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The earliest passion of St Alban

In *Hist. Eccl.* 1.7 Bede gives us a spirited narrative of the martyrdom of the first English saint, Alban, who was executed by Roman soldiers in the city that still bears his name. His story goes well beyond what he read in Gildas (10-11). Charles Plummer, who knew most things about Bede, could say no more in 1896 than that ‘it is tolerably certain that this chapter of Bede¹ is based on some earlier acts of St Alban, but so far these have not been discovered’. But very soon the discovery was made, in Germany by two Wilhelms, Levison and Meyer. Meyer, in a remarkably learned and remarkably complex article, gave a detailed account of no fewer than three new *Passiones S. Albani*,² and sought to establish the relation between them. Only in 2001 was Meyer’s account challenged, in a brilliant article by Richard Sharpe.³

I do not propose to rehearse Sharpe’s arguments here. Meyer thought a Turin Passion (T) to be the original, prior both to what he thought of as an excerpted Passion (hence his siglum E), preserved for us in several manuscripts,⁴ and to a Paris Passion (P) expanded from the excerpted text.⁵ Instead, Sharpe proposed that the short ver-

¹ Bede in fact drew on the same source for some details of his account of St Germanus in *Hist. Eccl.* 1.18.

² The manuscripts point to the title ‘Passio Sancti Albani (martyris)’. Cf. W. Meyer, ‘Die Legende des h. Albanus des Protomartyr Angliae in Texten vor Bede’, «Abhandl. Königl. Gesell. Wissen. Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl.», n. F. 8, 1904, 3-81.

³ ‘The late antique passion of St Alban’, in (ed. M. Henig and P. Lindley), *Alban and St Albans (The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions xxiv [2001], 30-37)*. Sharpe draws on his conclusion in his later ‘Martyrs and local saints in late antique Britain’, in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A.T. Thacker and R. Sharpe, Oxford 2002, 75-154, at pp. 113-118. I am very grateful to Professor Sharpe for his acute comments on the present paper.

⁴ Four were known to Meyer (and to Sharpe). I am most grateful to Mark Laynesmith for allowing me to mention here two more, which he discovered during an ongoing doctoral study into ‘The Cult of St Alban of Verulamium c. 400 - c. 750’ (Lambeth Palace). The text of one, found in Lincoln, Cathedral Library, MS 149 (s. XII 2/2, English, perhaps Leominster), is virtually identical to that of G. The second, found in Archives départementales du Jura, MS 12 F 8 (s. XIV), is an incomplete twin of A.

⁵ Summary at Meyer, *Die Legende...* cit., 29-30.

sion E represents a late antique original, of which the versions we read in T and P are independent expansions carried out with different aims.⁶

Accepting Sharpe's conclusion,⁷ I use it as the basis for the following conjectural reconstruction of the original Passion that lies behind E and the other witnesses: T, P and the account in Bede (B) from which we started.⁸ I reserve till later discussion of the relationship between the manuscripts and of the nature of the reconstructed text.

SIGLA⁹

- T Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, D.V.3 (s. VIII ex.): CLA iv.446. N.E. France (?Soissons)
 P Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 11748 (s. IX-X). Saint-Maur-les-Fossés
 B Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (1969)

E reconstructed from

- A Autun, Séminaire, 34 (s. IX-X)
 Ei Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, 248 (s. XII)
 G London, Gray's Inn, 3 (s. XII¹). Chester
 L London, British Library, Add. 11880 (s. IX¹)

Note on the apparatus criticus

Gaps separate the sigla of the three (groups of) witnesses (T, PB, E), which are

⁶ It is a crucial part of the problem that 'there is nothing in E that is not in both T and P' (Sharpe, *The late... cit.*, 33). This is true if 'nothing' means 'no substantial item'. T and P both omit *immo praecessit* at 4 (a probable case of coincidence (*saut du même au même*). For omissions in T see my apparatus criticus nn. 1 (joined by ε!), 8, 12, 16, 22, 30, 41, 57, 63, 67, 74, 84 (+ ε), 96 (+ ε), 127; see also n. 87. Some at least of these will be mechanical errors, not intended by the scribe (e.g. at n. 74); the coincidences with ε are perhaps worrying. For omissions in P see nn. 79, 117. T is then far more careless than P.

⁷ Readers should be warned that Sharpe's conclusions are not universally accepted: 'il semble sage de laisser le problème ouvert' (Dolbeau, 831: see next n.). Dolbeau's two objections are to be taken seriously (see below, p. 121, n. 21). And he is quite right to stress (p. 830) that T may be only one of a series of developing versions (the same is true of P: see p. 122, n. 22); but it is hard to see what positive use could be made of this perception.

⁸ At an Oxford seminar in 2000 Professor Sharpe circulated a provisional text of E, based on AEiGL, but he did not include this in his published article. I have refined on this text by taking the other witnesses into account, so as to get back to the 'original' work. Some at least of the textual problems resolve themselves in the process.

