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# **DECONSTRUCTING THE MAN CONSTRUCTING THE SAINT**

The Literary Sanctification of Germanus of Auxerre in the  
*Vita Germani Auctore Constantio.*

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the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

The narrative structure of the *Vita Germani Auctore Constantio* is based on its protagonist's spiritual development from man to saint. In the early chapters, Germanus' character is defined by human actions and attitudes, as shown in the moments preceding his epiphany when he fights against election to the see of Auxerre. Germanus' increasing sanctity is marked by the presence of miracles whose rituality is grounded in pragmatic actions related to the world of medicine and liturgy. These miracles are performed through human practices and represent a time in which the human and holy are mixed. The moment of transition to sanctity is described in two pivotal episodes in the *vita*. In these episodes Constantius uses the symbolism of water and of preternatural recognition to show Germanus' passage to holiness, which is confirmed when he performs a resurrection miracle. Finally, his *post mortem* sanctification is shown by a miracle performed by his relics. This thesis explores the origins and implications of this structure through semantic analysis of the text and linguistic, historical, and literary comparisons with works from its time and genre. Each chapter of the thesis explores a particular phase in the life of saint, identified by the presence and role of the themes of war, food, and medicine in the narrative development of the text.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*CCSL*  
*CML*  
*Latinorum CSEL*  
*Latinorum MGH*  
*Germaniae Historica*

*Auct. Ant.*  
*SS. rer. merov.*

*PL*  
*PSA*  
*RC*  
*VA*  
*VG*  
*VM*  
*VH*

*Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*  
*Corpus Medicorum*  
*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*  
*Monumenta*

*Auctores Antiquissimi*  
*Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*

*Patrologia Latina*  
*Passio Sancti Albani*  
*Revelatio Corcodemi*  
*Vita Sancti Amatoris*  
*Vita Germani Episcopi Autissiodorensis*  
*Vita Beati Martini*  
*Vita Hilarionis*

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**CHAPTER ONE****INTRODUCTION****THE SANCTIFICATION OF GERMANUS OF AUXERRE**

*C'est pourtant une évidence, seule capable d'expliquer l'abondance de cette production littéraire: il faut bien considérer l'hagiographie comme un message, dont nous avons perdu l'intelligibilité, mais qui remplissait une fonction de communication essentielle dans la société qui l'a produite et appréciée.<sup>1</sup>*

At the heart of this research is the idea that the *Vita Germani*, a fifth century hagiographical work written within the cultural basin of the dioceses of Auxerre, is characterised by the presence in its narrative of an evident evolutive pattern. The narrative's aim is to describe the spiritual growth of a man, Germanus of Auxerre, from the moment of his epiphany, to that of the revelation of his holiness, through a series of events described by the author to underline it.

Although the historical relevance of the text, especially in the context of Germanus' role as a symbol of orthodoxy against heresy, cannot and will not be neglected in this work, it is to its literary value, interpretation and merits that the next pages will be dedicated. The ultimate aim of this work is to present an innovative literary interpretation of the *Vita Germani*, founded on the spiritual "formation" of Germanus and his final revelation to holiness. This interpretation has been supported initially by a lexical study of the language most closely associated to Germanus' many miracles, a study which brought about the presence of the evolutive narrative pattern itself.

The text will be read and discussed largely and mainly as a literary piece, and interpreted as such, without forgetting, however, the profound role it had in picturing a clear image of the society of Auxerre at the time of its composition.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Louis Derouet, "Les possibilités d'interprétation sémiologique des textes hagiographiques," *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 62, no. 168 (n.d.), 153–62.

### 1.1 THE SANCTIFICATION OF GERMANUS OF AUXERRE

The *Vita Germani* by Constantius<sup>2</sup> is, from many points of view, a typical saint's life:<sup>3</sup> its protagonist is a strong, pious figure, whose miracles represent the core of the narrative, a narrative that begins with a treatment of his origins and education, the brevity of which throws into relief the longer description of and comments on the holy deeds that follows. There is, however, more to this relatively short text from the end of the fifth century than that.

As with many *vitae*, the VG presents the events that made up the life of the saint, from his birth to the moment his corpse left Italy (where he died) for its journey home to Gaul. A close reading of the text reveals what I will argue is a

<sup>2</sup> I will, from here on, refer to it as VG.

<sup>3</sup> Monographic approaches to various saints' lives will be discussed at different stages in this dissertation, as well as essential characteristics of hagiographical literature. Whereas, for the former, I will refer readers to relevant material in the notes throughout this work and its bibliography, some details should here be given about more general, yet key texts to the development itself of hagiology as a discipline. An excellent introduction to modern (post-1960) hagiographical scholarship (with a useful bibliography) is given by Patrick J. Geary, in "Saints, Scholars and Society," in *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 9–29. The earliest modern approach, focusing especially on the structure, meaning and context of hagiography, are from the Bollandist Hippolite Delehaye. *Les légendes hagiographiques*, Subsidia Hagiographica (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1906) approached the genre systematically and classified *vitae* on the basis of their content and approaches. See also *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Bruxelles: Bureau de la Société des Bollandistes, 1912), and *Cinq leçons sur la méthode hagiographique*, vol. 21, Subsidia Hagiographica (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1934). *Sanctus: essai sur Le culte des saints dans l'Antiquité*, vol. 17, Subsidia Hagiographica (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1927) has proposed an early, structured approach to the figure of the saint and his/her cult. In 1981, the "Centre de recherches sur l'Antiquité Tardive et le Haut Moyen Âge," of the Université de Paris X published, under the supervision of Pierre Riché, *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés: iv<sup>ème</sup>–xii<sup>ème</sup> siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981), which proposes a series of cardinal monographic papers on various hagiographical issues. For the more general aspects of the study of hagiographies see, especially: Michel Sot, "Arguments hagiographiques et historiographiques dans les *Gesta Episcoporum*," 95–104; Gilbert Dragon, "Le saint, le savant, l'astrologue: études de thèmes hagiographiques à travers quelques recueils de 'Questions et Réponses' des vi<sup>e</sup>–vii<sup>e</sup> siècle," 143–156; Jean-Charles Picard, "Conscience urbaine et culte des saints: de Milan sous Liutprand à Vérone sous Pépin d'Italie," 455–469; Claudio Leonardi, "L'Agiografia Romana nel secolo ix," 471–490; Jacques Dubois, "Influence des vies des saints sur le développement des institutions," 491–513. Essential also is the 1953 volume (republished by the Bollandists in 2000 and still very much in use) by René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie: ses sources—ses méthodes, son histoire* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 2000), which has been complemented by an up-to-date bibliography by Robert Godding.

Other interesting sources are Guy Phillipart, François De Vriendt, and Michel Trigalet, "Problèmes et premiers résultats d'une histoire générale de la littérature hagiographique," in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 337–55. Monique Goullet et al. also delivered an essential and up-to-date research on hagiography and its methodological approaches, which will be discussed and fully referenced in the next pages.

Guy Phillipart, Michael Trigalet, "Latin Hagiography before the 9th Century: a Synoptic View," in Jennifer Davis R. and Michael McCormick, eds., *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, Hampshire; Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 110–129. For a view on the difference between third-person narrated hagiography and Christian autobiography, such as Augustine's *Confessiones*, see Peter Turner, "Hagiography and Autobiography in the Late Antique West," in Peter Clarke and Tony Claydon, eds., *Saints and Sanctity*, Studies in Church History 47 (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), 41–50.

design, shown especially by the healing miracles, that tracks the evolution of Germanus from man to saint. This structure begins in the second chapter,<sup>4</sup> in which Germanus is forced into priesthood by the people of Auxerre, and evolves through actions of miraculous and spiritual nature, up to the moment of his full sanctification, represented by two crucial episodes at the end of the text: the resurrection of a young man and a post mortem healing.<sup>5</sup>

Germanus as described in the *vita* begins the narrative as a very human, very fallible man,<sup>6</sup> and at the conclusion he has become fully sanctified,<sup>7</sup> a process symbolically depicted by the ways he performs miracles: either with or without the support of a mundane object. Within its forty-six chapters, VG presents more than the twenty miraculous events. Of these, thirteen can be considered healings<sup>8</sup> and, among them, four are delivered with the use of an object or substance. The first is described in VG 8, where the saint cures a raging illness with blessed oil.<sup>9</sup> The second happens in VG 11, where he feeds cockerels with blessed cereals and they regain the faculty of singing;<sup>10</sup> in VG 15, a young blind girl sees again thanks to his *capsula*<sup>11</sup> and in VG 29, another girl, mute, speaks after he feeds her morsels of barley bread dipped in a handmade drink.<sup>12</sup> Beside the healing of chapter twenty-nine, which occurs in the middle of the text, all miraculous healings carried out with the help of an object are concentrated within the first fifteen chapters. Let us keep this in mind and look at other miracles: of the remaining nine healings, only two happen in the early chapters, one in chapter nine, the other in chapter twenty-two.<sup>13</sup> All others are placed in the second half of the narrative, starting from chapter

<sup>4</sup> I used Levison edition of the text as the basis for this entire work: Constantius of Lyon, “Vita Germani Episcopi Autissiodorensis Auctore Constantius” W. Levison ed., in *Monumenta Germaniae Historicae, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, vol.7 (Hannover and Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1920), 225–83. All references to the subdivision of chapters and their numbering refers to it.

<sup>5</sup> VG 38 and 45, 278–279 and 282.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 2, 252; 3, 252–253; “Deconstructing the Man.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Wood also notices a strong link between health and faith in the VG, in “The End of Roman Britain: Continental Evidence and Parallels” in *Gildas: New Approaches* (Woodbridge and Dover: Boydell Press, 1984), 3–27.

<sup>9</sup> VG 8, 256.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 11, 258–259.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 15, 261–262.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 29, 272–273.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 9, 256–257; 22, 267.

twenty-four onward.<sup>14</sup> Such distribution creates, I believe, a striking pattern: albeit all are miracles, most of the healings in the earlier chapters are delivered through the use of a physical medium, whereas those described later in the text become increasingly associated to the *presentia* and the *potentia*<sup>15</sup> of the saint and the power of his own prayers. Through a close analysis of the narrative, I came to the conclusion this pattern presents itself with even more clarity when focusing on recurrent themes and their lexicon. The themes—and lexicon—of the military world,

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 24, 268–269; 26–27, 270–271; 30, 273–274; 34, 275–276; 38, 278–279; 39, 279; 45, 282.

<sup>15</sup> The concepts of *presentia* and *potentia* are paramount attributes of the figure of the medieval saint. The social and spiritual, as well as, at times, political role of the saint has been one of the most discussed and analyzed topic by late antique and medieval scholars for the best part of the past forty years. Seminal, of course, has been Peter Brown (1971) “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” in *Journal of Roman Studies* 61, 80–101, which started a new wave of interest on the subject. The article was then republished in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982).

For the particular case of Germanus’ own cult, see *Saint Germain d’Auxerre et son temps* (Auxerre: L’Universelle, 1950), 201–312. For a complete view on the figure of the saint and his/her cult in late antique and medieval society see also Brown’s *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), “The Saint as Exemplar,” *Representations* 2 (Spring, 1983), 1–25 and “Holy Men,” in Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins and Michael Whitby eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. xiv “Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), 781–810; (J. Howard-Johnston, Hayward, P.A eds. *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Barbara Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Dated, but always essential is Hippolyte Delehaye’s *Sanctus*.

For an a view on the cult of saints and the early regulation of canonization see Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), especially pp. 3–35. For early thought on the cult of saints (martyrs in particular) and its regulation, see, again, Peter Brown, “Enjoying the Saints in Late Antiquity,” in *Early Medieval Europe* 9, no. 1 (2000), 1–24; André Vauchez, “The Church and the Cult of the Saints in the Medieval West,” in Jean Birrell trans., *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9–58; for a later approach, see Paul Fouracre’s essay “The Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to Regulate the Cult of Saints,” in the already cited *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown*, 143–165.

Interesting also is the comparison between pagan and Christian holy man proposed by Garth Fowden in “The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 102 (1982), 33–59; for more on the saint in an Eastern context, see Cyril Mango, “Saints,” in Guglielmo Cavallo, ed., *The Byzantines* (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 1992), 255–280; David Frankfurter, “Syncretism and the Holy Man in Late Antique Egypt,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2003), 339–385; Mark S. Burrows, “On the Visibility of the God in the Holy Man: A Reconsideration of the Role of the Apa in the Pachomian,” in *Vigiliae Christianae* 41, no. 1 (March, 1987), 11–33; Michel Van Esbroeck, “Le Saint comme symbole,” and Evelyne Patlagean, “Sainteté et pouvoir,” in Sergei Hackel, ed., *The Byzantine Saint, A Special Number of Sobornost Incorporating Eastern Churches Review* (St Bernardino: Borgo Press, 1984). Thomas Head’s monograph *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: the Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200*, analyzes the cult of saints in all its forms, in strict relation to its local milieu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

On the the history of the process of canonization in the West, see *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberledge, 1948), which offers also an excursus on the history of the cult of saints.

Finally, for a historical and literary excursus of saints from Late Antiquity throughout the Middle Ages, see S.C. Aston, “The Saint in Medieval Literature,” *Modern Language Review* 65, no. 4 (Oct. 1970), xxv–xlii.

food and, clearly, of healing, when placed into literary, doctrinal and liturgical contexts, seem to highlight the presence of this evolutive motif, which is essential for the narrative, but also in order to characterise the figure of Germanus. Such lexical approach is not, however, to be considered the final aim of this work, but rather a means to an end that proposes a new literary interpretation of the text itself, based on the presence in the narrative of a clear evolutive pattern of its protagonist, represented by his epiphany, spiritual evolution and final revelation to holiness. The literary nature of such interpretation is emphasised by the two approaches used to carry on research: one focusing on the text itself and its content, the other on a full comparative analysis of the VG and other relevant literary works of the time.

