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Reassessing Spanish Chronicle Writing before 900: The Tradition of Compilation in Oviedo at the End of the Ninth Century

Rodrigo Furtado

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This paper is a contribution to the origins of Spanish medieval historiography. I analyze two collections: the collection copied in the 'Soriensis' manuscript, most probably lost in a fire in 1671, and the so-called *Chronica Albeldensis*. I defend that shortly before the year 900 in Oviedo, Spain, from where both these collections originate, there was an interest in an easily readable kind of 'universal history' based on compilations of previous texts. These compilations were still modelled upon Eusebius-Jerome's *Chronicon*, but they already supposed a great freedom in the handling of those previous texts, revealing great difficulty in understanding history as synchronic. They also formed an authentic historical canon subject to continuous additions and redesigns, becoming the backbone of Medieval Spanish compilatory historiography until at least the thirteenth century.

During one of the most renowned Spoleto congresses, in 1970, Jocelyn N. Hillgarth spoke about Visigothic historiography. He contended that 'Spanish historians created no new models in historical writing'.¹ This was a strong statement. He argued that, if the concept of historiography was to be too narrowly considered, one would be forced to limit Visigothic historical writing to only five texts, including Isidore's *De viris illustribus*, which is a collection of very short biographies, following Suetonius' literary model.² Hillgarth did not develop his study beyond 711; however, it is unlikely he would have changed his mind even if he had done it.

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**REASSESSING SPANISH CHRONICLE-WRITING BEFORE 900:
THE TRADITION OF COMPILATION IN OVIEDO AT THE END OF THE NINTH CENTURY***

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Abstract

This paper is a contribution to the origins of Spanish medieval historiography. I analyze two collections: the collection copied in the 'Soriensis' manuscript, most probably lost in a fire in 1671, and the so-called *Chronica Albeldensis*. I defend that shortly before the year 900 in Oviedo, Spain, where both these collections derive from, there was an interest in an easily readable kind of 'universal history' based on compilations of previous texts. These compilations were still modelled upon Eusebius/Jerome's *Chronicon*, but they already supposed a great freedom in the handling of those previous texts, revealing great difficulty in understanding history as synchronic. They also formed an authentic historical canon subject to continuous additions and redesigns, becoming the backbone of Medieval Spanish compilatory historiography until at least the thirteenth century.

During one of the most renowned Spoleto congresses, in 1970, Jocelyn N. Hillgarth spoke about Visigothic historiography. He contended that 'Spanish historians created no new models in historical writing'.¹ This was a strong statement. He argued that, if the concept of historiography was to be too narrowly considered, one would be forced to limit Visigothic historical writing to only five texts, including Isidore's *De viris illustribus*, which is a collection of very short biographies, following Suetonius' literary model.² Hillgarth did not develop his study beyond 711; however, it is unlikely he would have changed his mind even if he had done it.

At the same meeting, M. C. Díaz y Díaz identified some Spanish circles interested in historical writing between 711 and 1000, 'though their members did not always feel strong enough to write it down'.³ It is common to consider that, despite Isidore's historical texts, Spain possessed no such historical works as Gregory of Tours's for Gaul, Bede's for Britain, or Paul the Deacon's for the Lombard Italy.⁴ For instance, in Spain after Isidore's *Chronica*, it seems that no one felt sufficiently confident to write a new universal chronicle starting with Adam. In fact, lack of originality and literary talent are sometimes considered

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¹ Hillgarth (1970: 262).

² Hillgarth (1970: 261).

³ Díaz y Díaz (1976a: 234).

⁴ Cf. Hillgarth (1970: 262).

key characteristics of Iberian historiography. Maybe Spanish people did not like history, or they did not know how to write it, or they simply preferred to spend time and resources on other issues.

Nevertheless, Spanish history writing is not an absolute vacuum. Spanish people did write history, used it for political reasons, and interpreted it in religious terms. Signs of this can be observed in a phenomenon which, though not only characteristic of the Spanish area of influence, came to affect its entire medieval historical writing: the making of compilations.

1. The origins of a Spanish compilation tradition.

The roots of a Spanish compilation tradition can be traced back farther into Late Antiquity and Imperial Constantinople. In the 570s, a Spanish émigré called John, born in Scallabis (now Santarém, Portugal), found in Constantinople a Latin chronicle written by a certain Victor,⁵ bishop of the unknown African city of Tunnuna but probably exiled in the Imperial capital as a consequence of the Three Chapters religious affair.⁶ We do not know for sure if they had met. What we do know is that when John came back to Spain, 'Graeca et Latina eruditione nutritus' (so Isidore says),⁷ he brought with him a copy of Victor's *Chronicon*.

Back in Spain, John became well known: he founded a monastery in Biclár and became bishop of Girona after the third Council of Toledo.⁸ Strongly impressed by this event and by the conversion to Catholic Christianity that it institutionalised, he decided to update Victor's *Chronicon* until 589/590 in order to explain it.⁹ In the *De viris illustribus*, Isidore states that John 'added to a book of chronicles a very useful history written in a historical and structured style'¹⁰ – it seems that John simply decided to add a new quire with its own text to the codex he had brought from Constantinople. In fact, in all the manuscripts we have today, Victor's and John's *Chronica* have always been copied together: all copies may derive from a single codex copied in 602, probably by a monk from the monastery of Biclár or by John himself.¹¹ This codex included Victor's and John's *Chronica*, as well as *marginalia* from some *Consularia Caesaraugustana*.¹²

⁵ CPL 2260.

⁶ Placanica (1989); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 101*-02*; 108*).

⁷ *De uiris illustribus*, 31: 'brought up in the Greek and Latin culture'.

⁸ Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 124*-28*).

⁹ CPL 2261.

¹⁰ Is. *uir*. 31: 'addidit et in libro Chronicorum ... historico compositoque sermone ualde utilem historiam'.

¹¹ Díaz y Díaz (1976b: 127).

¹² CPL 2267; Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 115*-24*). See also Jiménez Sánchez (2007).