⁹ I follow the datings and provenances given by Richard Sharpe, who kindly supplied me with photographs of the relevant folios of A, Ei and L. I am grateful to the librarian of Gray's Inn for allowing me to collate the passage *in situ*; I have not double-checked my results. P is available on line. T has recently been transcribed and discussed by F. Dolbeau in M. Goulet, S. Isetta, M. Berardo, L. Tassarolo, *Le Légendier de Turin. Ms. D.V.3 de la Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire*, Firenze 2014, 825-839. The accompanying DVD-ROM was not available to me, but I follow Dolbeau in the very few places where he differs from Meyer.

cited in that (roughly chronological) order. Where a witness is not available at a particular point (e.g. T in n. 1) its absence is not explicitly indicated. All variants individual to Ei and L (and many of those individual to G)¹⁰ are omitted, except where other witnesses are being reported. Readings unique to T and to P are again given where other witnesses are being reported, but omitted on the frequent occasions where they are the obvious result of ‘editorial’ expansion, where they are the result of Merovingian laxity in orthography (esp. *i/e*, *am/a* and the like),¹¹ or where they are plain nonsense.

Square brackets mark off the siglum of a manuscript whose reading differs in its orthography from that of another or others grouped with it;¹² but I ignore for this purpose variations like *t/c* and *ae/e*. In general, such minutiae (including the constantly recurring errors in word-division and separation of sentences) are reported only where one manuscript is being specifically reported. A note of the type ‘[*cf. P*]’ implies that an ‘expanding’ witness (T, P, B), though not presenting the exact wording in question, points clearly in that direction; thus in 1 where other witnesses give ‘*pro eodem se obtulit*’, P has ‘*pro eodem se militibus praesentavit*’. As for B(ede), he freely adapted the P-type text he had before him, and I only cite B sparingly; the absence of mention of B at any point in the apparatus implies no more than its evidence there did not seem of interest.

¹⁰ Ei and L form a sub-group of no great authority. For the free spirit G see below p. 121.

¹¹ This sometimes affects the sense, as at 5 *aduoluetur* TP where the present is needed. At 4 TP agree on *dirigente*, which can hardly be right. *-us* and *-um* are confused in P at 2 *christianus*, 8 *oportunus*, and 10 *condeturum*; in each case B is (naturally) right.

¹² I have normalised the orthography of the text to classical standards. In fact, Ei and L are remarkably free of ‘medieval’ spellings.

1. Tempore persecutionis sanctus Albanus, necdum spiritali unda perfusus,¹ quantum antiquitas tradidit² adhuc paganus, clericum persecutores fugientem³ hospitio recepit, ipsiusque habitu,⁴ id est⁵ caracalla qua ipse uestiebatur, indutus, pro eodem se obtulit,⁶ statimque iudici est oblatus.⁷
2. Qui cum ante christianitatis agnitionem christianum se esse in quaestione⁸ fatetur, gladii⁹ percuti iubetur sententia.¹⁰
3. Cumque ad uictimam duceretur,¹¹ peruenit ad fluuium qui¹² muros¹³ et harenam¹⁴ ubi ferendus erat meatu rapidissimo diuidebat,¹⁵ uiditque inibi¹⁶ ingentem hominum multitudinem¹⁷ utriusque sexus condicionis et aetatis,¹⁸ qui¹⁹ sine dubio diuinitatis instinctu ad obsequium martyris²⁰ uocabantur,²¹ ita²² fluminis ipsius²³ occupasse²⁴ pontem ut intra uesperam²⁵ transire uix²⁶ posset.²⁷
4. Denique iudex sine²⁸ obsequio in ciuitate substiterat.²⁹ Confert se sanctus Albanus³⁰ ad torrentem³¹ †cui diuerat†³² ad martyrium³³ peruenire, et dirigente ad caelum lumina ilico siccato³⁴ alueo suis cessit, immo praecessit, unda³⁵ uestigiis.
5. Cumque³⁶ ad locum destinatum morti³⁷ uenisset,³⁸ occurrit stricto gladio carnifex