Intra-textual analysis focused on the critical reading of the VG with the aim of underlining the idea of the formative evolution of the character in it. Inter-textual comparison, on the other hand, has stressed the uniqueness of such a pattern, which has not been identified in any of the other hagiographical text considered in this work. The literary interpretation of the VG proposed aims at providing, on the basis of a critical approach to both the text and the literary context to which it belongs, an innovative literary view of the text, emphasised by the comparative nature of much of the research behind it. It is, in other words, not only the emphasis placed on the “formative” aspect of Germanus’ character that strikes, but also its uniqueness when literarily contextualised, as there is an evident lack of the same in the other texts chosen for the formation of a comparative corpus.

As mentioned in the previous pages, miracles, in particular healing miracles, seem to follow an escalating pattern in the narrative, and it is mainly through their interpretation that the spiritual evolution of Germanus is shown. This idea has been outlined before: Wood, for instance, is convinced of the existence of a strong contextual link between Germanus’ holiness and the idea of health,<sup>16</sup> although it is Van Egmond in particular who identifies a discernible evolution involving healings

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<sup>16</sup> Ian Wood, “The end of Roman Britain,” 13.

and exorcisms in Constantius' work.<sup>17</sup> His emphasis is directed towards the rituality of each miracle and how it appears to decrease the more the narrative evolves towards the end of the saint's life.<sup>18</sup> Ritual, Van Egmond says, is a profound form of communication not only between the characters of a text, but also between the text and its audience, through which Constantius wants to underline the increment of Germanus' spiritual power.<sup>19</sup> It is, indeed, a similar interpretation to that which I will suggest in the coming chapters; I will argue, however, that Van Egmond's view is far from being complete, as the matter of Germanus' spiritual powers and their growth seems more complex. If I share Van Egmond's view when he recognises the text as an evolving body of narrative where healings are at the centre of this forward *motus*, I will also argue that more attention needs to be given to the symbolic acts through which miracles are performed and how they are described: it is not simply a matter of power and ritual, but of power and how the ritual is carried out and how it is described.<sup>20</sup>

The presence or absence of objects in the performance of healing miracles becomes an indicator of the degree of spiritual power Germanus has reached in the narrative, at once representing his growing sanctity and a symbol of such a sanctity in literary form. If Van Egmond and I agree in searching for the rituality within the miraculous, his quest is focused on the manner in which this rituality signifies Germanus' holiness: in other words, he looks at Germanus as a saint. I, on the other hand, will try to look at the same rituality (that is, the way the miracles are performed) also from its physical and pragmatic point of view, because it is through it that Germanus is defined, at once, as a saint and a man. This is the postulate necessary to understand and identify the presence of the sanctifying process in the narrative.

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<sup>17</sup> Wolfert S. Van Egmond, *Conversing with the Saints: Communication in Pre-Carolingian Hagiography from Auxerre*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); I agree with Van Egmond's view on the way healings and exorcisms seem to be simply two different sides of the same coin for Constantius (56); I will therefore consider them within the same group of miraculous events.

<sup>18</sup> Van Egmond, 53–57, but also J.C. Eby, "Bringing the *Vita* to Life: Bede's Symbolic Structure of the Life of St. Cuthbert," *The American Benedictine Review* 48, no. 3 (1997), 316–338.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> For the ritual and evocative power of words in relation to tradition and performance, albeit in the context of oral literature, see John Miles Foley, "Word-Power, Performance and Tradition," *The Journal of American Folklore* 105, no. 417 (Summer 1992): 275–301.



Generally speaking, the idea that the close reading of hagiography may supply material for literary criticism is not surprising, as we will see below in “The Structure of the *Vita Germani*.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, current scholarship tends to underline the necessity of literary and linguistic approaches to such texts to understand them more profoundly: “...concentration upon language in theory allows one to dig deeper meanings out of texts. Meaning, in this view, is ultimately constituted not by the formal message of the writing, but by its use of metaphor,” say Fouracre and Gerberding.<sup>22</sup> In the case of the VG, the “deeper meanings” skilfully woven by Constantius into the narrative seem to describe the spiritual and inner development of a man on the path toward sainthood. It is in this, as this dissertation will argue, that the originality of the text lies. The Auxerrois comes across as an exceptional hagiographical figure, especially when compared to other examples of fourth- and fifth-century Gaulish saints. Germanus, it will become evident, does transcend his own humanity to become a saint, but he is also, especially in the first chapters of the life, an example of human strength and, crucially, fallibility. This particular aspect of his literary persona sets him apart from many hagiographical figures of his time.

## 1.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

Each chapter of this thesis will focus on a specific moment of Germanus’ evolution from man to saint, and it will do so using the Latin text as its foundation. Chapter Two, “The Structure of the *Vita Germani*,” will discuss in greater details ways in which the *vita*’s narrative supports the episodes I have identified as markers of Germanus’ spiritual evolution and provide a contextual introduction and corollary to them: the work will be presented as the eidological biography of the saint, that is, centred not on the chronology of his actions, but rather on the development of his character, that is, when talking about a saint, the process of his or her becoming one. The concepts of *eidologie* and *chronologie*, initially applied to Roman biography and reflecting those of *praxis* and *ēthos* introduced by Xenophon,<sup>23</sup> will be proposed as a

<sup>21</sup> “The Structure of the *Vita Germani*:” 2.3.2. History and Miracles.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding eds., *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640–720*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 40.

<sup>23</sup> “The Structure of the *Vita Germani*:” 2.3.1 Hagiography and Classical Biography.

foundation for the interpretation of the narrative development of hagiography in general, and the VG in particular.

This analysis will first undertake a study of the “physical” text and describe how its editors have dealt with its structure on the basis of its manuscript tradition, focusing in particular on Levison’s division of the text in “paragraphs,” and Boriüs’<sup>24</sup> choice to create larger, chapter-like sections based on the chronology of the events as they are presented. A background on the potential Greco-Roman and biblical influences on the hagiographical genre will be undertaken, before introducing the above mentioned concepts of *eidologie* and *chronologie*: these will reinforce the proposed structural reading of the VG, which will then be described and discussed in the remnant of the chapter.

Chapter Three, “Deconstructing the Man,” will analyse the events of VG 2–3, in which Constantius describes Germanus’ election to bishop and his first steps into asceticism, taken in the form of food renunciation. In this chapter the analysis of the events in the *vita* and their vocabulary will bear witness to specific characteristics of the saint, all emphasising his humanity and the beginning of his detachment from it. When Germanus actively enters the narrative in VG 2, he is still very much a mundane man— and a rather unhappy one—who is forcefully asked to become bishop of Auxerre. Becoming a bishop was an imposed, undesired duty, a point Constantius makes strongly in the text and which will be one of the central themes of “Deconstructing the Man.” The chapter will argue that, by emphasising how unwillingly Germanus accepted his role as a bishop, Constantius wanted to underline how profoundly human Germanus was: he is not presented as an already holy, spiritual protagonist, as it happens, for instance, in the *Vita Beati Martini*, the *Vita Amatoris* and the *Vita Hilarionis*, but as a man, in all his simplicity and fallacy. Germanus, in other words, begins his path to sainthood as a humble human being. The chapter will also introduce two of the recurring themes in the text: war and food. Germanus’ eating habits are described in detail and, from being symbolic of the most basic needs of every man, they turn into a representation of Germanus’ spiritual superiority. War and its language is central to the description of Germanus’ election

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<sup>24</sup> *Vie de Saint Germain d’Auxerre*, René Boriüs ed. and trans. (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1965).

to bishop, but it also becomes a sign of his spirituality in relevant events in VG 17-18 and VG 28 which I will discuss in “Constructing the Saint.” The language of food and the language of military life are, at once, indicators of his humanity and of his coming sainthood. These two themes, along with those of medicine and liturgy, —which become preponderant in the central part of the narrative— are at the centre of this study, as they offered the most fertile of investigating grounds.

If “Deconstructing the Man” will discuss, so to speak, the beginning of Germanus’ journey to sainthood, the fourth chapter of this dissertation, “Constructing the Saint,” will be all about the journey itself. Germanus, now conducting a fully ascetic life is already, to the eye of his people, a holy figure: the faithful recur to him in moments of need, his spiritual charisma and power represented in the narrative by the miracles he performs. These very miracles, though, as described by Constantius, give the reader proof of Germanus’ still dual nature— human and divine: the active presence of an object or a substance in their narrative stands for Germanus’ ties with humanity, which are still present and cohabiting with his developing holiness, represented, on the other hand, by the very definition of such events, which are always described as otherworldly by Constantius. Healings performed with the use of an object are spiritually powerful, yet pragmatic and related to everyday practices. These miracles, if analysed contextually and lexically, will show how their performance is not only “pragmatic” because of the involvement of an object, but that it is strongly reminiscent of medical or liturgical practices. This points at a double narrative value of the miracles, which are “supernatural” yet “practical” at the same time. Such nature becomes another sign of that pattern of spiritual and otherworldly growth the figure of Germanus undertakes in the text.

Chapter Five, “Germanus’ holiness revealed,” will concentrate on the final stage of Germanus’ sanctification, represented in the text by a series of miracles, *ante* and *post mortem*, carried out without any material aid, where only the saint’s *potentia* and *presentia* are at work. Miracles in which Germanus no longer employs external objects, but where miraculous action is successful thanks to his sole presence, touch and prayer are the last narrative representation of his sanctification:

the climax of this part of the VG is all contained within its last eight chapters, in which not only are Germanus' miracles performed through his presence alone, but they also escalate in significance: it is within this part of the text the only resurrection carried out by Germanus is placed. Because objects are no longer used, the success of the miracle depends entirely on Germanus himself, that is, on his own role as a holy man. Because of their distribution, I believe these events represent the apex of Germanus' sanctification. His path to sainthood complete, his devotion to God no longer questionable, Germanus now performs miracles of a purely spiritual origin. *Lacrimae*, *feretrum* and prayer will be the central words and actions I will analyse and compare, in presence and use, with other texts, to demonstrate how these particular miracles are, indeed, the work of a holy man.

Chapter Six of this dissertation, "Afterlife of the Saint," will provide a brief overview of the influence Constantius' VG had on later hagiographical works, possible avenues for further research and a final summary of this work.

### 1.3 METHODOLOGY

I outlined in the previous pages how the VG presents itself not simply as the life of a saint, as the description of his unchanging holiness, but strikingly also as the narration of his growth from man to holy man. An attentive reader will spot this pattern, especially when it comes to Germanus' thaumaturgic powers, which act more and more as the sole means of healing with the approaching of the end of the text. A curious and careful reader would also notice the heavy presence of the themes of food, medicine and the military, and in particular how deeply woven within the narrative of some of the most flamboyant of Germanus' miracles—or humanly powerful actions—they appear to be. As they are so deeply related to Germanus' miracles, but also to his human figure, these themes offered a contextual continuum to follow, because they embraced all aspects of his life as a person and as a saint.

Such a relevance called for a closer analysis of each theme, an analysis that resulted in the discovery of how certain lexical items stood out because of their increased frequency or the importance of their roles in the narrative: they, in fact, recurred so often or in such a distinctive fashion they called for more research, both

within the VG and in a larger hagiographical and doctrinal context. Words such as *ieiunium*, *oleum*, *panis*, *hordeum* and *triticum*, all related to the theme of food and nutrition, but also crucially hinting at the realm of medicine, as I will discuss in the next chapters, along with other essential terms such as *capsula*, *feretrum* and *lacrima* are central to episodes around which my argument develops. Hence the importance of analysing their presence, diffusion and meaning in literature that could have influenced—or been influenced by—the VG.

The words provided a starting point, but the next question became how to investigate them. It seemed pointless to compare them with usage in all Latin literature written before the VG, but the question then became how to create a corpus of comparanda. In order to do so, I considered factors such as temporal and geographical proximity, as well as contextual similarities and doctrinal relevance; hagiographies, epistles and sermons have been chosen especially on the basis of their dates and location of composition, as well as their affinity of genre, whereas theological and doctrinal texts have been selected on that of their relevance at the time of Germanus and Constantius. My first decision was to focus especially on works temporally and geographically similar, i.e. those written in Gaul between the late-fourth and the mid- to late-sixth century, and of hagiographical or theological origin. These include the lives of Martin of Tours, Amator and the vision piece *Revelatio Corcodemi*, all composed temporally and geographically near Constantius. I have also considered, though, Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* (composed far from Gaul and earlier)<sup>25</sup> because of its affinity of genre and, crucially, because of its similarity in content with the VG. Healing and medicine are at the centre of many of the miracles on which I based my argument, so medical texts of Classical times have also been taken into consideration. The comparative corpus outlined above can be summarised as follows:<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> "Deconstructing the Saint," 3.3.1 Embracing Spirituality in the Corpus and Coeval Hagiography.

<sup>26</sup> All relevant bibliographical details on these texts will be given within the main body of the dissertation and in the Bibliography.