There may have been some precedents: at least Hydatius of Chaves, in northeastern *Gallaecia*, had already intended to complete Eusebius/Jerome's *Chronicon* (even if we do not know if this also meant the addition of a quire with Hydatius' follow-up to the codex with Jerome's Latin *Chronicon*). That 'Biclar compilation' supposes a singular understanding of the past: modelled on Eusebius/Jerome's interpretation of the successive *translationes imperii*, John's *Chronicon* presented the Visigothic kingdom of Reccared (586–601) as the successor of the Roman Empire in Spain. Thus, to Victor's *Chronicon*, whose last part was about the neo-imperial world of Justinian, John added a second small *Chronicon* in which the Visigothic king was seen as a kind of substitute for the emperor in Spain, thereby completely refocusing the Imperial perspective of Victor's text. The way John finished his *Chronicon* is very significant: by eventually eliminating the heresy of Arianism, king Reccared had played in the III Council of Toledo the role taken by Constantine the Great in Nicaea.¹³

In 615, a copy of this Biclar compilation was in Seville. Isidore used Victor's *Chronicon* in his own *Chronicon*¹⁴ and especially in the *Historia Wandalorum*,¹⁵ as well as in the *De viris illustribus*.¹⁶ He also used John's *Chronicon* in his *Chronica*, in the *Historia Gothorum* and in the *Historia Sueuorum*.¹⁷ Finally, he incorporated fragments of the *Consularia Caesaraugustana* in the *Historia Gothorum*.¹⁸

In eighth-century Mozarabic Spain, the anonymous author of the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* also knew these texts. Starting in 601, after Reccared's death, this new *Chronicon* intended to update Victor's and John's *Chronica* with a new text based on Eastern Mediterranean sources and centred on Byzantine and Muslim events up to the eighth century.¹⁹ This new chronological structure was a meaning building tool by itself, conditioning the interpretation of the successive texts as a whole. In fact, this system of adding new texts to an earlier universal chronicle shaped an alternative but still recognizable kind of 'universal chronicle'.

In order to analyze this phenomenon, I will concentrate on two Spanish manuscripts: the lost 'Soriensis' manuscript and Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Aemilianensis 39, Part II, fols. 245vb-258ra. They prove that in Spain, shortly before the

¹³ Hillgarth (1970: 281-83); Teillet (1984: 449-55); Galán Sánchez (1994: 166-68); Collins (2001: 145-47); Ferreiro (2008 [2010]).

¹⁴ CPL 1205.

¹⁵ CPL 1204.

¹⁶ CPL 1206.

¹⁷ Both CPL 1204.

¹⁸ Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 114*, 141*). See also Codoñer Merino (1964: 73-77); Rodríguez Alonso (1975: 87-91, 96-99); Martín (2003: 32*-33*).

¹⁹ Edited by Gil Fernández (1973: 7-14); see also Ayllet (2009).

year 900, there was a genuine interest in this easily readable kind of ‘universal history’, cherished by a few literate monks of a remote, small but rather dynamic region.

2. The Soriensis manuscript.

2.1 The codex.

The Soriensis manuscript was one of the five codices brought by Jorge de Beteta y Cárdenas from Soria (hence its name) in 1578 to enrich king Philip II’s library in his new huge monastery-palace of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. Here it had the manuscript number VI E 28. Regrettably, it was lost in the fire of 7 June 1671.²⁰ All authors that saw it agree that the Soriensis was a *vetustissimus codex* (vc) written in Visigothic script (*Gothicus*).²¹

Manuscripts Palencia, Archivo Catedralicio 37, fols. 297v-298r, which transmits the list of books taken by Beteta to El Escorial, and Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale 1284, fol. 131r, with the inventory of the books that came to the Escorial between 5 May and 2 July 1576, reveal the contents of this codex: it transmitted the Iberian *Genealogiae Bibliorum*, which were usually transmitted with the Beati, the *Chronica Adefonsis III ad Sebastianum* (Díaz 519), the *Chronica* of Eusebius/Jerome (CPG 2494), Prosper of Aquitaine (CPL 2257-58), Victor of Tununa (CPL 2260), with the *Consularia Caesaraugustana* (CPL 2267), and John of Biclar (CPL 2261; Díaz 42), the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* (Díaz 386), an *incerti auctoris de Diis gentium*,²² an *Historia Troie capte* (Dares Phrygius’ *De bello Troiano*?²³), a [*Nomina*] *regum Romanorum*, the *Liber historiae Francorum* (CPL 1316), Isidore’s *Historiae* (CPL 1204; Díaz 117-20), Julian of Toledo’s *Historia Wambae* (CPL 1262; Díaz 238-39, 264-65), the *Laterculus regum Visigothorum* (CPL 1266, Díaz 214, 405), Festus’ *De breuiario rerum gestarum populi Romani*, an unknown *De inundatione Nile* by Dometius Creticus, the *Ordo annorum mundi* (CPL 1266b) and Isidore’s *Chronicon ‘imperfectum’*.²⁴

Juan Bautista Pérez Rupert (c.1534–1597) saw this Soriensis manuscript and copied some of its texts into a codex of his own, later bequeathed to the Cathedral of Segorbe, where Pérez died as a bishop. His codex was deposited in the Chapter Archive of Segorbe, where it had the manuscript number ‘*arma. G, est. I*’. Unfortunately, most of the archive

²⁰ Andrés (1976).

²¹ Bautista (2016).

²² Bautista (2016: 40) suggests that this unknown text could be *Is. or.* 8.9.

²³ It was transmitted in Spain by the manuscript Madrid BN 8831 (11th c. *ex.*-12th c. *in.*). This version is close to the so-called ‘vulgate’ text, represented by manuscripts mainly from the North of France, England and Germany; the *De bello Troiano* does not seem to have circulated before in Spain.