¹ necdum spiritali unda perfusus *PA*; *om. T* ε ² tradidit [*T*] *P* ζ; tradit *G*; tradet *A* ³ persecutores (-toribus *P*; persequitur *T*) fugientem *TPBAG*; fugientem persecutores ζ ⁴ ipsiusque habitu [*T*] *G*; ipsius quae habitu *A*; ipsius qui hato ζ; ipsius habito *P*; ipsius habitu *B* ⁵ id est *PB* ε; idt (*with bar over t*) *A*; ipsiusque *T* ⁶ pro eodem se obtulit [*cf. P*] *AG*; *om. ζ* ⁷ iudici (-ice *P*) est oblatus *PA*; iudici oblatus est *G*; est iudici oblatus *Ei*; iudici oblatus *L*; Seuro impiissimo Cesari oblatus est *T* ⁸ in quaestione] inquestione *A*; inquisitione *P* ζ; inuestigatione *G*; *om. T* ⁹ gladii *TP*; gladio ε; statimque gladio *A* ¹⁰ percuti iubetur sententia *P*; iubetur finire sententiam *T*; percuti iubetur *E* (*cf. below, 9*) ¹¹ ad uictimam (-ma *P*; sicut agnus *add. T*) duceretur [*T*] *PA*; eum ducerent ad uictimam ζ; eum ad uictimam ducerent *G*; ad mortem duceretur *B* ¹² peruenit ad fluuium qui *E*; peruenit ad flumen quod *PB*; quo *T* ¹³ muros *G*; muro *PBAEi*; murus *TL* ¹⁴ harenam *G*; harena [*T*] [*P*] *BA* ζ ¹⁵ diuidebat *G*; diuidebatur *TPBA* ζ ¹⁶ uiditque inibi *PA*; uiditque ibi *B*; uidet ζ; uidit *TG* ¹⁷ ingentem hominum multitudinem *G*; ingentem hominem multitudinem *A*; hominem ingentem multitudinem [*P*] ζ; ingentem multitudinem hominem *T*; non paruam hominum multitudinem *B* ¹⁸ condicionis et aetatis *E*; condictionis aetatis *P*; condicionis diuersae et aetatis *B*; ut etatis condicionis *T* ¹⁹ qui *TPAL*; quae *BEiG* ²⁰ martyris *B* ε; martyres [*T*] *A*; marum *P* (*an erasure precedes*) ²¹ uocabantur *TPA*; uocabatur *B* ε ²² ita ε; et ita *PBA*; *T* omits (et) ita ... pontem ²³ fluminis ipsius *PBA*; *om. ε* ²⁴ occupasse *E*; occupasset *P* ²⁵ uesperam *PB* ε; uespera *TA* ²⁶ transire uix (pontefex *T*) *TPBA*; uix transire ε ²⁷ posset *B* ε; possent *T*; possit *PA* ²⁸ iudex sine *TPA* ζ; cunctis paene egressis iudex sine *BG* (*the latter omitting sine*) ²⁹ substiterat *BAEiG*; subsisterat *TP*; substeterat *L* ³⁰ confert se sanctus (*this word dub. in A*) Albanus *PA*; tunc beatus (beatissimus *G*) Albanus confert se ε; conferat se *T* ³¹ torrentem *PBE*; currentem *T* ³² cui diuerat (*corr. to diu erat*) *A*; cui diu inerat deuotio mentis *G*; cui deerat *L*; per quem debuit *Ei*; cuius deuotio erat [*cf. B*]; cui dico uiderat *T. Ei gives good sense, but probably only by conjecture.* ³³ martyrium *PAL*; martyrium ad martyrem *T*; martyrium ocus *BG*; martyrii locum *Ei* ³⁴ siccato *PBE*; secessit *T* ³⁵ cessis (*sic*) immo praecessit unda *A*; successit immo praecessit unda *G*; *om. L*; transcendit siccis *Ei*; secessit unda *T*; cessit unda [*cf. B*] ³⁶ cumque *PBE*; cum *T* ³⁷ locum destinatum (dist- *TPA*) morti (mortis *P*) *TPBAG*; locum martyrii ζ ³⁸ uenisset *AG*; uentissit *T*; uenissent [*cf. B*]; perueniret *L*; peruenisset *Ei*

precans, qui martyrem percussurus erat, pro martyre se³⁹ puniri,⁴⁰ proiectoque impio ense⁴¹ ad sancti Albani pedes aduoluitur, repente factus⁴² ex persecutore collega.

6. Verum,⁴³ dum iacente ferro esset inter carnifices iusta cunctatio, montem cum turbis sanctus martyr ascendit. Qui oportune⁴⁴ editus⁴⁵ gratia ineffabili quingentis fere⁴⁶ passibus ab harena situs⁴⁷ est uariis⁴⁸ floribus⁴⁹ pictus,⁵⁰ immo⁵¹ uestitus. In quo nihil est arduum, nihil praeceps, nihil abruptum,⁵² quem lateribus longe lateque deductum ad faciem⁵³ aequoris natura complanat.

7. Quem haut⁵⁴ dubie⁵⁵ martyri praeparatum iam prius quam sacro⁵⁶ consecraretur cruore, similem meritis eius⁵⁷ fecerat⁵⁸ pulchritudo. In cuius uertice dari sibi sanctus Albanus aquam rogauit,⁵⁹ statimque incredibili⁶⁰ meatu ante martyris pedes⁶¹ fons perennis exortus est, ut omnes agnoscerent etiam⁶² torrentem martyri obsequium deluisse.

8. Neque enim⁶³ fieri poterat ut in arduo montis⁶⁴ cacumine aquam martyr⁶⁵ peteret⁶⁶ quam utique⁶⁷ in flumine non reliquerat, si⁶⁸ fluuium⁶⁹ non uideret.⁷⁰ Qui denique ministerio⁷¹ persoluto, deuotione completa,⁷² officii testimonium⁷³ relinquens,⁷⁴ reuersus est ad naturam. Nec⁷⁵ illud⁷⁶ praetereundum⁷⁷ putauit, quod carnifici illi⁷⁸ radicatus ad terram lumina,⁷⁹ qui piis ceruicibus intulit⁸⁰ impias⁸¹ manus, cum sancti martyris capite conciderunt.⁸²