GROUP A HAGIOGRAPHY		GROUP B CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE	GROUP C MEDICAL WORKS
A1: GALLIC	A2: NON-GALLIC		
Sulpicius Severus, <i>Vita Martini</i> (Gaul, ca. 400). VM	Jerome, <i>Vita Hilarionis</i> (Syria, end of the fourth century). VH	Sidonius Apollinaris, <i>Epistolae et Carmina</i> (Lyon, first half of the fifth century).	Celsus, <i>De Medicina</i> (first century)
Mamertus, <i>Revelatio Corcodemi</i> (Auxerre, first half of the fifth century). RC		John Cassian, <i>Collationes</i> (born in Scythia Minor but associated with Marseille, 350-435)	Marcellus Empiricus, <i>De Medicamentis Liber</i> (4th-5th century)
Stephanus Africanus, <i>Vita Amatoris</i> (Gaul, late fifth to early sixth century). VA		John Cassian, <i>De Coenobiorum Institutis</i>	Anonymous, <i>Medicina Plinii</i> (3rd century)
Verus of Orange, <i>Vita Eutropii</i> (Orange, late fifth- sixth century).			

A final group relating to doctrinal and theological texts includes, beside the Bible, all relevant works of the Church Fathers, from Tertullian to the middle of the sixth century. These texts have all greatly contributed to the evolution of my argument and will be copiously cited and referred to throughout the next chapters.

Thanks to the comparative work carried out between the VG and the texts of the Corpus, in particular of groups A and B, the themes of food, the military and medicine have been, in fact, recognised as having been used peculiarly by

Constantius and possibly, I will explain and argue in the next chapters, with the aim of emphatically describing Germanus' spiritual passage from man to saint.

The same can be said about the selected lexical items belonging to the semantic fields of food, the military and medicine: each of them appeared to have a very defined role in the narrative, which goes beyond its signified, a role that explains the events and ties them to a wealth of inter-textual references, all aiming at emphasising the evolutive pattern of Germanus' character in the text.

Words, though, needed to be analysed in temporal, as well as literary contexts, because their semantic evolution, as well as their reception, could have held important clues about how Constantius used them in the VG, as well as about the context of such use. Each word of interest was recorded in accordance to its recurrence in the VG and in chosen historical periods, namely Classical (roughly up to the beginning of the third century), First Patristic period (from the beginning of the third century, to the beginning of the sixth) and Second Patristic period (from the beginning of the sixth to the end of the eighth). The cataloguing of each word has been done with the aid of both the CETEDOC Library of Christian Latin Texts (CLCLT) and *Patrologia Latina* databases, in particular the *LLT-A* (*The Library of Latin Texts-series A*), the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* and the *Patrologia Latina*<sup>27</sup> online database. Thanks to their invaluable help, I have been able not only to clarify the distribution of every relevant lexical item throughout the historic periods taken into account, but also to place each word in the context of the texts where it appeared.

The in-depth reading and translation of the VG highlighted with strength the presence of an evolutive pattern related to the figure of Germanus and his sanctification. This pattern became particularly visible in the context of healing miracles and recurrent themes: the military, food and eating habits, medicine, the last two protagonists, in most occasions, of the healings themselves. To show not only the presence, but the peculiarity of such an approach to the figure of the saint, I looked at other texts related, in various manners, to the VG itself: the presence of themes and lexical items belonging to their semantic fields have been not only

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<sup>27</sup> From now on referred to as PL.

searched, but narratively and contextually studied, to offer both background and comparison to Constantius' choices. The ultimate results of the process summarised in this paragraph and described in the previous pages are presented, analysed and discussed in the next chapters and provide, I believe, support the idea Constantius' aimed not only at describing the life of Germanus the holy man, but also at describing the struggle and the various steps that lead him to become so.

#### 1.4 THE CORPUS

The composition of the corpus of comparanda went through several stages. As described above, the parameters of geographical and genre proximity were the most relevant to the selection, along with the date of their composition. At this first stage the list of works potentially apt to be used in this research was large and included, I eventually realised, texts with very little in common with the VG and, indeed, with very little to offer from a comparative point of view, both lexical and contextual. For instance, Athanasius' *Vita Antonii* was excluded from the comparative corpus because it reached the Latin west in translation: I felt that, as a consequence, the relevance of the text may have been noticeably altered by the fact it had not been originally composed in Latin and decided not to use the text as a primary, comparative source. I have, nevertheless, kept in mind the immense importance of Athanasius' work for the genre of hagiography itself, especially from a thematic point of view, reason for which the text will appear in this study.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the text has been kept in mind and consulted because of its essentiality in the history of hagiography and represented an important source for the contextualisation, both temporal and from the point of view of the genre, of the VG.

The more research advanced, the more the same issues presented by the *Vita Antonii* in the context of the Corpus' hagiographical section became evident for other comparanda. As a consequence, the final Corpus presents many a difference from the original one, created before starting the comparative process of those texts with the VG. The final result includes fewer texts, but all decisively relevant to the study

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<sup>28</sup> See the introduction to *Athanasius: The Life of Anthony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, Robert C. Gregg trans. and ed., William A. Clebsch, ed., *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (Mahwa: Paulist Press, 1980), 1-28 and Helen Waddell, *The Desert Fathers* (London: Constanble and Co., 1946) for an overview of Anthony the Hermit and his historical person.



of the VG itself. Texts such as the *Panegyrici Latini*, or Maximus of Turin's *Sermones* were initially included in a group including texts produced close in time and place to the VG, to which they also presented an affinity in genre; the same could be said for the *Peregrinatio Aetheriae*, the description of a pilgrim trip in the Holy Land by a Spanish nun in the fourth century, and Merobaudes *De Christo*, a Latin poem produced in Gaul during the fifth century. All these texts presented, at least on paper, the possibility of presenting strong conceptual and lexical similarities to the VG, which did not happen. The same can be said for the works of Salvianus (*Ad Ecclesiam*), Orosius (*Historiae adversus paganos*) and Rutilius (*De reditu suo*), which were all part of the initial Corpus, but were later discarded.

Other texts, though, were added: when the importance of John Cassian and his view of fasting and asceticism became essential to understand and interpret Constantius' own attitude to the same matters, I extended my interest not only to the *Collationes* but also to the *De Coenobiorum Institutis*, which dealt directly with the matter of monasticism and, indeed, ascetic practices. For the same reasons, a text written miles away from Gaul and a good ninety years before the VG, Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis* became an essential piece of comparative hagiography, through which a lot about the VG has been revealed.

The same can be said of medical texts, as the strong medical parallels in some of the miracles of the VG, as already mentioned in the previous pages, and as will be discussed widely in "Constructing the Saint," brought about the necessity to find a medical comparative source. The first text to be taken into consideration was Pliny *Naturalis Historia*,<sup>29</sup> but because of its early date of composition, the transmitted, fourth century *Medicina Plinii*<sup>30</sup> has been favoured. This text was based on the medical remedies described in the *Naturalis Historiae* and was created as a short compendium for traveling medical experts.<sup>31</sup> Its diffusion at the time of

<sup>29</sup> Pliny, *Naturalis Historiae Libri xxxvii* vols. i-v, C. Mayhoff, ed., (Leipzig: Teubner, 1892-1909); Trevor Morgan Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History: the Empire in the Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Aude Doody, *Pliny's Encyclopedia: The Reception of the Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> A. Önnersfors, ed., *Plinii Secundi Iunioris qui Feruntur De Medicina Libri Tres*, Corpus Medicorum Latinorum iii (Berlin: 1964); Valentin Rose ed., *Plini Secundi quae Fertur Una cum Gargili Martialis Medicina* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1875); this latter includes large portions of Gargil Martialis's *De Hortis* (renamed in the text *Medicinae ex Oleribus et Pomis*).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 3-5.

Germanus and Constantius is well attested,<sup>32</sup> and makes it a likely known source for both the protagonist and the author of the VG. The first modern edition of this work, curated by Valentin Rose for Teubner,<sup>33</sup> also included large fragments of a medico-agricultural work, *De Hortis*, by Gargilius Martialis. These fragments, renamed, in the context of the *Medicina Plinii Medicinae ex Oleribus et Pomis*, provide a list of remedies and properties for a series of well known fruits and vegetables, but unfortunately do not provide sections about the medical use of cereals, and has been, as a consequence, left out of the Corpus. It will, nevertheless, be used when discussing the potential medical uses of oil, as it presents the substance in more than one instant as a medical adjuvant.<sup>34</sup>

The same can be said of Marcellus Empiricus' *De Medicamentis*,<sup>35</sup> composed in Gaul whether at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>36</sup> Marcellus Empiricus' detailed and well structured work is, because of place and date of composition, a necessary part of the medical comparanda of the Corpus.

Celsus' *De medicina*, likely written sometime in the first half of the first century AD,<sup>37</sup> is the best known of the medical texts of the Corpus: it has been chosen because of its influence on subsequent medical literature, but especially for its latinity, elegant and fluent.<sup>38</sup> Considering both the writing style and the education of Constantius,<sup>39</sup> his familiarity with a text of such standards seems more than plausible.

A series of late antique medical texts of north African origin, in particular Cassius Felix's *De Medicina*, have been left out mostly because their date of composition ( in the case of Cassius Felix, 447 AD) seemed to be too close to the dates of possible composition of the VG to have already made an impression on the

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<sup>32</sup> D.R. Langslow, *Medical Latin in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 64-65; Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2004), 5.

<sup>33</sup> See note 29 above for bibliographical details.

<sup>34</sup> "Constructing the Saint:" from section 4.2.1 Oil and the Healing of the *Tumefacta Infirmis*, to 4.2.5 The Capsula.

<sup>35</sup> Marcellus Empiricus, *De Medicamentis Liber*, M. Niedermann ed., J. Kollesch and D. Nickel trans., vol. v, *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1968).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 43-44. Also see, for more information on the text, 1.4.5 De Medicina.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 44-45, but especially Harm Pinkster, "Notes on the Syntax of Celsus," *Mnemosyne* 45, Fourth Series, fasc. 4(1992), 513-524.

<sup>39</sup> Or, at least, what we have managed to learn, as discussed in 1.7 Constantius of Lyon.

mind of a well educated, author such as Constantius. Whereas such a recent text may have been already known and in use among the medical community, it seemed less likely that a wider, albeit well educated, audience, was fully aware of it, to the point of implicitly referring to it while writing.<sup>40</sup>

The Comparative Corpus presented in this dissertation, hence, has evolved step by step with my research. It does not exclude, clearly, other comparative sources to which I have occasionally referred to for the analysis of single passages. These texts, such as, for example, Galen's *De Ptisana*, or a plethora of Classical works on Agriculture,<sup>41</sup> have been used only in one instance and were, more than anything, used as support sources, rather than comparative texts.

#### 1.4.1 THE VITA SANCTI AMATORIS EPISCOPI

The VA was commissioned by Bishop Aunacharius of Auxerre, along with, it seems, a metrical version of the VG. Aunacharius' rule over the see of Auxerre lasted from the last quarter of the sixth century to the very beginning of the seventh, as a consequence, the VA should be dated around that time. Van Edgmond pinpoints the specific date between 561 and 605. The author of the text is Stephanus Africanus, about whom very little is known. Arguments for the authenticity of the VA are mostly based<sup>42</sup> on two factors: the first is the existence—and proven legitimacy—of the epistolary exchange between Aunacharius and Stephanus himself. In these two missives, the bishop commissions a prose life of Amator and a verse life of Germanus<sup>43</sup> and Stephanus answers positively to the request. The two letters, but especially that written by Aunacharius, also delineate the type of audience to whom the VA may have been addressed.<sup>44</sup> The second is the fact that no other text referred

<sup>40</sup> Langslow, 56-60; Nutton, 299.

<sup>41</sup> "Constructing the Saint:" see footnote 33 above.

<sup>42</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 74-5. See also René Louis, "L'Église d'Auxerre et Ses Évêques avant Saint Germain," in *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son Temps* (Auxerre: L'Universelle, 1950), 49-56 and 86-87.

<sup>43</sup> Of which no witness has survived; in fact, both Levison ("Die Quellen," 146) and Van Egmond (*Conversing with Saints*, 75) provide good arguments supporting the possibility that such text has never been written.

<sup>44</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 78.

to as a life of Saint Amator has been transmitted to us, or even mentioned in Late Antique or Medieval sources.<sup>45</sup>

The VA has been largely and evidently influenced by Constantius' text, which is shown by the large number of similar events these hagiographies share;<sup>46</sup> the text has survived in seven manuscripts: two from the ninth and two from the twelfth century. The earliest of the manuscripts is the *Codex Reginensis Latinus* 187, which also contains a version of the RC, which is also contained, along with the VG and other texts, in the manuscript 154 of the *École de Médecine* at Montpellier. Van Egmond underlines the possibility this particular manuscript may have been produced in Auxerre, because of the relevance given to this three texts in its composition.<sup>47</sup> The later manuscripts, all dated to the twelfth century, are collections of several different hagiographies and are of little interest to the scholar of the VG; two of them, nevertheless contain, beside the VA, excerpts from the *Vita Germani Interpolata*, a fact that not only connects them strongly to the city of Auxerre,<sup>48</sup> but also to each other.<sup>49</sup> Today, the VA can be found in Duru's *Bibliothèque Historique de L'Yonne*.<sup>50</sup>

#### 1.4.2 THE REVELATIO CORCODEMI <sup>51</sup>

This short, barely known text is a real gem of Auxerrois hagiography and, in my opinion, of religious literature of the fifth and sixth century in general. Written mostly in the first person, an interesting feature for the time,<sup>52</sup> the RC is a vision narrative in which the protagonist, Mamertus a pagan, travels towards Auxerre to listen to the words of its bishop, Germanus. Night approaches, the winds are high, and the city still far off, so Mamertus decides to take refuge in a funerary chapel

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>46</sup> See Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 76–7.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 80–81, and footnotes 62–63.

<sup>48</sup> As rightly pointed out by Van Egmond, 81.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 81, footnote 64.

<sup>50</sup> Stephanus Africanus, "Vita Amatoris," in L. M. Duru ed., *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne, ou collection des légendes, chroniques et documents divers pour servir à l'histoire des différentes contrées qui forment aujourd'hui ce département*, 2 volumes (Auxerre and Paris: 1850–1863), 136–160.