²⁴ Bautista (2016: 39-41).

was also destroyed in 1938, during the Spanish Civil War. Early photographs of Pérez' lost codex are preserved today in the archive of the 'Biblioteca del Instituto de Historia del CSIC', in Madrid, as part of the Fondo Fotográfico Sánchez-Albornoz, now in the Biblioteca Tomás Navarro Tomás.

Directly from the Soriensis, Pérez copied the *Chronica* of Isidore, the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*, the *Chronica Adefonsi III* 'ad Sebastianum' (Díaz 520), the [*Nomina regum Romanorum*] (Díaz 514), the *Historia Wambae* of Julian of Toledo (CPL 1260), the *Ordo annorum mundi* of the ps-Julian of Toledo (CPL 1266b) and the *Laterculus regum Visigothorum* (CPL 2266); and he also used the Soriensis codex to collate Victor's and John's *Chronica* and Isidore's *Historiae*.²⁵

Jerónimo Zurita (1512–1580) also used the Soriensis. In a codex that had belonged to Juan Páez de Castro († c.1570), recently identified by Francisco Bautista as manuscript København, Det Arnsmagnæanske, Københavns Universitet, AM 833 4^o, Zurita added many notes and some texts taken from a 'corrected copy of an old codex of the royal library, copied 500 years ago in Gothic script' (fol. 120r).²⁶ Bautista identifies that old manuscript as the Soriensis. From this codex, Zurita copied the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*, the *Laterculus regum Visigothorum* and the *Historia Wambae*. He also collated Isidore's *Historiae* using the Soriensis.²⁷

Ambrosio de Morales (1518–1591) also refers to the Soriensis in some *marginalia* of the manuscript Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 1346 (cf. fols. 11v, 14r, 16r, 18r, 25r), using it to collate the *Chronica Adefonsi III* 'ad Sebastianum', the *Laterculus regum Visigothorum* and the *Historia Wambae*.

García de Loaysa y Girón (1534–1599) mentions it in his 1593 edition of Isidore's *Chronica*,²⁸ and Juan de Mariana (1536–1624) in his anthology, now London, British Library, MS Egerton 1873.²⁹

2.2 The Bicular collection in the Soriensis manuscript.

The Soriensis transmitted the *Eusebii Chronicon cum additionibus Hieronymi et Prosperi*,³⁰ followed by the Bicular collection: Victor of Tununa's and John of Bicular's

²⁵ Villanueva (1804); Mommsen (1894: 165-66); Díaz y Díaz (1976b: 130-33); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 13*-14*).

²⁶ 'ex uetustissimo codice regię bibliothecę ante D annos litteris gothicis descripto emmendatum exemplar'

²⁷ Bautista (2016: 12-13).

²⁸ Page 95, col. a: 'in exemplari autem Soriensi, quod omnium antiquissimus est' ('in the Soriensis manuscript, which is the most ancient manuscript of all').

²⁹ He probably used one of Pérez's copies.

Chronica, already with the inclusion of some marginalia of the *Consularia Caesaraugustana*.³¹ This same exact structure was preserved by other medieval manuscripts as well: a codex of the twelfth century from the monastery of Alcobaça, Portugal;³² another twelfth-century codex seen by García Loaysa and by Andreas Schott (1553–1638) at the end of the sixteenth century in Guadalajara, and referred to by Cardelle de Hartmann as ‘codex Toletanus’;³³ a thirteenth-century codex that was in the Chapter Archive of Burgo de Osma (Soria) in the sixteenth century;³⁴ a working codex of Florian de Ocampo (1499–1555);³⁵ and the mid-thirteenth century Spanish codex, probably from Toledo, which is now the manuscript Madrid, Biblioteca Histórica Marqués de Valdecilla-Universidad Complutense, 134.³⁶ Only the last one has survived.

As far as the *Chronicon* of Eusebius/Jerome is concerned, at least the Complutense 134, the Alcobaciensis and the Toletanus manuscripts derive from the same codex where the full *Chronicon* could still be read.³⁷ For his own edition of Eusebius/Jerome’s *Chronicon*, Arnaud de Pontac († 1605) used the notes taken by Schott, who saw the Toletanus, in 1583. It transmitted the full *Chronicon*.³⁸ The Alcobaciensis and the Complutense 134 transmitted only an epitome of the Roman history instead, which must have been made quite late, since the index copied in the Complutense 134 (fol. 2r) still indicates that its model had the full *Chronicon*: *Cronica Eusebii Cesarensis de veteri et nouo testamento*.

We have the complete text of Prosper’s *Chronicon* in manuscript Complutense 134 (fols. 14vb-17va) and some sparse references taken from the lost Alcobaciensis and Toletanus manuscripts. They suffice to confirm that these three manuscripts derived from the same African model with the edition of 455 of Prosper’s text.³⁹

The *Chronica* of Eusebius/Jerome and Prosper of Aquitaine transmitted by the Soriensis manuscript were copied neither by Pérez nor by any other author. However, fortunately Pérez copied at least a short list of consuls, which he had found *in manuscripto*

³⁰ Mommsen (1894: 165).

³¹ Villanueva (1804: 197-98).

³² Nascimento (1979).

³³ Pontac (1604: 27); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 21*-22*, 86-87*).

³⁴ Villanueva (1804: 198); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 20*-21*). Bautista (2016: 22) suggests that the Toletanus and the codex from Burgo de Osma may be the same.

³⁵ Villanueva (1804: 198, 199-200; 216-17); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 22*-23*); Bautista (2016: 23-26).

³⁶ Ewald (1881: 323-27); Mommsen (1894: 167-72); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 27*-38*, 85*-89*).

³⁷ Furtado (in press).

³⁸ Pontac (1604: 27).

³⁹ Mommsen (1894: 486-87); Pontac (1604: col. 786). I am now preparing a paper about this version of Prosper’s *Chronica*, in which I develop these conclusions.