³⁹ pro martyre (martyrem *TP*; matyre *corr. from* *matre* *A*) se *TPAG*; se pro martyre ζ (pro martyre se puniri *is placed after* *carnifex in G*) ⁴⁰ puniri *E*; poneri *T*; ponere *P* ⁴¹ impio ense (sense *P*) *PA*; ense *B*; a se impio gladio ε; gladio *T* ⁴² factus *AEi*; factus est *PGL*; factus *T* ⁴³ uerum *A*; uirum *TP*; uerum-tamen ζ (cum ergo *is ex* *persecutore factus esset collega ac iacente G, drawing on B*) ⁴⁴ oportune *PBGL^{pc}*; oportunae *A*; oportuna *EiL^{ac}*; oportuni *T* ⁴⁵ editus *TP EiG^L*; idetus *A*; laetus *BG* ⁴⁶ quingentis fere *TB[cf. P] ε*; qui ingentis fere *A* ⁴⁷ harena situs [*P*]*BE*; arinas. et qui *T* ⁴⁸ uariis *TPB ε*; uariis *A* ⁴⁹ floribus [*T*]*PBAG*; coloribus ζ ⁵⁰ pictus *AEiGL^{pc}*; picturatus *T*; pictis *P*; pinctus *L^{ac}*; depictus *B* ⁵¹ immo *PBA* (*cf. A*); atque [*T*] ε (*there were perhaps variants in the archetype*) ⁵² abruptum *TPB ε*; abruptum *A* ⁵³ ad faciem *ed.*; a faciem *T*; a facie *PE*; in modum *B* ⁵⁴ haut] *auth A*; aut non *T*; cui ε; sine *P* ⁵⁵ dubie *L*; dubiae *A*; dubium *PEi*; dubii *T* (cui autem dubium est huic martyri esse praeparatus quem iam *G*) ⁵⁶ sacro *TP ε*; sacra *A* ⁵⁷ cruore similem meritis eius *PA*; cruore sacrum similis ε; cruore sacro simili *T* ⁵⁸ fecerat *E*; ficerat *T*; fiat *P(?)* *above the line* ⁵⁹ dari sibi sanctus (beatus ε) ... rogauit *E*; s. *A.* aquam sibi dari rogauit *T*; dare sibi s. *A.* aqua erogauit *P*; s. *A.* dari sibi a Deo aquam rogauit *B* ⁶⁰ incredibili *TE*; incluso *PB* ⁶¹ ante martyris pedes *GL*; ante martyres pedes *TA*; ante pedes martyrum *P*; ante pedes eius *B*; *om. Ei* ⁶² agnoscerent etiam [*T*]*PBA*; etiam agnoscerent *Ei*; etiam cognoscerent *L*; cognoscerent etiam *G* ⁶³ enim *PBE*; *om. T* ⁶⁴ arduo montis *BA*; arduum montis *TP*; ardui montis *G*; montis arduo ζ ⁶⁵ martyr *TPBAG*; *om. ζ* ⁶⁶ peteret *BAEi^{pc}GL*; petiret *TP*; peterit *Ei^{ac}* ⁶⁷ utique *PE*; *om. TB* ⁶⁸ reliquerat si [*cf. B*]*A*; reliquerat se *P*; reliquerat sicut *G*; reliquerat sic ζ ⁶⁹ fluuium *A*; fluuius ε; oportunus *P* ⁷⁰ uideret ζ; uiderit *A*; uideretur *G*; uiderent *P*; (hoc opportunum esse non) uideret *B*; (quam in fluuium non) uidisset *T* ⁷¹ ministerio *PBAζ*; misterio *T*; martyrio *G* ⁷² completa *TBE*; concita *P* ⁷³ testimonium *BAζ*; testimonio *TG*; testimonii *P* (*after corr.?*) ⁷⁴ relinquens *PBA*; relinquentem ζ; relicto *G*; *om. T* ⁷⁵ nec *TE*; haec *P* ⁷⁶ illud *TAG*; illum *P*; *om. ζ* ⁷⁷ praetereundum *E*; -iundam *T*; -euntem *P* ⁷⁸ carnifici illi [*T*]*AG*; carnifices illius *P*; carnifici ζ ⁷⁹ radicatus ad terram lumina *A*; radicatus ad terram lumina ceciderunt *GL*; curuatus ad terram lumina *T*; ad terram lumina (*corr. from* *lumine*) *P*; *om. Ei* ⁸⁰ intulit *TBE*; atulit *P* ⁸¹ impias *PBE*; impia *T* ⁸² cum ... conciderunt (concidorum *P*; ceciderunt *L*) [*cf. B*]*AL*; cum sancti martyris capite oculi in terram ceciderunt *Ei*; cum sanctos martyres conciderent caput *T*; tum s. m. caput absciderunt *G*

9. Ibiq⁸³ etiam carnifex ille, qui antea⁸⁴ sanctum Dei ferire⁸⁵ noluerat,⁸⁶ gladio⁸⁷ percussus est. Tunc iudex⁸⁸ exanimis,⁸⁹ tanta nouitate percussus,⁹⁰ iniussu etiam principum iubet de persecutione⁹¹ cessari,⁹² referens augeri⁹³ potius religionem caede⁹⁴ sanctorum, per quam eandem⁹⁵ opinabantur christianitatis nomen⁹⁶ aboleri.⁹⁷

10. Ad⁹⁸ cuius⁹⁹ basilicam cum¹⁰⁰ sanctus¹⁰¹ Germanus episcopus cum omnium apostolorum diuersorumque¹⁰² martyrum reliquiis peruenisset, pretiosa in eodem loco¹⁰³ munera conditurus, reuelli sepulchrum¹⁰⁴ iubet,¹⁰⁵ ut membra sanctorum¹⁰⁶ ex diuersis regionibus collecta, quos pares merito¹⁰⁷ receperat caelum,¹⁰⁸ sepulchri unius teneret¹⁰⁹ hospitium.