<sup>51</sup> "Revelatio Corcodemi," in H.M Duru ed., *Bibliothèque Historique*, 57–66.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 97.

where he falls asleep. What ensues is the description of the vision in which Corcodemus reveals himself to Mamertus as the resident of the tomb, as well as a dream where Germanus makes an appearance, too, as bishop of Auxerre. Mamertus eventually reaches Auxerre and is converted to Christianity by Germanus.<sup>53</sup>

Very little is known about the origin or dating of the text; it is part of the *Vita Germani Interpolata*, the composition of which could be placed at any time between the years of Aunacharius' episcopate to the year Bede completed his *Historia Ecclesiastica*<sup>54</sup> in 731.

Recent scholarship has argued there are strong ties between the RC and the *Vita Peregrini*, some seeing the latter as the inspiration for the former, as in the case of René Louis; others, like Van Egmond, are more inclined to believe the RC is precedent to the *Vita Peregrini*.<sup>55</sup> If it is probably true that the text is not of great importance from a historical point of view,<sup>56</sup> it is nevertheless important because of its strong relation with the VG and the figure of Germanus himself. Not only is Germanus the protagonist of Mamertus' conversion, he also appears as part of his dream. Germanus' presence in the narrative is, therefore, essential and becomes important for understanding the diffusion, if not of Constantius' VG, at least of Germanus' cult. Also very interesting is the conceptual parallel between the two texts: the RC describes the evolution of Mamertus from pagan to Christian, the VG narrates that of Germanus from Christian to holy man.

As for its manuscript history, the RC has survived in all the manuscripts of the *Vita Germani Interpolata*, of which it is a part, as well as independently in others, always associated with Constantius' VG. Two of these are the same ninth-century manuscripts from the Vatican Library and the Bibliothèque National de France where the VA also appears.

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<sup>53</sup> The subject of visions and dreams in Late Antique and Merovingian texts has been tackled most recently by Isabel Moreira in *Dreams, Visions and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>54</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 98.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 99–100.

<sup>56</sup> Levison, "Die Quellen," 160–1.

### 1.4.3 THE VITA BEATI MARTINI

The VM was composed in the early years of the development of hagiography and it is therefore considered a seminal work in the genre.<sup>57</sup> The early reception of the text, though, was not entirely positive: in fact, the flamboyancy of the miracles attributed to Martin was not accepted unequivocally as the truth, to the point where even monks of his own monastery at Marmoutier doubted the miraculous origin of many of Martin's deeds.<sup>58</sup>

Certainly the best known among the hagiographical texts of the corpus, better known, in fact, than the VG itself, Sulpicius Severus' creation is essential to the narrative of the VG, as Constantius has based so much of his work on it. In fact, the similarities between the VG and Sulpicius Severus' works extend also to the *Dialogues*, where the narrative of some Martinian miracles certainly inspired the Lyonnais.<sup>59</sup> The text is also of extreme interest because it presents two topics which were to recur, albeit in different fashions,<sup>60</sup> in the VG: that of asceticism and that of war and the military, both discussed in the following chapter. Of particular relevance, as I will show, are the differences between Germanus' and Martin's attitudes towards their episcopate and their very different outlooks on life before becoming bishops. Their asceticism is also part of the many similarities between the two texts, as both

<sup>57</sup> Clare Stancliffe, *Saint Martin and His Hagiographer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 6. See also John P. Bequette, "Sulpicius Severus's *Life of Saint Martin*: The Saint and His Biographer" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 13:2 (Spring 2010), 56-78. For more on the figure of Saint Martin and his cult, which has been paramour to all Gallic saints, see Eugen Ewig, "Le culte de saint Martin à l'époque Franque," *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 47, no. 144 (1961), 1-18; Allan Scott McKinley, "The First Two Centuries of Saint Martin of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 14, no. 2 (2006), 173-200; Régine Pernoud, *Martin of Tours: Soldier, Bishop, Saint* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006); Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), especially for his study of the cult of Saint Martin, 13-27.

<sup>58</sup> Stancliffe, *Saint Martin*, 7.

<sup>59</sup> For a detailed outline of all parallel passages between the VG and Sulpicius Severus Martinian texts see Levison, "Die Quellen," 114-18. In the context of parallels in holy actions between a well known holy figure and a less established one, see also the interesting remarks made by Herbert, in her discussion of the *Vita Cainnechi*, where Cainnech's similarities to Columba were described to emphasize the former's holiness. (Maire Herbert, "The *Vita Columbae* and Irish Hagiography" in J. Carey, M. Herbert and P. Ó'Riain, eds., *Studies in Irish Hagiography: 'Saints and Scholars'* (Dublin: Four Court Press, 1999), 34. For an interesting take, on the other hand, on the differences between the two texts, especially in their depiction of an episcopal model, see *La Vita Germani di Costanzo di Lione: Realtà Storica e Prospettive Storiografiche nella Gallia del Quinto Secolo*, Memorie IX, vol. VII.2, (Roma: Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1996).192-207, especially 200-201.

<sup>60</sup> "Deconstructing the Man."

appear to have been somehow inspired by Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis*, although differently.<sup>61</sup>

The VM is the first work by Sulpicius Severus and it has been dated roughly to the end of the fourth century. According to Stancliffe, the author began collecting material on Martin around 393, the possible date of their first meeting, and continued to do so for three to four years.<sup>62</sup> The hagiography may have been completed as early as 396.<sup>63</sup> The audience of the text was paramount to Sulpicius Severus: it was addressed to members of the Gaulish Christian community who supported or were part of the ascetic movement inspired by Martin himself and that was to find true expression in the monasticism of Lérins. The bishops of Gaul, though,<sup>64</sup> did not always see such movements in a positive light, not at least in the beginning: it seems plausible, then, to read the VM not only as a praise of asceticism, but also as an apology for the same, literarily embodied by the deeds of a holy bishop-hermit, Martin.<sup>65</sup> Importantly, the strong references in the text to Roman culture and literature, as well as the pagan roots of Martin's family, make the text a piece of interest for those Christians in Gaul who "were still torn by their love for the classical culture in which they had been nurtured."<sup>66</sup>

The manuscript history of the text is remarkably similar to that of the VG: it has been transmitted through two main families of codices, which suffered from heavy interpolations.<sup>67</sup> The earliest, modern edition of the text had been published by CSEL in 1866, under the supervision of Karl Halm, who chose, among the several lines of manuscripts, a selected few on which he based his edition.<sup>68</sup> In 1967,

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., and Stancliffe, *Martin*, 6–8, 61–70. A detailed account of Sulpicius Severus' use of Jerome as a source –and of the moral issues behind it– is given by Richard J. Goodrich in "Vir Maxime Catholicus: Sulpicius Severus' Use and Abuse of Jerome in the *Dialogi*," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58 (2007), 189–210.

<sup>62</sup> Stancliffe, *Martin*, 72.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>67</sup> Sulpicius Severus, "Vita Sancti Martini," Karl Halm ed., in *Vita Sancti Martini, Epistulae, Dialogi*, CSEL 1 (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866), v–xiv.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 108.

Sources Chrétiennes published a new version, edited by Fontaine, which also contains excellent background material.<sup>69</sup>

#### 1.4.4 THE VITA EUTROPII

The *Vita Eutropii* is a relatively short text narrating the life and miracles of Eutropius of Orange, bishop of the southern french town at the end of the fifth century. The years of his episcopate, according to the Bollandists,<sup>70</sup> may have at least in part coincided with those of Germanus' episcopate in Auxerre. His hagiography, composed by Verus of Orange, who is considered his successor on the episcopal seat of the town, fulfils many hagiographical *topoi* typical of the style, and presents some interesting similarities with the VG. The Bollandists first published the work incomplete, as pointed out by Varin in an early complete edition of the text, and catalogued on the 27th of May, the day of Eutropius' martyrdom.

#### 1.4.5 THE VITA HILARIONIS<sup>71</sup>

The relevance of the VH for this dissertation is chiefly based on the five chapters Jerome dedicates to the description of the hermit's diet: these chapters describe the eating habits of the saint, which resemble closely those of Germanus and provide a useful literary comparative to the Auxerrois' form of asceticism. The VH has been cited by Stancliffe as a possible source for the VM,<sup>72</sup> as it forms, along with the Athanasius' *Vita Antonii* and Jerome's own *Vita Pauli Monachi* and *Vita Malchi Monachi Captivi*, an example of very early hagiography, produced in a time when the genre was far from being settled.<sup>73</sup> The VH was most likely composed in Bethlehem around the end of the fourth century and it remains the only composition about this desert father. The text is very clearly divided into sections dealing Hilarion's early life and conversion, his time in the desert with Antony, his miraculous deeds, his attempts to escape people and seek refuge in the desert. The

<sup>69</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vie de Saint Martin*, J. Fontaine ed., Sources Chrétiennes 133 (Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1967).

<sup>70</sup> *Vie de Saint Eutrope, évêque d'Orange, par Verus son successeur*, P. Varin, ed. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849), 4.

<sup>71</sup> Jerome, "Vita S. Hilarionis," in PL vol. 23 [col. 0029-0054A].

<sup>72</sup> Stancliffe, *Martin*, 7–8.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.



text has survived in several manuscripts,<sup>74</sup> a very high amount of which date from before the eleventh century.<sup>75</sup>

#### 1.4.6 DE MEDICINA<sup>76</sup>

This text is a fundamental part of the Corpus as it represents its chief medical text for comparison; very little is known about Aulus Cornelius Celsus, author of this first-century medical text. In fact, doubts have been raised since the earlier years of *De medicina*'s diffusion even about the originality of the work itself, which has been considered to be a translation or interpretation of already extant Greek literature.<sup>77</sup> Although this theory has not been entirely discounted, it seems more likely that *De medicina* was inspired by Greek medical literature, especially the Hippocratic Corpus and the lost works of Heracleides, Erasistratus, Meges of Sidon and Asclepiades. An estimation of Celsus' life and, as a consequence, the possible date of the text, have been possible thanks to the fact he was mentioned by both Quintilian and Pliny, a fact which would place him firmly under the rule of Tiberius.<sup>78</sup>

Much has been said about the figure of Celsus, possibly more than about the text he created: his participation in the medical profession was questioned, often on the basis of the literary style used in discussing certain subjects, deemed to be too colloquial. Pliny himself placed Celsus among the *auctores*, not the *medici*.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, it appears he was aware of medical practices on a first hand basis, as he mentioned patients who were under his own care or whom he had personally followed.

<sup>74</sup> Sister Mary Donald McNeil, "The Latin Manuscript Tradition of the *Vita Sancti Hilarionis*, in ed. William Abbott Oldfather *Studies in the Text Tradition of Jerome's "Vitae Patrum"* (Illinois: 1943), 251–305.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/texts/Jerome-Vita-Hilarionis.html>

<sup>76</sup> For an in depth overview of the history of the text and its author see Aulus Cornelius, Celsus. *A. Cornelii Celsi Quae Supersunt*. Edited by F. Marx. CML 1. (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1915), "Prolegomena."

<sup>77</sup> W.H.S. Jones, "Introduction to the *De Medicina*," in *De Medicina*, Page, Capps and Rouse ed., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), vii–xiii.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., vii.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., xiii.

Four main manuscripts, two in Florence, one in the Vatican and one in Paris,<sup>80</sup> are at the basis of the *De Medicina* as we know it today, dated from the ninth to the fifteenth century.

#### 1.4.7 DE MEDICAMENTIS LIBER

Most likely composed in Southern Gaul between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, *De Medicamentis Liber* is formed by thirty-six chapters, providing a series of recipes and solutions for several types of ailments. The chapters are ordered following an *a capite ad calcem* order,<sup>81</sup> that is starting from illnesses of the head (including eyes, nose, mouth, but also hair and scalp complaints) to the feet. The text is interesting because, in spite of being a compilation of previous works, therefore presenting very little originality, it was a well known compendium of the time, which also included some magic and folk remedy. The text is also of interest in the context of this study, because its author, Marcellus, was a Christian<sup>82</sup> and because the stress placed on folk remedies and what could be read as forms of natural magic make *De Medicamentis* somehow as non-acceptable to modern eyes as much as the miraculous exploits of a saint.<sup>83</sup>

The text was edited for the first time in the sixteenth century by Janus Cornarius, and the anonymous *Medicina Plinii* is considered its main source.<sup>84</sup> The edition used for this study is the one proposed by Niedermann for the *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum*, published in two volumes in 1968, with a German translation by Kollesch and Nickel.

#### 1.4.8 MEDICINA PLINII

The *Medicina Plinii* is the work of an anonymous author who, most likely in the fourth century,<sup>85</sup> compiled a vademecum of Pliny's medical remedies taken from

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<sup>81</sup> Langslow, 66.

<sup>82</sup> For how Marcellus Empiricus' creed may have influenced –or not– his approach to medicine, see Jerry Stannard, "Marcellus of Bordeaux and the Beginnings of Medieval Materia Medica," *Pharmacy in History* 15, vol.2 (1973), 47-53.

<sup>83</sup> Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, 113-119.

<sup>84</sup> Stannard, 48-49; Niedermann, "Praefatio."