Gothico [= Soriensis] in *fine additionis Prosperi Aquitanici*.⁴⁰ This addition is in fact the same short *consularia* of 444–455 that had been added in 455 to Prosper's *Chronicon*.⁴¹ It was the only part of this text that Pérez copied to his own codex. It plainly confirms that the Soriensis had the same text also transmitted by the Complutense 134 (see fols. 17rb-va).

Isidore of Seville says that Victor's text was a universal *Chronica a principio mundi*.⁴² However, no manuscript known today, including the Soriensis (used by Pérez), transmitted Victor's complete universal *Chronicon*. In the Soriensis, in the Alcobaciensis and in the Complutense 134 manuscripts, Victor's *Chronicon* only starts in 444 and there is no trace of its first part.⁴³ In all these manuscripts, Eusebius/Jerome's and Prosper's *Chronica* appear before this 'truncated' version of Victor's *Chronicon* instead. Thus, already in the model of all these codices, the first part of Victor's *Chronicon* had already been replaced by Eusebius/Jerome's and Prosper's own texts.⁴⁴ As a consequence, it is evident that the Soriensis and the other manuscripts derive from the same ancient model. It transmitted Eusebius/Jerome's, Prosper of Aquitaine's, Victor of Tununa's and John of Biclar's *Chronica*. This model must have been produced not in Biclar, but only after Victor's and John's *Chronica* had arrived at Seville, since Isidore still knew Victor's full text, and before the tradition of these texts had split in two branches, in Mozarabic Spain (see above). Seville, where Isidore had and used extensively both Eusebius/Jerome's and Prosper's *Chronica*, must have been a good place to make this replacement. This new *Liber chronicorum* did not change its main thread: it was in fact a unique narrative of world history, where each *Chronicon*, by intending to complete the former one, updated the facts since the last date of the last *Chronicon* up to the present of the new text.

2.3. The *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* and the Mozarabic collection.

⁴⁰ 'in the Gothic manuscript, after the additions to Prosper of Aquitaine's *Chronica*'. Madrid, Fondo Fotográfico, photographs 191 and 192 (= fols. 117v and 118r).

⁴¹ Prosp. *Chron.* 1351-1354 (ed. Mommsen); Mommsen (1892: 487, 'Continuatio Alcobaciensis'). About Prosper's editions, see Mommsen (1892: 345-47), and also Muhlberger (1986); Humphries (1996).

⁴² Is. *uir.* 25.

⁴³ Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 101*-02*; 108*).

⁴⁴ I do not think that Isidore misinterpreted Eusebius/Jerome's and Prosper's *Chronicles* as a kind of first part of Victor's *Chronica* as posited by Mommsen (1894: 179-80); Reydellet (1970: 368-69); Cardelle de Hartmann (2001: 102*-06*). In fact, Isidore knew them very well and made extensive use of both Eusebius/Jerome's and Prosper's *Chronica*. Moreover, in the Complutense 134, Alcobaciensis or Toletanus manuscripts, the *Chronica* of Eusebius/Jerome does not start *a principio mundi* as Victor's did, according to Isidore.

All manuscripts of Victor's and John's *Chronica* have also transmitted Isidore's *Chronica* and *Historiae*, in their typically Spanish 'intermediate' and 'mixed' versions. Theodor Mommsen and Díaz y Díaz suggested that Isidore's texts would also have been added to the compilation in Seville.⁴⁵

According to Díaz, in Mozarabic Spain the compiler of the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* would have known this 'Sevillian collection' and added his own text to it, thus forming a new anthology.⁴⁶ It would have been the model of the Soriensis manuscript.

In my opinion another interpretation is more accurate. As I said before, starting in 601 with the death of Reccared, the *Byzantia-Arabica* was conceived as an update of Victor's and John's *Chronica*. Both of these texts treated the history of the Eastern Mediterranean, and this was a region that also interested the anonymous compiler of the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*. He also knew and used Isidore's *Historia Gothorum* for Sisebut's and Suinthila's reigns but he did not intend in any way to complete it. Also, he does not seem to have known Isidore's *Chronica* at all; at least he did not use it.⁴⁷ Since the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* intended to complete John's *Chronicon*, and not Isidore's texts, I assume that the Biclár collection must have reached the Mozarabic world without Isidore's historical works.

Therefore, I do not think that Mommsen (and Díaz after him) was right in supposing that in the model of the Soriensis manuscript Isidore's *Chronica* and *Historiae* were copied between John's text and the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*.⁴⁸ In fact, Mommsen's hypothesis simply follows the chronological order of the texts. If the compiler of the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* decided to complete John's *Chronicon*, it is reasonable to assume that Isidore's historical texts had been added to the collection only after the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* and not before, otherwise the compiler would have completed Isidore's *Chronica* or Isidore's *Historiae* instead. This is confirmed by the Soriensis manuscript itself, in which, according to the two inventories of the second half of the sixteenth century, the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* are listed just after John's *Chronicon*, but long before Isidore's texts.

Even in Complutense 134, which is the only surviving manuscript of the Soriensis family, Isidore's texts were not copied immediately after John's *Chronicon*. In fact, in this manuscript, between John's text and Isidore's *Chronica* and *Historiae*, an African-Italian-Gaulese set of chronographic notes, epitomes and other small chronicles was copied (fols.

⁴⁵ Mommsen (1894: 165-67); Díaz y Díaz (1976b: 130-33).

⁴⁶ Díaz y Díaz (1976b: 130-33).

⁴⁷ Díaz y Díaz (1976b: 132, n.36).

⁴⁸ Mommsen (1894: 165-66).

25v-47r),⁴⁹ thus confirming that Isidore's *Chronica* and *Historiae* were not intrinsically associated with that compilation.

Furthermore, the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* is missing from Complutensis 134. This text was not copied in the lost codex Alcobaciensis either, nor in the Toletanus or in the manuscript of Burgo de Osma. In its place, a better known text appears in all these manuscripts: the *Chronica Muzarabica a. 754*. The *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* was only copied in the Soriensis manuscript. Therefore, it transmits an independent branch of the Biclár collection, to which the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* and then Isidore's historical texts were added, perhaps in Toledo or in some other Mozarabic center; in another branch, the African-Italian-Gaulese anthology was added to the Biclár collection, thus forming the *Liber chronicorum* preserved in Complutense 134⁵⁰; and then later, some copyist decided to add to the collection Isidore's historical texts and the *Chronica Muzarabica a. 754* too (this was the model of the Complutense 134 and other manuscripts).

