection number Regius 4337.<sup>53</sup> But most interesting is the notation: Godescalc, thereby acknowledging its ancient origin.

In his list of manuscripts at Le Puy Dom Estienne listed many more than came to Cardinal Colbert. Quite a few seem to have been kept by the canons at Le Puy. Most of these, it is thought, likely perished during the French Revolution in the attacks on Le Puy and the cathedral, when the statue of the Black Madonna was profaned, tried, beheaded, and burned. Hence, it was most fortunate that our Godescalc manuscript had gone to Paris to be preserved there in the Royal Library. For a modern pilgrim to Santiago to hold this manuscript in his hands now is a thrilling and moving experience in light of the fascinating history surrounding its creation and travels for over a millennium.