11. Quibus¹¹⁰ honorifice depositis¹¹¹ atque sociatis,¹¹² de loco ipso¹¹³ ubi martyris¹¹⁴ sanguis effluerat¹¹⁵ massam¹¹⁶ pulueris rapuit, uiolenta quidem¹¹⁷ deuotione sed pio fidei ausu, in qua apparebat cruore seruato¹¹⁸ erubuisse¹¹⁹ terram¹²⁰ martyris¹²¹ caede,¹²² persecutore pallente.¹²³ Quibus rebus manifestatis atque¹²⁴ patefactis, ingens hominum¹²⁵ eadem die¹²⁶ ad Deum¹²⁷ turba conuersa est, praestante¹²⁸ Domino nostro Iesu Christo,¹²⁹ cui est honor et¹³⁰ gloria¹³¹ in secula seculorum. Amen.

⁸³ ibique *E*; ibi qui *T*; ibi *B*; itaque *P* ⁸⁴ antea *PB A*; *om. T* ⁸⁵ ferire *T PB A*ζ; perire *G* ⁸⁶ noluerat *P E*; noluit *T* ⁸⁷ gladio [*P*] *A*; in laude Dei et ipse ζ; lautus et ipse *G*; pro Christi confessione ipse *T* ⁸⁸ iudex *PB E*; impiissimus Caesar *T* ⁸⁹ exanimis *T*; exanimis *A*; animi ε; nim mis *P* ⁹⁰ percussus *T B E*; percussus *P* ⁹¹ iubet de persecutione *T [P] AL*; persecutiones iubet *G*; iubet *Ei* ⁹² cessari *B AE^{pc} G*; cessari *E^{ac} L*; cessare *TP* ⁹³ augeri *E*; gaudiri *T*; *om. P* ⁹⁴ caede *T A*; caedi *P*; *om. ε* ⁹⁵ eandem *G*; eandemque *A*; eadem *P* ζ; tandem *T* ⁹⁶ opinabantur (-buntur *P*) christianitatis nomen [*cf. B*] *A*; opinabantur *T* ⁹⁷ aboleri ε; oboleri *A*; abolire *TP* after *corr.* ⁹⁸ ad *TP* ε; a *A* ⁹⁹ cuius *TE*; eius *P* ¹⁰⁰ cum *T* ε; *om. P A* ¹⁰¹ sanctus *P A*; sanctorum *T*; beatus ζ; benedictus *G* ¹⁰² diuersorumque *PB E*; ac diuersarum *T* ¹⁰³ pretiosa in eodem (eadem *P*) loco *TP AG*; pretiosa ibidem *B*; in eundem locum pretiosa ζ ¹⁰⁴ reuelli sepulchrum [*P*] *B E*; reuelatoque sepulchro *T* ¹⁰⁵ iubet *T (omitting ut) E*; iussit *PB* ¹⁰⁶ membra sanctorum *T B E*; memorata sanctorum corpora *P (see below, p. 124)* ¹⁰⁷ merito *TE*; meritis *PB* ¹⁰⁸ caelum *T B E*; caelestis *P* ¹⁰⁹ teneret [*P*] *B E*; retereret *T* ¹¹⁰ quibus *T B E*; qui his *P* ¹¹¹ honorifice depositis *TE*; dep. hon. *PB* ¹¹² sociatis *T B G*; satiatis *A*; potiatas *P*; eleuatis ζ ¹¹³ ipso *PB E*; illo *T* ¹¹⁴ martyris *B E*; martyres *T*; martyrum *P(?)* ¹¹⁵ effluerat *P A*; effluerat *T*; effuderat *L*; effusus est *G*; effusus erat *B Ei* ¹¹⁶ massam *B A*; massa *TP*; massam cruenti ε ¹¹⁷ quidem *TE*; *om. P* ¹¹⁸ pio fidei ausu (fidei auso *P*; sacrilegio *T*) in qua apparebat (apparebat *P*) cruore seruato *T [cf. B] A*; pio effectu in errore apparebat seruatum ζ; pio affectu *G*, *omitting words up to* quibus ¹¹⁹ erubuisse *P A*; erubisset *T*; rubuisse *B* ¹²⁰ terram *T A*; *om. PB* ζ ¹²¹ martyris ζ; martyres *T*; martyrum *PB A* ¹²² caede *A*; caedi *P*; caedem *B* ζ; sed de *T* ¹²³ persecutore pallente *PB*; persecutorem pallente *T*; persecutores pallente *A*; persecutorem pallentem ζ ¹²⁴ manifestatis atque [*T*] *E*; et que *P* ¹²⁵ ingens hominum *T A*; hominum ingens ζ; ingens hominum multitudo *G*, *omitting turba below*; non mirum hominum *P*; innumera hominum *B* ¹²⁶ die *PB* ε; (eodem) tempore *T*; *om. A* ¹²⁷ ad Deum *E*; ad Dominum *PB*; *om. T* ¹²⁸ prestante *T*; auxiliante *P*; patrocinante *A*; regnante ε. *The exact wording is uncertain.* ¹²⁹ Iesu Christo *P E*; *om. T* ¹³⁰ honor et *TP* ζ; *om. A* (cui est cum coaeterno patre et spiritu sancto honor uirtus laus et gloria et imperium in *G*) ¹³¹ gloria *T A*ζ; uirtus *P (cf. G in previous n.)*