2.4. The model of the Soriensis manuscript: the Ovetensis collection.

'Ex codice Gotthico Soriensi' Pérez copied the [*Nomina*] *Regum Romanorum*.⁵¹ Villanueva did not identify it. Hence, Mommsen did not include it in his reconstruction of the Soriensis manuscript. This list is a shorter version of the *Ordo regum Romanorum* included in Oviedo in the *Chronica Albeldensis*: Bautista suggested that it was the source used by this *Ordo*.⁵² In fact, these *Nomina* are a simple list of names of the Roman kings and emperors up to Tiberius III (698–705), with the length of each reign, but never mentioning the Visigothic kings, as the *Ordo* does. These *Nomina* attribute to Tiberius III a reign of only one year, so they may have been composed around 700.

The same can be said about the Visigothic royal list (*laterculus*) also copied in Soriensis. It also ends in 700. This list provides the precise date of king Vitiza's rise to power: *unctus est autem Vitiza in regno die quod fuit XVII. Kal. decemb'*.⁵³ This information was almost literally quoted in manuscript Madrid, *RAH Aem.* 78, fol. 186, which transmits the Ovetensis *Chronica Prophetica*, composed in April 883: '*unctus est in regno Uitiza die XVIII kalendas Decembris ..., era DCCLII*'. This is very important because it proves that this *Laterculus* was in Oviedo in 883, when the *Chronica Prophetica* was composed.

⁴⁹ See Furtado (2016a).

⁵⁰ Furtado (2016a).

⁵¹ Madrid, Fondo Fotográfico, photograph 406 (= fol. 245v).

⁵² Bautista (2015).

⁵³ Transl.: 'Vitiza was anointed as king in the 17th day before the Kalends of December'. Cf. Villanueva (1804: 322); Gil Fernández (1978-1979: 67-68); Furtado (2016b: 81-82).

The *Ordo annorum mundi* transmitted by Soriensis and copied by Pérez was also used in Oviedo, in the 12th century, by Pelagius, in his *Liber chonicorum*.

The same happens with the *Liber historiae Francorum*, composed in Gaul in 727: apart from this copy in the Soriensis manuscript, its presence in Spain is also atested in Pelagius of Oviedo's *Liber Chroniconum*.⁵⁴

Festus's *Breuiarium* was also known in Oviedo: it was copied in El Escorial R.II.18, fols. 35r-44r, a manuscript that came to Asturias in 882-883, brought from the South.

The *Historia Wambae* was also in Oviedo during the final quarter of the ninth century: the *Chronica Adefonsis III* (also from 883) and the *Ordo gentis Gothorum* inserted into the *Chronica Albeldensis* used it.⁵⁵ This *Historia* was still in Oviedo in the first half of the twelfth century, because it was copied in Pelagius of Oviedo's *scriptorium* into a lost manuscript seen in the sixteenth century by Morales and Mauro Castellá Ferrer (1567-1612).⁵⁶

It cannot be known for sure when all these texts were added to the collection: the fact that they were all used in Oviedo may indicate that either most of them had already been gathered together before their arrival, in a Mozarabic centre, as Bautista has argued,⁵⁷ or that they were all present in Oviedo where they could have been added to the collection.

The Ovetensis *Chronica Adefonsi III* in its version 'to Sebastian' was also copied in the Soriensis manuscript. Since, apart from Soriensis, this version 'to Sebastian' has only circulated in manuscripts related to the scriptorium of bishop Pelayo of Oviedo, it was certainly in Asturias that this *Chronicon* was also added to the collection.

In the Soriensis manuscript, the *Chronica Adefonsi III* was not copied after Isidore's *Historiae* or Julian's *Historia Wambae*, but almost at the beginning of the manuscript, just after the *Genealogiae biblicae*. Still, in this version 'to Sebastian', the *Chronica Adefonsi III* presents itself as an update of the *Historia Gothorum*, in a version amplified until king Wamba.⁵⁸ Zurita noted that in Soriensis the *Historia Wambae* was copied just after Isidore's *Historia Gothorum*. If so, as Bautista suggested,⁵⁹ Isidore's *Historiae* were probably copied with the following sequence *Historia Wandalorum* + *Sueuorum* +

⁵⁴ Bautista (2011: 72-73)

⁵⁵ Gil Fernández (1985: 76, 98).

⁵⁶ See Cifuentes (1793: 103); Flórez (1765: 97), and cf. Madrid, BN 1237, fol. 1v: 'nostrorum pontificum Isidori, Ildelfonsi, Iulliani, Idacii atque Sebastiani Salmanticensis historias gothicis characteribus scriptas inveni' (Castellá's manuscript).

⁵⁷ Bautista (2016: 42-45).

⁵⁸ *Chronica Adefonsis III, ad Seb.*, 1a.

⁵⁹ Bautista (2016: 53).

Gothorum, as they were also copied in the Ovetensis collection of the manuscript Madrid, RAH Aem. 78.⁶⁰

By intending to complete Isidore's text expanded up to Wamba, the *Chronica Adefonsi III* was still repeating what John of Biclar and the Mozarabic compiler of the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* had done before: it was seeking to make clear a new process of *translatio regni*, this time from the Visigothic to the Asturian kingdom, well in accordance with the dominant ideology of Oviedo in the end of the ninth century.⁶¹

At the same time, the anonymous author of the *Chronica Adefonsi III* expected the ultimate victory of Oviedo over the Muslims. Therefore, this *Chronica* not only sought to continue Isidore's *Historiae*, but to present Oviedo as a kind of climax of history, already pointing to a post-Islamic period. Somehow, the *translatio regni* programme already found in Biclar and in Mozarabic Spain was repeated by the author of the *Chronica Adefonsi III*, not only because Asturians were considered the rightful heirs of the Visigoths, but also because the defeat of the Muslims is already supposed in the *Chronicon*. In a sense, Oviedo would be the successor of both Toledo and Cordoba.