<sup>85</sup> Langslow, 64.

chapters twenty to thirty-two of the *Naturalis Historiae*.<sup>86</sup> The book collects over 1100 medical recipes in three sections, the first two organised following the common *a capite ad calcem* medical structuring method, the third collecting material in a less ordered form.<sup>87</sup> The difference in style and structure of the text's last chapter is due to its content, more focused on particular diseases rather than anatomical order. The edition proposed by the *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum* does not include Gargilius Martialis material, which has been preserved in large chunks in some versions of the *Medicina Plinii*, which is, on the other hand, part of Rose's earlier edition (1875) published by Teubner. This particular text, which is inserted at the end of Rose's edition under the name of *Gargili Martialis Medicinae; Ex Oleribus et Pomis*<sup>88</sup> is of interest as it describes the medical and herbal properties of many vegetables and fruits.

The *Medicina Plinii* enjoyed great popularity during the Middle Ages, a fact attested by the copious amount of manuscripts of the text extant.<sup>89</sup> The edition used in this study is that by Önnersfors for the *Corpus Medicorum Latinorum*, published in the collection's third volume in 1964.

## 1.5 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in the previous pages, I have approached the VG from both a literary and linguistic point of view in order to create textual and contextual connections upon which I based my research and constructed my argument.

Two texts have been of outmost relevance for the contextualisation of hagiography in the late antique period in Gaul and the Auxerrois: Goullet et al.'s volume on Merovingian hagiography,<sup>90</sup> and the already cited monograph by Van Egmond on hagiographies and their relevance in the context of the history of the Auxerre area. This latter volume has presented several cues for the development of my argument, chiefly by helping in constructing the comparative corpus and by

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<sup>86</sup> Önnersfors, xii-xviii.

<sup>87</sup> Langslow, 64.

<sup>88</sup> Rose, 139 onward.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., but especially Önnersfors, xix-xxi.

<sup>90</sup> Monique Goullet, Martin Heinzelmann and Christiane Veyrard-Cosme, *L'hagiographie mérovingienne et ses réécritures* (Paris: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010).

providing interesting views on the function of the VG as a central text in the literary history of Auxerre. Van Egmond has also discussed texts from a more socio-political point of view, providing interesting insights into their reception and message.

Goullet's work has provided an excellent complement to Van Egmond's: it invested a larger geographical area and wider temporal arch, and has emphasised the meaning of reception in hagiography, with a particular accent placed upon the *réécriture* of Merovingian texts, a subject particularly important also for the VG.<sup>91</sup>

In the specific context of this thesis, Goullet's effort has proven particularly helpful in providing an up-to-date excursus of the status quo of hagiographical scholarship on the time and space of Constantius, as well as focusing on the importance of later reception and re-writing of late antique works. Current research methodologies applied to the hagiographical field are explored and discussed, leaving the reader with a better sense of how far –and in which direction– hagiographical research has been moving.

Paolo Pieroni's translation of Einar Löfstedt's *Commentario Filologico alla 'Peregrinatio Aetheriae,'* Maria Conti's *Studi sulla Latinità Merovingia in Testi Agiografici Minori*<sup>92</sup> have provided an inspiration for the type of detailed, analytical study of the text needed when engaging so closely with the matter of its structure and lexicon, even though my own research, as it will become apparent from the next chapters, did eventually follow a less linguistic and more literary approach.<sup>93</sup> The *Commentario Filologico alla 'Peregrinatio Aetheriae'* is a grammatical and stylistic commentary to this late antique text, which is analysed, in the introduction, also in the context of its belonging to northern African latinity. The commentary includes single lexical items, as well as full sentences, all stylistically and grammatically analysed. Löfstedt's commentary is supported by both secondary and primary references to other texts. In spite of its importance as an inspiration to my research,

<sup>91</sup> See 1.6, Germanus of Auxerre.

<sup>92</sup> Pubblicazioni della Regia Università di Milano (Messina–Milano: Casa Editrice Giuseppe Principato, 1939).

<sup>93</sup> Even though on a smaller scale, Bottiglieri did follow a specular approach for her syntactic and morphological analysis of the Latin of the VG's shortened version presented in the ms Paris, BNF 12598 (104–112): Corinna Bottiglieri, "L'Epitome della *Vita di S. Germano di Auxerre* nel ms. Paris, BNF lat. 12598," *Hagiographica: Rivista di Agiografia e Biografia della Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo* 18 (2011), 89–133.

the *Commentario*'s results focus on the linguistic, rather than the literary interpretation of the text, which, on the other hand, is at the centre of this work.

Maria Corti's 1939 *Studi sulla Latinità Merovingia in Testi Agiografici Minori* provided a useful insight into the matter of Late Antique and early Medieval Gallic hagiography. The text, just as those mentioned in the previous pages, is dated, but still valuable, especially because it focuses on the same genre and, roughly, time of VG. Corti's detailed study is essentially linguistic in nature, but also provides interesting views on the literary value of the texts themselves, and provides a useful read for scholars of Late Antique and Merovingian literature. This study has strongly benefited from such texts, as they proposed and highlighted a research path, that of an in depth and comprehensive investigation on the lexicon of a text, upon which I based the very beginning of my own research, although it, then, evolved quite independently and differently from them.

Also published during the first half of the twentieth century, but still fundamental for the understanding of the literary milieu of Constantius' time, is André Loyen's work on Sidonius Apollinaris and the *esprit précieux* in Gaul, *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaule au derniers jours de l'Empire*.<sup>94</sup> In it, Loyen discusses the figure of Sidonius Apollinaris, man of letters in Rome under Avitus, Marjorian and Anthemius, then bishop of Clermont, where he not only became a strenuous defender of orthodoxy, but also kept writing.<sup>95</sup> Loyen's work is essential in the context of this thesis, as it provides an overview of that very cultural world in which Constantius would have moved during the years of the VG's composition. His analysis of Sidonius' cultural background (proposed in the second chapter of his work), as well as the detailed overview of the social and economic situation in Gaul in the fifth century, provided the necessary context to achieve a knowledge of the type of figure Constantius may have been, as well as contributing important details about his world.

The last section of Loyen's work, more strictly dedicated to Sidonius' prose and its style, although not directly associable to that of Constantius serves to, once

<sup>94</sup> Collection d'études latines, xx (Paris: Société d'édition *Les Belles Lettres*, 1943).

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 38-48

again, contextualise his production within that of the Lyon-Clermont *intelligentia*, of which, his correspondence with Sidonius' himself shows, he was very likely a part.

Michael Roberts also tackled late imperial literature and its stylistic value in *The Jewelled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity*.<sup>96</sup> Again, an accent is placed on the *esprit précieux* of late antique Latin authors, who are re-evaluated from a literary point of view by Roberts. His volume, as pointed out by McDonough in his review of the text,<sup>97</sup> could almost be read as an answer to Erich Auerbach "dismissal of the poetry of Avitus, Ennodius, Arator and Venantius Fortunatus as 'mannered to the point of absurdity.'"<sup>98</sup> Roberts' view on the polished and flowery style of late antique poets differs profoundly from that of previous scholars because, rather than associating it with a mere masquerade for a lack of inspiration, he viewed it as a true representation of a poet's capability to craft a piece, much in the same way a jeweller would do with one of his own creations. Interesting, especially in the context of Christian literature, to which the VG belongs, is Roberts' assertion that the jeweled style has been largely avoided by Christian poets (with some notable exceptions, such as Prudentius and Avitus) possibly because considered a style not entirely suitable to the type of message—one of Christian humility and simplicity—they aim to deliver through their works.<sup>99</sup> Roberts' work, just as Loyen's, has been significant for this research because it provided essential details about Constantius' world and possible background. If Loyen offered an insight of the cultural milieu to which the author of the VG may have belonged and its attitude to the socio-historical events characterising those centuries, Roberts' helped in defining the status quo of literary forms and styles at the time of Constantius' writing.

Courcelle's *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques*<sup>100</sup> has been of help for a series of reasons: firstly, it provided a clear and readable account of the Germanic invasions of Europe and north-Africa, and supplied essential historical details about the times and places of both Germanus and his biographer, Constantius.

<sup>96</sup> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>97</sup> C.J. McDonough, "The Jewelled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity by Michael Roberts," in *Phoenix* 45, no.3 (Autumn, 1991), 273-275.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>99</sup> Roberts, 122-147.

<sup>100</sup> Pierre Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques* (Paris: Hachette, 1948).

It did so by utilising literary sources of the period as a primary source of information. By doing so Courcelle somehow put literature at the service of history successfully, and just as successfully delivered a work which can be read both a history of late antique military and political events, as well as an anthology of the most influential writers of the time. It is, therefore, to the contextualisation in history and society of the VG that Courcelle's effort has been useful.

Mohrmann's four volumes on Christian Latin<sup>101</sup> have provided insightful views on the characteristics of Christian Latin, as well as the history and development of studies in the field up to Mohrmann's times. Although dated, her work still represents pivotal research for those interested in the history of the Latin language. Some of the essays collected in her *Études* have been of relevance to the development of this dissertation. More general ideas about the style and characteristics of Christian Latin, as well as early methods of research, are largely explored in the first volume of the collection.<sup>102</sup> Interesting is also Mohrmann's work on the stylistic relationship between Christian and vulgar Latin,<sup>103</sup> and the reciprocal influence they had on each other.

The study on the *Vita Genovefae* proposed in 1986 by Heinzelmann and Poulin,<sup>104</sup> advances within its pages a linguistic analysis of the text, which can be, in method and form, compared to the larger works of Bonnet and Goelzer.<sup>105</sup> The text is more relevant to this research, though, for the analytical approach used to discuss its structure, as well as its historical value. Because the holy figure and aura of Germanus is a powerful actor in the narrative development of Geneviève, Heinzelmann and Poulin's work is also essential in the analysis of the figure of

<sup>101</sup> Christine Mohrmann, *Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens i-iv*, 2nd ed. (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1961).

<sup>102</sup> Of particular interest "Quelques traits caractéristiques du Latin des Chrétiens," vol. 1, 22-50, "Le problème du vocabulaire chrétien," 113-122 and "La Latinité chrétienne et le problème des relations entre langue et religion," 124-137.

<sup>103</sup> "Le Latin commun et le Latin des Chrétiens," vol.3, 13-24 and "Les éléments vulgaires de Latin des Chrétiens," 33-66, as well as a more socially and historically centered piece on "Les transformations linguistiques et évolution sociale et spirituelle," 25-31.

<sup>104</sup> Martin Heinzelmann and Joseph-Claude Poulin, *Les vies anciennes de sainte Geneviève de Paris: Études Critiques*, vol. 329, Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, IVème section: sciences historiques et philologiques (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1986).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 11-49.

Germanus in later centuries and texts, a topic which will be part of the conclusive chapter to this dissertation.

Very useful has also been Benedicta Ward's essay "The Spirituality of Saint Cuthbert," a study on how the saint's spirituality is described in the text through scriptural references and commentaries, which has proven of great interest for how the hagiographer can use biblical and christological references to enhance the saint's credibility in the eye of the reader.<sup>106</sup> To engage a secondary source with a similar approach to the text as I followed, one must look into more recent publications: E.A. Thompson's 1984 *Saint Germanus and the End of Roman Britain*<sup>107</sup>, a monograph focusing on the historicity of Germanus in reference to his voyages to Britain in order to fight the Pelagian heresy<sup>108</sup> is one of them. Albeit that his approach to the VG is historical, rather than literary, Thompson does present, especially in the second chapter of his work, dedicated to Constantius' view of Gaul, Italy and Britain, a similar use of semantic analysis to obtain cues about the texts possible use as a historical source.<sup>109</sup> Thompson investigates the use of geographical and topographical terms to support the historical value of the passages where they

<sup>106</sup> In Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe, eds., *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 1989), 65–76. The essay was particularly useful for the development of the chapter "Germanus' holiness revealed."

<sup>107</sup> E.A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus and the End of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984). Another interesting work which has taken the importance of lexicon as an instrument to identify specific characteristics of a hagiographical text as a whole is Robert Collins' article "Observations on the Form, Language and Public of the Prose Biographies of Venantius Fortunatus in the Hagiography of Merovingian Gaul" in H.B. Clarke and Mary Brennan *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 105–131: in it, Collins discusses how the hagiographer's lexical choices may be influenced by the type of audience whom he writes.

<sup>108</sup> Germanus' fight against the Pelagian heresy is quite likely what made him best known among scholars, but it will only be treated as a narrative theme, rather than from a historical point of view, in this dissertation. The literature on Pelagianism is, nevertheless, immense. For more on Pelagius, his thought and its social and theological relevance, a good start would be represented by: B.R. Rees, *Pelagius: Life and Letters* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998); Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (London: Black, 1968); Peter Brown, "The Patrons of Pelagius: The Roman Aristocracy Between East and West" *Journal of Theological Studies* 21, no. 1 (1970), 56–72; *ibid.*, "Pelagius and his supporters: aims and environment" *Journal of theological Studies*, vol. 19 (1968); Augustine Casiday, "Cassian against the Pelagians" *Studia monastica* 46, no. 1 (2004), 7–23; Alison Bonner, "Was Patrick Influenced by the Teaching of Pelagius?" *The Journal of Theological Studies* 63, no. 2 (October 2012), 572–607; Theodore De Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Georges De Plinval, *Pelage : ses écrits, sa vie et sa réforme : étude d'histoire littéraire et religieuse* (Lousanne: Payot, 1943); Boniface Ramsey, ed., *Saint Augustine: Selected Writing on Grace and Pelagianism* (New York: New City Press, 2011). For a view of the Pelagian heresy and its influence in Gaul, see Miele, 210–232/

<sup>109</sup> Thompson, *Saint Germanus*, 7–14.



appear. Thompson's entire work on Constantius' text presents similarities to mine, as he used words to contextualise the narrative, in an attempt to separate the literary from the historical, using the latter, then, to propose a successful argument. In my case, the contextualisation of Germanus' acts, literarily symbolised by the lexical items I looked at more closely, becomes clear only by their semantic study, which allowed to find inter-textual relations which, in turn, shifted the meaning of entire episodes within the VG from the literary to the symbolic, liturgical or medical. This shift is at the centre of my argument, and the signification of the passages, as well as of words analysed become its demonstration.