Translation

1. In the time of the persecution, the holy Alban, who had not yet been baptised, and was (according to the report of olden days) still a pagan, gave shelter to a cleric who was fleeing from his persecutors, put on his clothing – the hooded tunic he was wearing – and offered himself up instead of him. He was at once handed over to the judge.
2. Since he declared under torture that he was a Christian (Christianity not yet having been recognised), he was sentenced to execution by the sword.
3. And when he was being led away to be sacrificed, he came to the river that separated with its swift course the walls and the arena where he was to be struck down. And he saw there that a great crowd of people, of both sexes and every age and status, who without doubt were being summoned by God to attend on the martyr, had so thronged the river bridge that he could hardly have passed over before evening.
4. In fact, the judge had been left in the city with no one to attend on him. The holy Alban made his way to the river across which he had to pass (?) to reach his martyrdom. As he looked up at heaven, the river bed at once became dry, and the water yielded to – or rather went ahead of – his footsteps.
5. And when he had come to the place assigned for his death, the executioner, who was going to execute the martyr, met him with drawn sword. But praying to be punished in the martyr's place¹ and throwing away his impious blade, he grovelled at the feet of the holy Alban: he had suddenly become his companion instead of his persecutor.
6. But while the sword lay on the ground and the executioners hesitated, not without reason, the holy martyr climbed the hill with the crowds of people. The hill rises conveniently about fifty paces from the arena. It is unspeakably beautiful, painted – or rather clothed – with diverse flowers. There is nothing steep, precipitous or sheer about it; nature brings it down with long wide slopes to look like a flat plain.
7. The hill had undoubtedly been made ready for the martyr even before it was consecrated by his holy blood, for its beauty had made it like his merits. At the top the holy Alban asked to be given water, and at once, incredibly enough, there came forth before the martyr's feet an unfailing spring, so that all might realise that the river too had paid homage to the martyr.
8. For it could not have come about that the martyr should ask for water on the high

¹ Or perhaps 'executed as a martyr'. For a second martyrdom see below, p. 123.

hill top, when he had left none at all behind in the river,² if he had not seen the river. For, its service quite finished, its holy work complete, it returned to its natural course, leaving behind evidence of the duty it had done. And I did not think I should pass over the fact that the eyes of the executioner, who brought impious hands to bear on that pious neck, fell to the ground roots and all, along with the martyr's head.

9. And there the executioner who had previously refused to strike down the holy one of God was also put to the sword. Then the terrified judge, stunned by such an extraordinary turn of events, even without instructions from the *principes* ordered an end to the persecution, pronouncing that religion is rather strengthened by the slaughter of holy men, the very thing which they thought led to the name of Christianity being blotted out.

10. When the holy bishop Germanus came to <Alban's> basilica with relics of all the apostles and diverse martyrs, meaning to house the precious gifts there, he ordered the grave to be opened up, so that the bodies³ of holy men who had been received by heaven as equal in merit, though brought together from different regions, should be taken in by a single place of burial.

11. When the relics had been honourably laid to rest next to each other, he took a clod of earth from the very place where the martyr's blood had flowed forth. This devout act was violent indeed, but its temerity was occasioned by a believer's piety. The piece of earth retained traces of blood, making it clear that the ground had grown red with the martyr's blood even as his persecutor grew pale. After these things had been manifested and revealed, a great crowd of men turned to God on that day, thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

² Or 'at least in the river'?

³ See below, p. 124.

The stemma

The relationship of the E manuscripts is clear enough. A is very much closer to TP (and especially to P) than are EiGL (= ε),¹³ as the apparatus abundantly illustrates (from 1 on; note especially omissions in ε at 16 23 84,¹⁴ while ε is rhythmically inferior at 26) and as is shown by instances of orthographical primitiveness¹⁵ at e.g. 20 25 61; and though it has its own errors¹⁶ (e.g. 2 9 45 46 95), it can be right where all others are wrong (43 68). Of the others, EiL (= ζ) often hunt together (note especially the omissions at 6 65), though each has its unique readings (e.g. Ei 32 33 35 61 79;¹⁷ L 32 35 38 62). G stands out for what seem to be excellent conjectures (a cluster at 13-15) and for its contamination from B(ede): witness e.g. 28 33 43.

T and P do not seem to coincide in error against E, except where the error can be put down to Merovingian waywardness in orthography (39 43 64 66 92).¹⁸ Nor should they on either Meyer's or Sharpe's view. But decisive in favour of Sharpe's view is the following observation. Let us compare the behaviour of A (selected for this purpose as being the purest witness to E) with that of T and P. AT are not found to agree in error against P.¹⁹ That is consistent with both rival views. But neither are AP found to agree in error against T.²⁰ That is absolutely *not* consistent with A being 'descended' from T and P in turn being 'descended' from E (Meyer). But it *is* consistent with Sharpe's picture, and indeed with no other that I can imagine.²¹

As one would expect from a trifid stemma, T and P separately have readings that side strikingly with E against the other (for private omissions in T and in P, see p. 114

¹³ ε is occasionally capable of a sensible correction: so, it seems, at 22 (in this section such figures refer to notes in the apparatus criticus).