After Asturias, the collection was certainly taken to La Rioja, perhaps to Albelda or to San Millán: Gregorio de Andrés argued that the codices taken by Beteta to El Escorial had been copied in this region.⁶² I do not know if the remaining texts may have been added to the collection here or still in Oviedo: the *De Diis gentium*, the *Historia Troie capte* and the *De inundatione Nile* by Dometius Creticus. At least the *Historia Troie capte* (if it is to be identified with Dares's text) seems to point to a Gallic origin, which can be compatible with La Rioja. This, however, cannot be known with certainty.

Nevertheless, all other texts of the collection were in Oviedo. Therefore, I argue that it was here that the model of the Soriensis manuscript was organized. The *Genealogiae biblicae*, which are Christ's very detailed genealogical tree, were copied at the beginning of the collection. Just after them, was copied the *Chronica Adefonsi III*, the most important text of the so-called Asturian chronicles. By placing it here, after Christ's genealogy, and by explicitly stating that it continued Isidore's *Historiae*, the organizer of the codex was presenting Asturian kings both as the legitimate successors of the Visigoths, and as the main political Christian representatives at least in Iberia. He broke the usual chronological sequence of the texts, but he gave to the entire collection a new ideological reading, centred in the historical importance of the Asturian kings, and namely of Alfonso III.

⁶⁰ Furtado (2016b: 93-94).

⁶¹ Deswarthes (2003: 124-57).

⁶² Andrés (1976: 106-07).

It is amazing that the Soriensis, probably a tenth-century manuscript, had transmitted almost all the important Spanish historical texts written in Latin from the end of the sixth to the end of the ninth century. It is quite clear that since its very beginnings, this group of texts with more or less universalistic aspirations depended on a chronistic structure, rooted in the Eusebius/Jerome model – it is the very conception of historical writing as a short and accessible chronological narrative that we find here. Obviously, historical thought in Spain was not dead before the year 900.

3. The *Chronica Albeldensis*.

The *Chronica Albeldensis* (Díaz 514) is a different example, though I think it shares with Soriensis many common characteristics.⁶³ Nevertheless, it is true that this *Chronica Albeldensis* is not at all similar to any of the *Chronica* that were copied in the Soriensis manuscript. In fact, despite its name, it is not a continuous and uniform text, but a collection of very different works, from different origins, composed by different anonymous authors and gathered by an anonymous monk. It seems much more like a compilation, similar to the Soriensis collection itself, even if it contains shorter and far less renowned texts.

Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, Ramón Menéndez Pidal and Díaz y Díaz defended that this collection had been gathered together at the end of the ninth century in Oviedo, during the reign of Alfonso III.⁶⁴ Díaz y Díaz also thought that at least some parts of this compilation derive from a Mozarabic collection.⁶⁵ Manuel Gómez Moreno and Juan Gil Fernández argued that this compilation, as we know it today, had been organized later, in La Rioja, or that at least all the manuscripts we have today derive from a model copied there in the tenth century.⁶⁶ In fact, they argued that the compiler of the *Chronica* seems to have a genuine interest in the Banu-Qasi, the Mulladi family who ruled the upper Ebro from the eighth to the beginning of the tenth century.⁶⁷ Besides, the reference to the battle of Monte Laturce (859), when Muhammed ibn Musa al-Qasawi was saved ‘ab amico codam e nostris’,⁶⁸ could also indicate that the text had been at least revised in La Rioja. Gil also added that some errors and misunderstandings concerning toponyms may have also their origin in La Rioja.⁶⁹ However, all this evidence seems to me too weak to allow any solid

⁶³ Díaz y Díaz (1979: 165-73); Ruíz García (1997: 257-64).

⁶⁴ Sánchez Albornoz (1945); Menéndez Pidal (1949); Díaz y Díaz (1976a: 218-21).

⁶⁵ Díaz y Díaz (1976a: 218, n.30).

⁶⁶ Gómez Moreno (1932: 570); Gil Fernández (1985: 86-88).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Chronica Albeldensis* (1985) 14.12-13.

⁶⁸ *Chronica Albeldensis* (1985) 15.11.8-9.

⁶⁹ Gil Fernández (1985: 86-88).

conclusion. The Albeldensis collection was obviously copied in La Rioja; however, the core of its collection came from Oviedo.

Manuscript Madrid, RAH *Aemilianensis* 39, Part II, fols. 245vb-258ra, transmits the most 'complete' version of the Albeldensis collection. It was copied in San Millán de la Cogolla in the second half of the eleventh century.⁷⁰ The first part of the collection copied in this manuscript corresponds to a heterogeneous set of texts such as chorographic lists, catalogues, aphorisms, stories about the alphabet and chronographies (including also the *Ordo annorum mundi*). It seems that, at the beginning of his compilation, the copyist decided to bring together a corpus of short texts with a more or less historical or geographic thematic. The collection includes the following texts: *Exquisitio totius mundi* (fols. 245vb-246ra; inspired by Julius Honorius' *Cosmography*, a text copied in the famous manuscript El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, R.II.18); *Exquisitio Spaniae* (fol. 246ra-b; copied from Is. or. 4.28); a list of Spanish dioceses (fol. 246rb-va); the length of four Spanish rivers (fol. 246va; inspired again by Honorius' *Cosmography*); *De septem miracula que sunt mundi* (fol. 246va); *De proprietatibus gentium* (fol. 246vb); *Causas celebres ex Spania* (fol. 246vb); a short text about the alphabet (fols. 246vb-247ra; inspired by Is. or. 14.3-4, 11, 12); the *Ordo annorum mundi* (fol. 247ra-va); *De sexta etate seculi*; *Exquisitio miliarios cibitatum* (fol. 247va; also in Madrid, BN Vit. 14/15, fol. 1r); and *Notitia episcoporum cum sedibus suis* (fol. 247va-b).⁷¹