Another approach to the VG, this time centred on the potential historical and political reasons behind its composition, has been proposed in 1996 by Maurizio Miele,<sup>110</sup> who placed the text within the context of the politics of the dioceses of Lyon in the late-fifth century, advancing the interesting theory that Germanus was, in fact, chosen as the subject of a literary work in order to create positive connections with bishop Patient, by whom the work had been commissioned.<sup>111</sup> By doing so, Miele historically places the VG in a Gallic and continental context in detail, as well as providing yet another proof of the power, not only religious, of bishops in Late Antiquity. Although I may not necessarily agree *in toto* with some of Miele's conclusions,<sup>112</sup> the value of his work is undoubted: not only he provides, in my opinion, the most complete analysis on the historical figure of Constantius to date,<sup>113</sup> but ultimately delineates a much necessary historical contextualisation of the text not exclusively focusing on the relation between the Auxerrois saint and the British Isles.

Although not yet in the case of the VG, recent studies have stressed the importance of hagiographical structure and how its peculiarities can produce interesting insights that can also be useful for the text's interpretation. Of particular

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<sup>110</sup> Maurizio Miele, *La Vita Germani di Costanzo di Lione: Realtà Storica e Prospettive Storiografiche nella Gallia del Quinto Secolo*, Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei: Memorie ix, vol. 7.2 (Roma: Accademia dei Lincei, 1996).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. For another example of the powerful political forces at play in the commissioning of hagiographical works in the late antique and early medieval periods, see J.-M. Picard's work on "The Purpose of Adomnan's *Vita Columbae*," *Peritia* 1 (1982), 160–177.

<sup>112</sup> Miele does not believe the VG can be successfully used as a historical source about Germanus himself, a view which seems too drastic (133–151; 221–226); it is, nevertheless, a captivating argument.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 133–151.

relevance to my own approach to the structure of the VG and its analysis are the works of John C. Eby on Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*,<sup>114</sup> and Przemyslaw Nehring's on the *Vita Hilarionis*.<sup>115</sup> Both tackled the text focusing on its narrative structure, with the aim of displaying how such a structure can provide fundamental information about the text itself. Of great interest to my project are also the works chosen by Eby and Nehring: the first, the *Vita Cuthberti*, produced by an author, Bede, known for having cited verbatim the VG in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. The *Vita Hilarionis*, as previously discussed, is one of the fundamental texts of the literary comparative corpus used for the development of my argument.

The essentiality of miracles and their narrative role within the hagiographical text, which will be at the centre of the fourth chapter of this dissertation, has been discussed by Jean-Louis Derouet,<sup>116</sup> whose proposal focuses on a semiotic interpretation of the miracle episodes within a corpus of late Merovingian and early Carolingian hagiographies.<sup>117</sup> This relatively short article published in 1976 provides quite a unique critical mélange of literary theory and history and proposes a reading of the miracle passages as a key to the disclosure of each *Vita*'s sub-textual meaning, which he finds to be, in the case of the texts taken into consideration, a didactic explanation of the dialectic opposition between Good and Evil.<sup>118</sup>

Last, but not least, in this brief excursus of relevant secondary sources is Clare Stancliffe's 1983 volume *Saint Martin and His Hagiographer*,<sup>119</sup> a key text for the type of research I have carried out. Not only does Stancliffe's work focus on a saint, Martin, and a text, Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Beati Martini*, of enormous importance to the VG, as I have explained already in the previous pages and I will

<sup>114</sup> J.C. Eby, 316–338.

<sup>115</sup> Przemyslaw Nehring, "Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis*: A Rhetorical Analysis of Its Structure," *Augustinianum* 43, no. 2 (2003), 417–34.

<sup>116</sup> Derouet, "Interprétation Sémiologique," 153–62. See also, as an example of how the literary interpretation of miracle narratives can be used to identify the purpose of a *Vita*: Sara E. Ellis Nillson, "Miracle Stories and the Primary Purpose of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*," *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Medieval Northwestern Europe* 10 (May 2007).

<sup>117</sup> The works of Jonas of Bobbio edited by Krusch in the MGH, "Vitae Columbani Discipulorum ejus" in *Rerum Scriptorem Merovingicarum* ii (1902), 1–152 and "une dizaine de textes qui ont été écrits dans les centres religieux de la Meuse et de la Moselle moyenne à partir du milieu du 7ème et jusqu'à la fin du 8ème siècle," which have been selected on the basis of "critères d'histoire politique et culturelle." (Derouet, 154–5).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 155–157. The article, just as Eby and Nehring's, will be discussed in more detail in the relevant chapters, "The Structure of the *Vita Germani*" and "Constructing the Saint" respectively.

<sup>119</sup> See 1.4.3 The *Vita Beati Martini*.

describe in even more detail in the next chapters, but her multidisciplinary approach does resemble closely which I have used for this dissertation. Stancliffe approaches the text first from the point of view of its historicity: the first chapters are centred on the figures of Sulpicius Severus and Martin, their relationship, and their portrayals in literature. The rest of the work is divided in thematic chapters, each about a particular aspect of the text, from Martin's spiritual powers, to Sulpicius' literary style and historical value as an author, from the possible literary sources of the VM, to its ties with the ascetic movements of north Africa and the Middle East. Whereas this dissertation certainly owes a great deal to Stancliffe's work, both as a source of knowledge on the VM, one of the chief texts of the literary corpus I created, and as a detailed vademecum of the times and places of Martin and Germanus, my approach to Constantius and the saint of Auxerre is chiefly textual, mostly because there are no other sources, either on Constantius or Germanus, which could support the type of in depth, socio-historical analysis Stancliffe produced on the VM. On the other hand, Stancliffe's attention to detail, skilful literary interpretation of passages within the text, and lively prose certainly shaped the way I will introduce and present the result of my research.

## 1.6 GERMANUS OF AUXERRE

As rightly pointed out by Ian Wood,<sup>120</sup> one must exercise caution when using fifth-century texts as historical sources: this is especially true for hagiographies and certainly the VG is no exception. When it comes to the figure of Germanus, though, the historian of the text needs to heavily refer to Constantius' hagiography, as very little else has been written and, in fact, most of it has been based on Constantius' work itself.<sup>121</sup> Borius analyses in detail the historicity of the VG<sup>122</sup> and I would

<sup>120</sup> Ian Wood, "Continuity or Calamity: the Constraints of Literary Models" in *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9–18; but also Paul Fouracre, "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography," *Past and Present* 127 (May 1990), 3.

<sup>121</sup> An interesting point of view on the historicity of the VG is given by Nora C. Chadwick in "St Germanus of Auxerre and the Growth of Ecclesiastical Biography" in *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1955), 240–68; in this context, Anthony A. Barrett's "Saint Germanus and the British Missions" (*Britannia* 60 (2009), 197–217) and Andrew Breeze's "Elaphus the Briton, St Germanus and Bede" (*Journal of Theological Studies* 53, no.2 (October 2002), 554–557) are also relevant; In the first few pages of his "Introduction," (133–137), Miele discusses the difficulties in assessing historically the VG itself as does Barrett.

<sup>122</sup> Borius, 61–106.

remand to his words for a complete and satisfactory overview on the subject; I will limit my interest here to those moments of the life of Germanus that have created the most interest: the dates of his episcopate and that of his death. All of them, it becomes clear, are strictly correlated and are essential also for the dating of the VG itself.

What we know about the historical Germanus<sup>123</sup> comes mostly from the hagiographical sources related to him.<sup>124</sup> At least six medieval versions, according to Bouchard,<sup>125</sup> were written by the ninth century. In fact, only five survive, which will be listed below, but Bouchard counts also the hypothetical *Vita Germani Metrica* mentioned in the introductory pages of the VA<sup>126</sup> commissioned by bishop Aunacharius to Stephanus Africanus, along with the prose life of Amator, but of which no witness –if it were ever written– is extant.

The first is Constantius' VG, composed in the late fifth century, followed by the *Vita Interpolata*, which was to become, in fact, the most “successful” in Auxerre and its surrounding, to the point that it was to be used as primary sources for all successive works on the saint;<sup>127</sup> a brief description of Germanus' life is also given by Gregory of Tours in his *Liber in Gloria Confessorum*. The ninth century, then, saw the genesis of Heiric of Auxerre's *Vita Sancti Germani Metrica* and *Miracula Sancti Germani Episcopi Autissiodorensis*, the first a stylistic exercise based on the *Vita Interpolata*, the latter, the literary rendition of a series of post mortem miracles the Auxerrois performed, and of the *Gesta Pontificum Autissiodorensium*, to which Heiric, a scholar and theologian, collaborated in compiling.<sup>128</sup> The *Gesta* are an important source for the factual life of Germanus, because they originated within the dioceses of Auxerre and, more importantly, within the heart itself of the bishopric,

<sup>123</sup> VG, 225–230; Levison, “Die Quellen,” 112–143.

<sup>124</sup> See, beside the already mentioned Levison, Borius, Miele and Bottiglieri, also J. Gaudemet, “La carrière civile de Saint Germain,” and R. Laprat, “La carrière cléricale de Saint Germain et le droit canonique de son temps,” in *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son temps*, 111–118 and 151–179.

<sup>125</sup> Constance B. Bouchard, “Episcopal Gesta and the Creation of a Useful Past in Ninth-Century Auxerre,” *Speculum* 84, no.1 (Jan. 2009), 1–35 (16–17).

<sup>126</sup> See above, 1.4 The Corpus.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. Constantius of Lyon, *Vita Germani Interpolata*, in *Bibliothèque historique de l'Yonne, ou collection des légendes, chroniques et documents divers pour servir à l'histoire Des différentes contrées qui forment aujourd'hui ce département*, edited by L.M. Duru, 1:46–99. Auxerre: Perriquet, 1850.

<sup>128</sup> Bouchard, 17 forward.

which undoubtedly still had access, in the ninth century, to a series of now lost official documents related to the saint.<sup>129</sup> Because the authors relied both on other hagiographical texts, but also both urban and diocesan documents, the *Gesta* are a particular abundant source for what concerns Germanus' family and his presence and actions in the Auxerre area. Such details were likely contained in his testament, a document certainly kept within the records of the diocese. This probability is strengthened by the large amount of details contained in the *Gesta* about Germanus' family's land possessions and the way he wanted them to be distributed after his death.<sup>130</sup> He was born to Rusticus and Germanilla, both from Auxerre. His family was of aristocratic origin, just as Constantius said. He married Eustachia in Rome, the same woman, we may assumed, who became a sister in faith to him in the second chapter of the VG.<sup>131</sup> Lands belonging to his own inheritance were donated to local churches (Saint Étienne) and likely included a number of usable buildings; a monastery dedicated to Cosme and Damien martyrs was also built on family land according to the *Gesta*, as well as a church in honour of Saint Maurice and his fellows.<sup>132</sup> Another church was edified within the city walls to Saint Alban, to whom Germanus was deeply devoted.<sup>133</sup> The *Gesta* also mention the foundation of another monastery, eventually destroyed by the Huns.<sup>134</sup> After his death, the rest of his properties were left to the dioceses of Auxerre.<sup>135</sup>

Germanus' two trips to Britain, as already discussed, have been at the centre of much academic discussion. If the first trip is largely considered historical,<sup>136</sup> more doubts have been advanced about the second, which is considered mostly

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 21–22.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Alagus and Rainogala, "De Beato Germano," in *Gestes des Évêques d'Auxerre*, Michel Sot and Guy Lobrichon eds., Les Classiques de l'Histoire du Moyen Âge (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2002), 28–49.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 37–38.

<sup>133</sup> See Richard Sharpe, "The Late Antique Passion of Saint Alban" in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art and Archeology*, Henig and Lindley ed., The British Archeological Association Conference Transaction xxvi (Leeds: The British Archeological Association and Maney Publishing, 2001), 30–37.

<sup>134</sup> *Gesta*, 40.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 34–38.

<sup>136</sup> See above, footnote 104, but also Wood, "The End of Roman Britain," 9–10 and also Fernand Benoit, "L'Hilarianum d'Arles et les missions en Bretagne (v<sup>e</sup>–vi<sup>e</sup> siècle)," in *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son temps*, 181–189.

fictional,<sup>137</sup> as discussed by Wood, Chadwick and Barrett, among others, in detail.<sup>138</sup> Michael E. Jones<sup>139</sup> has also written about Germanus' second trip at length in order to find possible historical signs within its narrative. If the historical information, especially the details about military strategy, support his argument, his analysis of the passage itself—as well as a series of other events presented in the VG, which is used, too, to strengthen his point, is fatally flawed by the fact he relied on Hoare's translation of the text,<sup>140</sup> instead of the original Latin or, at least, the more literal translation provided by Borius.<sup>141</sup>

When it comes to the dates of his episcopate, sources<sup>142</sup> rely greatly on details related to the death of his predecessor, Amator. According, again, to the *Gesta*, Germanus was bishop of Auxerre for thirty years and twenty-five days; albeit the text appears not to be particularly reliable when it comes to episcopate successions in the fifth century,<sup>143</sup> it has been taken into account by most historians. Levison has provided a thorough calculation of Germanus' episcopate and, consequently, also managed to date his death, on the basis of two main factors: the first is the certainty of his episcopate being in full swing in 429, year of his first mission to Britain. The second is the date of Amator's death, which occurred in a year when the first of May fell on a Wednesday. The first mission to Britain is not only described by Constantius, but also by Prosper of Aquitaine—who provides the date of 429 for it—in the *Chronicle* as well as in his work of criticism against John Cassian, *Contra Collatorem*, and is today considered historically accurate, also when it comes to its date.<sup>144</sup> The death of Amator is recorded in the *Martyrologium*

<sup>137</sup> See footnote 117; of the same opinion is Barrett, 197–218.