¹⁴ At least at 23 the omission may have been intended as an improvement.

¹⁵ This shows that the common ancestor of Aε was Merovingian, not late antique.

¹⁶ In this section I use the word 'error' to mean a reading I do not accept; it covers interventions as well as apparent mistakes. There is no doubt some danger of circularity here; but it is hard to know how to proceed in any other way in a tradition of this kind.

¹⁷ Some of these look like intelligent conjectures.

¹⁸ For one exception (35), caused by *saut du même au même*, and for the errors that separate T and P, see above, p. 114 n. 6.

¹⁹ At 25 they share a Merovingian spelling error (-a for -am).

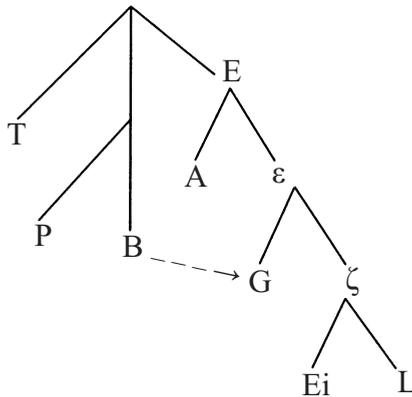
²⁰ I am not altogether certain of the truth at 87.

²¹ Dolbeau (see above, p. 114 n. 9) raised two particular objections to Sharpe. One (a) concerns a passage in 11 (my n. 118), where he claims that it is unlikely that the splendid oxymoron *pio sacrilegio* in T should have arisen from *pio fidei ausu* (E). It might be replied that E's phrase is an odd one, which the adaptor replaced for clarity. More generally and seriously, Dolbeau refers us to the arguments of Meyer, *Die Legende...* cit., 27. The original Passion should be something more impressive than the 'dürre Gerippe' we find in E. I am not sure E is in fact so skeletal (it is a Passion, not a Life). But we could, if we liked, regard it as itself an abbreviation of a longer work. Much more serious is (b): It is hardly likely that two independent expansions of E *both* preserved so faithfully many of the same words from the source. Is it perhaps possible that the expanders in both cases felt that the original (which was, Sharpe argues, on public view) was a sacred text that might be expanded but should not be changed? For the *tituli* exhibited, arguably at Auxerre, see the T version at Meyer, *Die Legende...* cit., 44; Sharpe, *The late...* cit., 36.

n. 6), and I have constantly used their evidence as a guide where the E manuscripts vary among themselves.

The familiar fact that B(ede) drew on something like P²² is often illustrated in the apparatus; note e.g. 12 60 69 70 105. For the sparing use I make of him, see above, p. 115.

The picture therefore is:



This stemma seems to impose itself, and it can be used as a guide where choices are uncertain. It is natural, when one is after all reconstructing the short version, to favour E = Aε against the expansions T and P. But T and P prove invaluable in deciding between variants within the E tradition.²³

Notes on the text

My impression, from the style of the Latin, is that this is a work credibly to be dated to the Patristic period.²⁴ A few of the items below (found on the Brepols CDS data base; exact references can easily be confirmed by consultation of this marvellous tool) provide reassurance that the wording is not ‘medieval’.

1. *spiritali unda*: Of baptism in Zeno of Verona (s. IV) and Quodvultdeus (s. V).
perfusus: used by Zeno with *salubri unda baptismatis*.
caracalla: As a cloak worn by a Christian priest already in Jerome, *Epist.* 64.14.

3. *ad victimam duceretur*: Meyer, *Die Legende...* cit., 54 cited Jer. 51:40 ‘deducam

²² Not of course the later P itself. There are a number of instances of B siding with the rest against P: see 72 80 83 90 108 110 (also 106, discussed below T, p. 124). These will be inherited readings from a source ‘somewhat upstream of P within its branch of the tradition’ (as Sharpe remarks to me).

²³ Hence some of the fifteen or so places where my reconstruction differs from Sharpe’s (for which see above, p. 114 n. 8).

²⁴ Sharpe (*The late...* cit., 36-37) argues on other grounds for a date between 420 and 470.

eos quasi agnos ad uictimam'. Cf. also Prov. 7:22 'sequitur quasi bos ductus ad uictimam'.

utriusque ... aetatis: rather casually written; note Bede's addition of *diuersae. diuinitatis instinctu*: Eugippius, Vegetius.

obsequium martyris: Augustine, Sermons.

intra uesperam: CDS finds this only in Bede.

4. T's retention of *iudex* here (whereas at 9 it becomes *impiissimus Caesar*) is an important part of Sharpe's argument (*The late... cit.*, 33). So too is the word *principum* in 9 (*ibid.*, 35).

For 'cui diuerat' (A) I suggest tentatively 'qui debuerat': 'Alban, who had to reach his place of martyrdom'. *debuerat* would = *debutit* (see L-H-Sz p. 320). But it must be admitted that this particular kind of error (u for b) does not seem to be found in our tradition.