After these short texts comes a chronicle of the Roman Empire (*Ordo Romanorum regum*; fols. 248ra-250va) that epitomizes Isidore's *Chronicon* and uses the *Nomina regum Romanorum*: it also ends in 700, with Tiberius III; an *Ordo gentis Gothorum* that abridges Isidore's *Historia Gothorum*, updating it until the Visigothic king Rodrigo (fols. 250va-252va);⁷² a chronicle of the kings of Oviedo (*Ordo Gothorum [Obetensium]*⁷³ *regum*; fols. 252va-256va), which, according to Jan Prelog, must depend on an early version (or on a draft, as Gil Fernández defends) of the *Chronica Adefonsi III*; and a set of genealogies, texts and *laterculi* usually associated with the so-called *Chronica Prophetica* (fols. 256va-258ra).

Putting aside the initial lists of curiosities (some of them also had an autonomous circulation⁷⁴), the *Ordines regum Romanorum, gentis Gothorum, Gothorum [Obetensium] regum* and the texts usually interpreted as part of the *Chronica Prophetica* also circulated

⁷⁰ Guerreiro (1990).

⁷¹ Gil Fernández (1985: 91-93).

⁷² About this text, see Furtado (2011).

⁷³ This 'complete' title is only in El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, d.I.2.

⁷⁴ See the *Ordo gentis Gothorum* copied in the manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica del Vaticano, Reg. Lat. 667, fols. 2r-9r (cf. Furtado 2011).

together in the following ancient manuscripts (I am only considering manuscripts copied until the twelfth century): in manuscript El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, d.I.2, fols. 239r-242r (Albelda, 976);⁷⁵ in manuscript Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 1358, fols. 8vb-27vb (San Juan Bautista de Corias, 1160-1188); and in manuscript Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 2805, fols. 10r-36r (Santiago de Compostela, 12th c.).⁷⁶ Madrid, BN 1358, and Madrid, BN 2805, also contain the *Exquisitio totius mundi*,⁷⁷ the *Ordo annorum mundi*,⁷⁸ the *Sexta etate seculi*,⁷⁹ and the *Exquisitio miliaris cibitatum*.⁸⁰ Escorial d.I.2 also contains the *Laterculus* of the Astur-Leonese kings.⁸¹

The core of this collection (at least the three main *Ordines* and the *Chronica Prophetica*) was gathered together at the end of the ninth century in Oviedo, during the reign of Alfonso III.⁸² There are two fundamental reasons to defend this argument. The first is that there are a significant number of texts finishing in 883: in fact, the sequential reading of the main three *Ordines* ends in that year. Diaz, following a suggestion already made by Florez, argued that the last *Ordo* had been written in three stages, having had a first draft in 881, and being updated in 882 and 883.⁸³ The *Chronica prophetica* also contains no text composed after 883.⁸⁴ Even among the short texts, at least of the *Ordo annorum mundi* and the *De sexta etate seculi* end in 883, and the *Notitia episcoporum* includes a short poem honoring king Alfonso III. The second reason has to do with the ideological analysis of these texts: especially the last *Ordo*, the *Chronica prophetica* and the *Notitia episcoporum* confirm their composition during the neogothicist ideological environment of Alfonso III: the title of the last *Ordo* (*of the kings of the Goths*) shows that the Asturian kings were clearly being presented as the successors of the Visigoths.

The *Ordo regum Romanorum*, the *Ordo gentis Gothorum* and the *Chronica Prophetica* used the *Nomina regum Romanorum*, the *Historia Wambae* and the *Laterculus regum Wisigothorum*, this last one in precisely the same version as copied in the Soriensis manuscript. In my view this *Chronica Albeldensis*, whose core was also composed in

⁷⁵ Antolín (1910: 368-404); Gil Fernández (1985: 81); Millares Carlo (1999: n° 49); Martínez Díaz (1966: 114-17); Díaz y Díaz (1979: 64-70).

⁷⁶ See Rodríguez Díaz (1998). Estévez Sola (1995: li-lij) argues that MS Madrid, BN 2805 is not directly derived from Madrid, BN 1358, but that these two manuscripts come from a codex of Compostela, which is in turn a copy of a manuscript of San Juan Bautista de Coria.

⁷⁷ Madrid, BN 1358, fols. 9vb-10ra; Madrid, BN 2805, fols. 11r-11v, and 28ra-29rb

⁷⁸ Madrid, BN 1358, fols. 8vb-9rb; Madrid, BN 2805, fols. 10r-10v, and 36r-37v.

⁷⁹ Madrid, BN 1358, fols. 9rb-9va; Madrid, BN 2805, fols. 10v-11r.

⁸⁰ Madrid, BN 1358, fols. 25ra-25va; Madrid, BN 2805, fols. 32r-32v.

⁸¹ Escorial d.I.2, fol. 240va.

⁸² Díaz y Díaz (1976a: 218-21).

⁸³ Díaz y Díaz (1976a: 218-21).

⁸⁴ Furtado (2016b).

Oviedo, is not very different from the Soriensis compilation. In fact, the structure of the collection remains similar: i) it transmits a synthesis of World history; ii) it collects the available historical knowledge in a kind of historical easy-to-read Vulgate; iii) the succession of texts also reveals the *translatio regni* as an historical interpretative device. Indeed, we discover here exactly the same framework we had already found in Soriensis, even if this manuscript was clearly 'less organized': from biblical history to the Romans, and from the latter to the Visigoths and the Muslims on the one hand, and to the Asturian kingdom on the other. The *Chronica Prophetica*, with its narratives and genealogies, also describes Muslim history and especially its Spanish realms, corresponding to the interest in Byzantine-Arabian/Muslim history, already assured by the *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica* in the Soriensis manuscript. It announces the end of the Muslim rule in Spain for November 883, and Alfonso III's eventual victory and rule over the entire peninsula.