<sup>138</sup> 206–214. In spite of agreeing with Chadwick's conclusion the second trip to Britain never happened, Barrett does not think it is, in fact, a doublet of the first narration, as proposed, on the other hand, by Chadwick herself.

<sup>139</sup> Michael E. Jones, "The Historicity of the Alleluja Victory," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 18, no.3 (Autumn, 1986), 363–373.

<sup>140</sup> Which is pleasant to read, but certainly not faithful to the Latin original.

<sup>141</sup> See especially 366–368.

<sup>142</sup> VG Introduction, 225–7; Richard Sharpe, "Martyrs and Local Saints in Late Antique Britain" in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 75–155; Wood, "Continuity or Calamity," 14–16.

<sup>143</sup> Sharpe, "Martyrs and Local Saints," 80.

<sup>144</sup> Ian Wood, "The Fall of the Western Empire and the End of Roman Britain" *Britannia*, vol.18 (1987), 251–262, at 251; also E.A. Thompson, *Germanus of Auxerre and the end of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge UK and Rochester US: Boydell Press, 1984), 28–29 and Barrett.

*Hieronymianum*, as well as in an Episcopal Calendar which originated during Aunacharius' times (end of the sixth century), and most notably in the *Vita Amatoris* itself.<sup>145</sup> The only years when the First of May fell on a Wednesday before 429 were 407, 412 and 418.<sup>146</sup> Levison underlined how Germanus appeared to be still alive at the time of Hilary's deposition of Chelidonius in 444:<sup>147</sup> if seen in such light, the only year Germanus could have died after thirty years and twenty-five days of episcopate was, indeed, 448. Levison and Borius both have embraced this particular timeline.

Wood appears more skeptical, especially when it comes to the reliability of the *Vita Hilarii*, according to which Germanus was still alive in 444: Germanus, an orthodox and well respected figure, Wood says, may have been used as a prop to make the accusations against Chelidonius strategically stronger. The truth is, though, that papal literature about the Chelidonius affair does not mention the presence of Germanus at any given time during the dispute.<sup>148</sup> It is to another text Wood addresses his attention, the *Vita Severi*, composed later than the *Vita Hilarii*, but with no hidden agenda when mentioning in its pages Germanus' funeral procession through Vienna, while on its way from Italy to Auxerre. The text mentions under which pontificate such event took place, that of Pascentius, whose successor Claudius was to attend the Council of Orange in 441: it becomes evident that, by taking the *Vita Severi* instead of the *Vita Hilarii* as a comparative source to use as historical backup, Germanus' episcopate should be placed between 407 and 437.<sup>149</sup> Wood's debunking of Levison and Borius' dating of Germanus' death continues when he approaches the historical clues left by Constantius himself in the text: he refers in particular to the events of chapters twenty-eight, thirty-eight and forty,<sup>150</sup> the historicity of which is proven by the presence of Sigisvult, Goar and Tibatto.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>145</sup> VG Introduction, 225; Wood, "The end of Roman Britain," 14–15.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 226; Sharpe mentions only 407 and 418 ("Martyrs and Local Saints," 80–81).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 227; Wood, "The end of Roman Britain," 15.

<sup>148</sup> Wood, Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 15; VG 28, 271–272; 38, 278–279; 40, 280.

<sup>151</sup> For an account of the history of the time see Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe 300–1000*, 2nd Ed., Palgrave History of Europe (London: Palgrave, 1999) and Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London: Longman, 1994); see also Barrett, 197–218.

The career of the first, and the fact he is defined by Constantius a *patricius*,<sup>152</sup> should place the death of Germanus after 440;<sup>153</sup> Goar, protagonist of the events of chapter twenty-eight, was active as a warlord since around 410, which means it is likely he was still so in the late 430s rather than the late 440s.<sup>154</sup> The same can be said about the events of Tibatto's life. Prosper's *Chronicle* of 452 records the rebellion of Tibatto and maintains that his capture and the suppression of the Bacaudae fell on the same year, basing such reckoning on the dates of the olympiads. The years thus deduced were 439 and 442. Mommsen contested such on chronology, preferring a dating based on regnal dates, which would place the events about four years earlier, in 435 and 437. This would clearly fall perfectly with the assumption that Germanus' death did not occur in the late 440s, as maintained by Levison and Borius, but rather in the late 430s, as Wood demonstrates following the above reasoning.<sup>155</sup> Sharpe does not agree, and seems to support the ideas advanced by Mathisen in "The Last Year of Germanus of Auxerre,"<sup>156</sup> where he disregards entirely the evidence about the length of Germanus' episcopate proposed by the *Gesta* and makes a rather strong case for the year 446 as that of the Auxerrois' death.<sup>157</sup> Thompson also endorses a later date of death for Germanus, 445, and bases his choice on historical facts transmitted by primary sources: he identifies the lowering of taxations in Gaul mentioned by Constantius in the VG as the same described by Salvian,<sup>158</sup> and consequently places Germanus' visit to Arles in 439. Thompson then proceeds to date the encounter between Germanus and Goar, as described by Constantius in chapter twenty-eight, as well as the saint's second trip to Britain sometime shortly before the year 446.<sup>159</sup> There are no historical reasons to believe, Thompson continues, Germanus travelled to Ravenna, where he died, much later after his meeting with Goar. He mentions late 444 as the date for Germanus'

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<sup>152</sup> VG 38, 278.

<sup>153</sup> Wood, "The end of Roman Britain," 16.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 16–18.

<sup>156</sup> *Annalecta Bollandiana* 99 (1981), 157–159.

<sup>157</sup> Sharpe, "Martyrs and Local Saints," 80.

<sup>158</sup> E.A. Thompson, "A Chronological Note on St. Germanus of Auxerre", in *Annalecta Bollandiana* 75 (1957), 135.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 137.



second trip to Britain, and the Spring of 445 as the date of the saint's meeting with Goar and his final trip to Ravenna, where he was to die on the 31st of July of the same year.<sup>160</sup>

### 1.7 CONSTANTIUS OF LYON AND THE *VITA GERMANI*

The reasons behind the composition of VG may have been many: Wood suggested the idea the literary Germanus was used as an exemplum of perfect pastoral behaviour to be imitated, a fact possibly demonstrated by the many instances of political and social intervention he undertakes in the text.<sup>161</sup> This theory is embraced by Van Egmond, who also identifies the possibility of an edifying purpose for the VG, or even that Constantius was commissioned the VG to create a literary rival to the figure and the cult of Saint Martin of Tours, whose hagiography, nevertheless, is one of the more influential among Constantius' sources. Of a similar opinion is Miele, who sees bishop Patient of Lyon's episcopal agenda as the main motor behind the composition of the text.<sup>162</sup>

Regardless of its ultimate purpose, the VG is undoubtedly part of that literary flourishing moment that characterised the end of the fourth and the entirety of the fifth century in Gaul, as explained and analysed with sagaciousness by Wood in "Continuity or Calamity: the Constraints of Literary Models,"<sup>163</sup> but as with many texts of the time, very little is known about its genesis and, indeed, its author.

Levison introduces the idea Constantius was known as a writer before the VG was composed and had been asked by Patient, bishop of Lyon (the same to whom he was to dedicate the VG) to write a series of hexameters about the holy Secundinus, which were then inscribed on the very walls of the newly built basilica in Lyon.<sup>164</sup> It is, though, the VG that places Constantius on the panorama of fifth-century literary Gaul. The *Vita Germani* is the only known work by Constantius of Lyon. Very little information about him survived to modern times, mostly all coming

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 137–138.

<sup>161</sup> Wood, "The end of Roman Britain," 1–26. Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 33–35.

<sup>162</sup> 143–181.

<sup>163</sup> In *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 9–18.

<sup>164</sup> Levison, 230.

from Sidonius Apollinaris' letters.<sup>165</sup> The correspondence between Sidonius and Constantius is essential for our knowledge of the latter: none of his own personal correspondence to Apollinaris has survived, though. Those written by Sidonius to Constantius have, on the other hand, reached our time: the picture painted by Sidonius' words is that of a man of culture and faith, respected and highly regarded.<sup>166</sup> In all truthfulness, the "Constantius" with whom Sidonius corresponded with alacrity is never identified as the author of the VG, but it can be inferred with relative certainty, for two reasons, as pointed out by Van Egmond: first, both Patient of Lyon and Censurius of Auxerre (the receivers of Constantius' dedication of the VG) were Sidonius' epistolary companions, which means Sidonius was active in both Lyon and Auxerre's literary and spiritual milieux at the time of Constantius; this belonging to a very definite, circumscribed, learned élite, always of religious origin, always linked by clear intellectual aspirations, was a typical characteristic of that literary and cultural panorama that Apollinaris – and Constantius – were part of, a panorama which found in letter writing not simply a way to communicate, but also a means of affiliation to Gaul's nobility.<sup>167</sup> This is important, because it certainly adds character to the figure of Constantius, of which so little is otherwise known. Even more relevant to identify Constantius as the recipient of Sidonius' letters as the author of the VG is the fact he was often praised for his literary skills, a factor which makes it probable he was a writer of some sort. All in all, it appears plausible that it was, indeed, Constantius of Lyon, creator of the VG, who corresponded with Sidonius Apollinaris at the end of the fifth century.<sup>168</sup> From Sidonius' words, Van Egmond continues, one can also quite safely conclude that Constantius was of Roman, classical education and most likely of Gallo-Roman aristocratic lineage. Interestingly, though, nowhere in the letters is Constantius identified as a priest – although it can be contextually implied – and it will not be until the twelfth century that the author of the VG will be openly named as one, in two manuscripts of the

<sup>161</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, *Poems and Letters in Two Volumes*, The Loeb Classical Library, W.B. Anderson ed. and trans., (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936–1965); for more on Constantius, see Levison, "Die Quellen," 107–112; Gustave Bardis, "Constance de Lyon: Biographie de Saint Germain d'Auxerre," in *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son temps*; 89–108 and Miele, 143–151.

<sup>162</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris, vol.1, 330–34; vol.2, 8–11; 394–399; 494–499.

<sup>167</sup> Ian Wood, "Continuity or Calamity," 16.

<sup>168</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 25.

*Vita Interpolata*.<sup>169</sup> In spite of being the only known work by Constantius, the VG is, in its own merit, sufficient to demonstrate his literary skills, his knowledge and ease of work with the Latin language: although the genre of the *Vitae* is not original in Constantius' times, his prose proves to be of excellent artistic standards: Constantius' Latin is fluid and poetic, its syntactical regularity balancing the at times flamboyant description of miracles. All in all, the text is an extremely fine example of Late Antique Christian prose.

### 1.8 THE *VITA GERMANI* AND ITS AUDIENCE

As pointed out by Van Egmond, although not composed in Auxerre, the VG is tied intrinsically to the city, and not only because it was Germanus' own home.<sup>170</sup> First of all, the second dedicatory letter introducing the text is addressed to Censurius,<sup>171</sup> one of Germanus' successors on the town's episcopal seat: this places the text within the basin of interest of the Auxerre's audience. The letter itself mentions how Censurius did ask a copy of the VG to Constantius, a fact which could be read not only as sign of a personal interest in the life and deeds of a well known predecessor, but also as the result of a more widespread local demand.

The reasons behind the city of Auxerre's interest in the text, seems to go hand in hand with its purpose. In the case of hagiography, one of the first purposes to be considered is edification, as pointed out by Miele and Van Egmond.<sup>172</sup> Another reason may have been cult propaganda, although Van Egmond quickly underlines this may not be the specific case of the VG. He supports such a view with the fact that the VG was in fact not composed in Auxerre, and not commissioned by any of its bishops. However, it is possible that a propagandistic purpose was present, especially when considering the work originated in Lyon, a city in direct competition with Tours, seat of one of the most important of Gallic saints' cults, that of Martin.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 25–28.

<sup>170</sup> Van Egmond, 25.

<sup>171</sup> VG, 243.

<sup>172</sup> Miele, 143-159; Van Egmond, 33-36; Wilhelm Gessel, "Germanus von AUxerre (um 378-bis 448). Die Vita des Konstantius von Lyon als homiletische Paränese in hagiographischer Form," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 65 (1970), 1-14.

<sup>173</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 34.

More interesting, however, seems the idea that the purpose of the VG, as well as its reception in Auxerre, was influenced largely by historical and theological reasons. Constantius offers a portrait of Germanus as a defender of orthodoxy against heresy; he does so by placing a heavy accent on Germanus' role in eradicating Pelagianism from Britain. That the text was, in fact, received as a criticism to heresy, and the figure of Germanus as the representation of Catholic orthodoxy, seems to be supported by the use of the text made by Bede in later decades.<sup>174</sup> It is important, however, to underline that the same view may have been just as powerful in Auxerre when the text began to circulate.