5. The relative clause 'qui ... erat' is awkwardly placed (as was felt by whoever was responsible for the variant in G), but the writer wished to bring out the contrast with the succeeding clause. Cf. on c. 8 below.

6. I print *ad faciem aequoris*: 'nature brings it down with long wide slopes to form a flat plain'. We may compare Amm. Marc. 27.8.6 (of the sea) 'maris attolli horrendis aestibus assueti rursusque ... in speciem complanari camporum' ('to sink to the form of a level plain' Rolfe).

7. At 7 'ante martyris pedes' (martyrum P; eius B), 11 'martyris sanguis' (martyrum P(?); martyris B), 'martyris caede' (martyrum PBA), and apparently also 3 'ad obsequium martyris' (marum P; martyris B), P makes the executioner a second martyr alongside Alban. Bede does not follow him except, remarkably, at the second passage in 11, where A too has the plural and ζ (it seems) emends back to the singular (G is defective here).

8. The witnesses point to 'si fluuium non uideret', 'if he had not seen the <behaviour of the> river'. Seeing the river down below miraculously regaining its water (as is explained in the next sentence) emboldens Alban to ask for a drop at the top of the hill. 'The evidence of the duty it had done' is the new spring on the hill, in 7 called the sign that the river had 'paid homage' to the martyr. It is interesting that T saw fit to introduce the classicising pluperfect subjunctive *uidisset*. In what follows, I have considered adding a participle (e.g. *eruta*: cf. Virg. *Aen.* 5.449 'radicibus eruta pinus') to go with *radicitus*; but the adverb may be taken with *concoiderunt*, 'fell roots and all'. Cf. Servius ad *Aen.* 3.90 'si arbor sponte radicitus cadat'; also Catull. 64.288-9 'ille tulit radicitus altas / fagos', where Kroll comments: 'als stände *effossas* oder *euolsas* da'. For the awkward positioning of the relative clause 'qui ... manus', see n. above on c. 5.

9. *augeri*: for ‘sanguis martyrum semen Christianorum’.

10. *membra sanctorum*: i.e. their bodies: cf. e.g. Damasus, *Epigr.* 23.1-2 ‘hic tumulus retinet caelestia membra / sanctorum’. Whoever was responsible for the variant ‘memorata sanctorum corpora’ (P, not supported by B) perhaps wished to exclude the possibility of dismemberment, which was frowned upon until after the time of Gregory the Great (I am grateful to Professor Sharpe for his advice on this point).

Prose rhythm

The rhythms exhibited here are consistent with a fifth-century date. Of 18 sentence ends, 7 could be classed accentually as Planus, 4 as Tardus and 6 as Velox (I think of c. 9 *nomen aboleri* as being a metrical clausula rather than a Trispondeus). Most of these could also be taken as metrical clausulae, but not c. 1 ‘iudici est oblatu-’ (a Velox with a hiatus) or c. 2 ‘iubetur sententia’. I do not favour the term *cur-sus mixtus*; but our text shows signs of the transition to the pure accentual system perhaps first seen in the sixth century. These signs are reinforced if we take into account the ends of cola within the sentences: thus 1 *unda* [abl.] *perfusus* (P), 3 *rapidissimo dividebat* (V: though the text is not quite certain), 5 *pedes aduoluitur* (T), and 8 *impias manus* (P);²⁵ to which add 9 *iudex exanimis* (T), where the comma should follow the adjective.

It is difficult to give for comparison figures for T and P, whose texts are so much affected by what they inherited from E. Restricting investigation to eleven sentence endings in two passages where T is completely independent of E,²⁶ I count 5 Planus, 2 Tardus, and 3 Velox; four passages are ‘unmetrical’. In P I have looked at eight passages where it is independent of E.²⁷ I count 3 Planus, 1 Tardus, 2 Velox; six passages are unmetrical.

These are findings of no statistical validity, but they are consistent with E being appreciably earlier than T and P.

* * *

This paper was prompted by a splendid perception by another scholar, and my edition of the *Passio Sancti Albani*, though the first, is based on material that has been in print for over a hundred years. It does, however, have a special interest for an

²⁵ For all this see my remarks in ‘*Tribunus Marianus*’, in *Nel segno del testo. Materiali e studi per Oronzo Pecere*, ed. L. Del Corso, F. De Vivo, A. Stramaglia, Firenze 2015, 85-87.

²⁶ As reconstructed by Meyer, *Die Legende...* cit., 46 (including words from the Gospel that happen to be rhythmical) and 60.

²⁷ As reconstructed by Meyer, *ibid.*, 48, 50.

editor: for all the incrustations of later material, we have here an apparently watertight case of a trifold stemma, which can be used almost mechanically to determine the text.

Abstract

Bede's celebrated account of the martyrdom of the early English saint Alban is ultimately based on a lost Latin Passion. It has recently been recognised that this original was close to a 'short' version E, which is transmitted in several extant manuscripts, and that two longer versions (T and P) are independent expansions of E. The original is here reconstructed for the first time; all the available evidence is presented in a lengthy apparatus criticus. The edition is accompanied by a translation into English and by notes on difficult passages.

Key-words: Patristics; Martyrdom; St Alban; First critical edition.

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