Thus, I argue that the same principles that were operative with the Biclár, the Mozarabic and the Ovetensis/Soriensis compilations emerge even more clearly in the *Chronica Albeldensis*. Indeed, all three *Ordines* copied in this *Chronicon* are abridgments of texts which are also in Soriensis: Isidore's *Chronica* and *Historiae* and a primitive version of the *Chronica Adefonsi III*. I do not claim that the *Ordines* copied in the *Albeldensis* were composed directly from the Soriensis manuscript. I suggest that the compiler that shaped in Oviedo the textual core of the *Chronica Albeldensis* took more accessible and manageable short texts circulating in a dispersed way, and decided to bring them together in an 'abbreviated' structure that roughly reproduced the model of a larger compilation. In Oviedo, someone curious about the history of the World could read either compilation: either the model of the Soriensis, with the best and more prestigious historical texts available, or the more quickly readable *Chronica Albeldensis*.

This is perhaps not very different from what happened with Isidore's and Idefonsus's *De viris illustribus*, copied in manuscript El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, d.I.2, fols. 341-43. Here both these texts are abridged, sometimes to the point of just quoting some names, without any other text. Escorial d.I.2, copied in Albelda in 976, is precisely one of the manuscripts which contains a part of the *Chronica Albeldensis*, in which the introductory texts of the Madrid, RAH *Aem.* 39, are missing. This is therefore a concrete example of a process that seems to have occurred in the *Chronica Albeldensis*: despite having longer prestigious and ancient texts, in Oviedo one also began to make and gather together abridgments and epitomes from different origins. These shorter texts presented an even more condensed view of the past, imitating together the structure of the earlier compilations.

It may well be possible that there is also another link between the Soriensis and the textual core of the *Chronica Albeldensis*. In fact, manuscript Madrid, RAH Aem. 39, is a codex copied in the *scriptorium* of Suso, San Millán de la Cogolla.⁸⁵ The fact that Suso had a very important *scriptorium* in the tenth and eleventh century points to this area as the place where the Soriensis manuscript may have been copied. Jorge de Beteta also took from Soria a manuscript with the *Vita sancti Aemiliani*, which is now the El Escorial a.II.9: Saint Aemilian was the founder of the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla and this manuscript, which was in Soria with our Soriensis, was probably copied there. If it was so, then both the Soriensis manuscript and the Madrid, RAH Aem. 39 may have been copied in the library of Suso.

Conclusions

The two examples I presented here reveal that much of the Spanish historiography of the second half of the first millennium has the following characteristics.

1. It depends on a diachronic chronistic structure, modelled upon Eusebius/Jerome's *Chronicon*. The historical knowledge in Spain between the beginning of the seventh century and the end of the tenth century supposes a chronological continuous narrative, allowing the constant updating of texts and reconfiguring of collections.
2. It presupposes a great freedom in the handling of texts. Manuscript Madrid, RAH Aem. 39, shows that the texts of the *Chronica Albeldensis* were copied based on the same structure that had been used at least since the Biclár collection. The core of the *Chronica Albeldensis* clearly assumes the ecumenical principle of the chronicle, including shorter texts, such as lists, genealogies and epitomes, instead of the more extended and prestigious ancient texts. The essential feature, however, remained: the chronological continuity up to the present; the succession of authors and texts from different origins while arranging them in a chronological order; and an interpretation of history as a continuous *translatio regni* up to the Astur-Leonese or to the Pamplonan kingdoms.
3. These compilations also reveal a difficulty in understanding history as synchronic. This dimension was assumed in Eusebius's *Chronicon*, with its different tables for the different geographic areas. However, this synchronic view had already been eliminated in Jerome's Latin continuation (largely due to the 'unification' of the known world under Rome), and their successors tended to shrink more and more their perspectives to focus on the regions where they wrote.

⁸⁵ Díaz y Díaz (1979: 165-73); Ruíz García (1997: 257-64).

4. Finally, the structure of these compilations constitutes a canon derived from the principles established in Late Antiquity and subject to continuous additions and redesigns. This may have been the most important of all the consequences for Spanish historiography: a compilation from Bicar, expanded in the Mozarabic South, in Asturias and in La Rioja, came to include the most essential canon of all historical texts of Medieval Spain before 900 (perhaps only with the exception of Orosius's *Historiae*). Spanish people might even have known other authors or recognized their work, but as the anonymous compiler of the *Chronica Albeldensis*, Pelagius of Oviedo, the anonymous compiler of the *Chronica Naierensis*, Lucas of Tuy, Rodrigo Ximenes de Rada or Alfonso X show, it is often to the core of this collection that historians go back for inspiration. This is also the case for matters of history writing: for these copyists, compilers and men of culture, history writing often resulted in little more than the combination or abbreviation of previous texts by juxtaposing or interpolating them, and in their continuation up to the present. When those authors came to organize an original collection of texts in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, they could not fail to take into account either the model or many of the texts transmitted during the previous six hundred years. Born in Bicar, our Spanish compilation became the backbone of Medieval Spanish compilatory historiography until at least the thirteenth century.⁸⁶

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CCSL – Corpus Christianorum Series Latina

CPL – Clavis Patrum Latinorum

MGH SS / AA – Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores / Auctores Antiquissimi

⁸⁶ This article was written as part of the research project «La evolución de los saberes y su transmisión en la Antigüedad tardía y la alta Edad Media latinas III», (PI- J.C. Martín & D. Paniagua) 2017-2019 clave de referencia FFI2016-76495-P. 'La evolución de los saberes y su transmisión en la Antigüedad tardía y la Alta Edad Media III' (FFI2016-76496-P). I am most grateful to Prof. Roger Collins, to Dr. Eric S. Kooper and to Dr Cristian Bratu for their close reading of this text, their comments and their most valuable suggestions.

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