The ongoing theological debate at the time of Constantius was still characterised by the same themes Cassian had proposed, which were largely based on the controversy between Augustinian and Pelagian thought on free will.<sup>175</sup> The issue had kept its relevance in Gaul because of the theological influences of Lérins, which had been source of many a candidate to episcopacy (including Eucherius, bishop of Lyon and one of Patiens' predecessors) and supported an orthodox view of the matter.<sup>176</sup> It seems essential to understand this particular aspect of the role of the VG, especially when considering its reception in Auxerre: the text would have been received, very likely, as a powerful criticism of the ideas Germanus fought in Britain, ideas which were still present and debated upon in late fifth century Gaul, especially among the potential audience of a written work such as the VG: bishops and their entourage. As pointed out by Van Egmond and Miele,<sup>177</sup> the text would have been produced for the consumption of a lyonnaise audience, but a copy of it was requested by Censurius, bishop of Auxerre, after his completion. It seems safe to assume, therefore, that an episcopal entourage received the VG both in Lyon and Auxerre, and that Germanus would have been perceived as a representation of righteous orthodoxy in both, a fact that adds as essential historical interpretative layer to the text. Such historical contextualisation has been often only associated

<sup>174</sup> See 6.1, "Afterlives of the Saint" for a discussion on the topic.

<sup>175</sup> Miele, 210.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.; S.Pricoco, *L'Isola dei Santi: il Cenobio di Lerino e le Origini del Monachesimo Gallico* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo e Bizzarri, 1978).

<sup>177</sup> *Conversing with Saints*, 36; Miele, 143-159.

with the history of Britain, but is, in fact, just as present when considering the text within its Gallic background.

### 1.9 THE DATE<sup>178</sup> OF THE *VITA GERMANI*

Levison based his own dating on the historical context given by the letters preceding the beginning of the VG, to Bishops Patient of Lyon and Censurius of Auxerre: the first ruled over the see of Lyon, roughly, between 449 and 494, the year in which bishop Rusticus was already in charge.<sup>179</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris' letters help to pin point the date of Patient's episcopate, showing he was still bishop of Lyon around 470-475.<sup>180</sup> Censurius was Germanus' successor on the see of Auxerre, and ruled from Germanus' death—indeed a point of contestation, which I will discuss below—to his own, which occurred around 486.<sup>181</sup> In his letter to Patient, Constantius himself that writes the life of holy Germanus had been “until now concealed by silence,”<sup>182</sup> a sentence implying it had been so for a relatively long time, which made Levison opt for a date of composition close to 480.<sup>183</sup> Borius, following the same reasoning, places the composition of the text in the decade between 470 and 480. Van Egmond, too, places the VG's composition at the end of the fifth century, between 475 and 480 and he does so on the basis of three main reasons: the first is a remark made by Sidonius Apollinaris in one of his letters to Constantius that the latter was an old man around the years 470-475, which would make it probable the VG was not composed much after that. He also mentions, just as Levison and Borius before him, Patient's episcopate, which most likely ran from 450 to 475, hence proving the creation of the VG could not have happened much later than such dates. Finally, he points at, and underlines the importance of, that the fact the life and deeds of Germanus had been unspoken of for many years, referencing, again, the letter to Patient as a source for this particular information.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>178</sup> See L.W. Barnard, “The Date of S. Athanasius' ‘Vita Antonii’,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 28, 3 (September 1974), 169–175, for an archetypal method to achieve a possible date to an unlikely historically accurate text.

<sup>179</sup> Borius, 46.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> VG Introduction, 230–231.

<sup>182</sup> VG, Letter to Patient, 248: (...) *vitam Germani episcopi obumbratam silentio* (...).

<sup>183</sup> VG Introduction, 231.

<sup>184</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 29.

The only voice which appear to set itself apart from such a well tuned choir of agreement is that of Sharpe, who feels the text was composed slightly earlier, and places its original date of birth between 460 and 470.<sup>185</sup>

From Levison to Van Egmond, scholarship appears to agree on, if not a certain year, at least on a certain decade during which the VG was most likely composed, that is, between 470 and 480. The only notable exception is that of Sharpe, who feels the text may have been composed as early as 460. What needs to be remembered, and I will discuss below, is the relevance of Germanus' death date for the dating of Constantius' work, as the year of the Auxerrois' departure from this world is often used as a basis for the dating of his hagiography.

#### 1.10 THE TEXT: ITS DIFFUSION<sup>186</sup>

The VG was an inspiration for many hagiographical works written in Auxerre, although Constantius did not compose it in that city.<sup>187</sup> It was not only later texts about Germanus to be influenced by it, namely the *Vita Metrica* and the *Miracula Germani*, both written by Heiric of Auxerre in the ninth century, but also a series of other early medieval hagiographies such as Stephanus Africanus' *Vita Amatoris*, the *Vita Epiphani* by Ennodius of Pavia, probably composed around the year 500, the *Vita Radegundis*, the *Vita Germani Parisiensis* and the *Vita Albini*, all written by Venantius Fortunatus between 530 and 600, as well as Adomnán of Iona's *Vita Columbae*.<sup>188</sup> The text was known and certainly appreciated in Auxerre, home to Germanus himself and stronghold of his cult: about a century after Constantius completed the VG, bishop Aunacharius, successor of the saint, was aware of the text's existence and most likely was inspired by it when he asked Stephanus, a writer of African origin and hence known as *Africanus*, to create a verse life of Germanus.

<sup>185</sup> Sharpe, "Alban," 36.

<sup>181</sup> This section is largely based on: W. Levison's introduction to the VG, 225–46; Constantius of Lyon, as well as Borius, *Vie de Saint Germain d'Auxerre*, Van Egmond, *Conversing with the Saints*, Miele, *La Vita Germani di Costanzo di Lione*, Bouchard, "Episcopal Gesta," and Sharpe, "The late antique Passion of Saint Alban."

<sup>187</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 25–26.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

Although this composition has never come to life<sup>189</sup>—there is no extant manuscript and it is not mentioned as an actual text anywhere—Stephanus did fulfil another of Aunacharius’ requests, the creation of a prose life of Saint Amator: the result, the *Vita Amatoris*, is stylistically inspired by the VG, as well as similar in content, as it has been discussed in several parts of this work. The author of the *Revelatio Corcodemi*, a text composed roughly around the same time of the *Vita Amatoris* (mid-sixth century), also appear to have been familiar with the VG: the text in its entirety is part of the *Vita Germani Interpolata*<sup>190</sup> and, as already mentioned, the stylistic similarities with Constantius’ work seem to prove its author was well acquainted with the it.

The interpolated version of the VG was composed by an anonymous writer during the Carolingian period; in it, entire chapters of Constantius’ original work are sided with portions of other texts of different origins, so much so that, to say it with Levison, Constantius’ original is not modified, but rather submerged.<sup>191</sup> The *Vita Interpolata* itself is usually dated to the second half of the ninth century, although Bouchard have recently proposed a much earlier date, as discussed in the “Introduction,”<sup>192</sup> as undoubtedly it is this version Heiric used for his *Vita Germani Metrica*, and Rainogala and Alagus for the chapters related to Germanus in their *Gesta pontificum Autissiodorensium*, around 875. Heiric, composes a life of Germanus in hexameters.<sup>193</sup> He does so at the request of Lotharius, one of the sons of Charles the Bald, and abbot of the Monastery of Saint Germain d’Auxerre. When Lotharius dies prematurely in 865, Heiric offers his work to king Charles in 873. Heiric had also composed a prose work entitled *Miracula Germani*, which focuses on the post mortem miracles performed by the saint at several locations and shrines. Heiric seems to have been, during his short life (841–876), a man of great knowledge, student of Haimon of Auxerre, of Lupus of Ferrières and an acknowledged master, who collaborated with other authors to the composition of the

<sup>189</sup> See “Introduction,” 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre; Bouchard, “Episcopal *Gesta*.”

<sup>190</sup> Duru, 57–64.

<sup>191</sup> Levison, VG Introduction, 225–283.

<sup>192</sup> 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre; Bouchard, 17 onward.

<sup>193</sup> Heiric of Auxerre, *Vita Germani Metrica*, PL 124 [col. 1131–1208 B]. By the same author, also see *Miracula Sancti Germani*, PL 124 [col. 1207–1272 D].

*Gesta Episcoporum*, which have proven, as discussed in the early pages of this work, extremely useful to gather historical information about Germanus.<sup>194</sup>

The text became known relatively quickly in northern Italy: In Lombardy, Ennodius, bishop of Pavia and author of the *Vita Epiphani*, composed at the beginning of the sixth century, was clearly inspired by Constantius, just as Venantius Fortunatus was in the composition of his *Vita Radegundis*. The figure of Radegund in particular, shares with Germanus a strongly portrayed ascetic streak.<sup>195</sup> The same accent upon asceticism and food intake control in particular was also shown by Genovefa of Paris, whose *vita*<sup>196</sup> presents Germanus as the inspirational figure who guided a young Genovefa on a path of renunciation and holiness.<sup>197</sup>

The text reached also the Iberian peninsula, where it was known by Isidore of Seville (mid-sixth century),<sup>198</sup> and in general enjoyed great diffusion in Visigothic Spain.<sup>199</sup>

Just as the textual Germanus crossed the Alps and the Pyrenees in the fifth and sixth centuries, so he also crossed the sea and made himself known to Insular authors such as Adomnán of Iona, who not only modeled Columba's sea perils in the *Vita Columbae* on those described by Constantius,<sup>200</sup> but also related the episode of VG 13, quoting partially word by word.<sup>201</sup> Bede also inserted *ad verbum*, and almost entirely, VG 12 to VG 18 and VG 25 to VG 27 in the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*,<sup>202</sup> while describing how Germanus fought and conquered Pelagianism in

<sup>194</sup> "Introduction," 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre.

<sup>195</sup> See "Deconstructing the Saint," 3.4 The Diet of a real Hermit; Venantius Fortunatus, *De Vita Sancta Radegundis*.

<sup>196</sup> *Vita Genovefae Virginis Parisiensis*, but also *Vita Germani Interpolata*, 42–44, 68–70.

<sup>197</sup> *Vita Germani Interpolata*, 42–44, 68–70.

<sup>198</sup> VG Introduction, 232–4 and also "Die Quellen," 147, Borius, 46–50; Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 25–35.

<sup>199</sup> See for instance the example proposed by Antonio Maya Sánchez, in "Presencia de la *Vita Germani* de Costancio de Lyon en la España Visigoda. Una Imitación," *Habis* 25 (1994), 347–355.

<sup>200</sup> Adomnán of Iona, Anderson and Anderson ed. and trans., *Life of Columba*.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. ii.34, 144: *opponentes pericula procellas concitabant; caelum diemque tenebrarum caligine obducebant*. VG 13, 260: *obponunt pericula, procellas concitant, caelum diemque nubium nocte subducunt et tenebrarum caliginem maris atque aeris horrore congeminant*.

<sup>202</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors eds. and trans., Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1969).



Britain. He equally produced a shorter history of the saint in the *Chronicis Maioribus* (725), and dedicated a few words to him in the *Martyrologium*.<sup>203</sup>

Around the same time, but back in Gaul, the *Missale Gallicanum Vetus* proposed, among others, a mass in honor of Germanus, where a long preface described an ideal portrait of the holy bishop of Auxerre, with specific references to episodes and moments of his life that had clearly been taken from Constantius' work.<sup>204</sup> The Gallican Missal provided another source of information on Germanus, although many erroneous insertions have been added to the events described by Constantius, above all the idea of a trip to Ireland undertaken by Germanus and Lupus shortly after their British experience against the Pelagians.<sup>205</sup> It is not the only reference to Germanus' presence on Irish shores: Muirchú, author of the *Vita Patricii*,<sup>206</sup> maintains Patrick studied under Germanus' guidance in Auxerre, and lived with the Gallic saint for forty years. The *Legenda Aurea*<sup>207</sup> by Jacques de Voragine (thirteenth century), contains a biography of Germanus which marks the last step of the textual evolution of Constantius' composition.

Constantius' text has not only provided material to imitate, but has also been historically relevant for the dating and the understanding of another important late-antique work, the *Passio Sancti Albani*. The argument involving the VG was first made by Sharpe<sup>208</sup> and most recently analyzed by Wood.<sup>209</sup> In order to understand how Constantius' work becomes so essential for the textual history of another, one needs to look at the manuscript history of the PSA. What follows is only give a brief outline of the conclusions reached by Sharpe.

<sup>18</sup> Bede, "Chronicon Sive de Sex Hujus Saeculi Aetatibus" in *De Temporum Ratione*, PL 90 [col. 0561C–0562C].

<sup>19</sup> *De Liturgia Gallicana Libris Tres*, PL 72 [col. 0341C–0342C].

<sup>20</sup> VG, 233.

<sup>206</sup> Muirchú, "Vita Patricii," in *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, Ludwig Bieler ed. and trans., *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae X* (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 70–72: 1.6–1.8.

<sup>207</sup> Jacobus De Voragine. *Legenda Aurea: Vulgo Historia Lombardica Dicta*. Edited by Th. Graesse. Leipzig: Impensis Librariae Arnoldianae, 1850.

<sup>208</sup> Sharpe, "The Late Antique Passion of Saint Alban," 30–37.

<sup>209</sup> Ian Wood, "Germanus, Alban and Auxerre" in *Bulletin di Centre d'Études Médiévales d'Auxerre, BUCEMA*, 13 (2009), 123–129; "Levison and Saint Alban" in *Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947). Ein Jüdisches Forscherleben* (2010), 171–185.

Three versions of the PSA were identified by Meyers in his edition of the text and confirmed by Levison. These were the T version, found in a manuscript in Turin, the P version from Paris, and the much shorter E version found in four manuscripts. Meyers argued that T, the oldest and most corrupt of the versions, was the true witness to the original PSA, while E was an abridgement of T, from which P was created. Sharpe, on the other hand, argued that E was the closest manuscript witness to the original PSA, and it is in this context the VG and the historical Germanus become essential. A passage of the text is particularly revealing:

When St Germanus came to Alban basilica (in England), carrying with him relics of all the apostles and of several martyrs, he ordered the grave to be opened for him to place precious gifts in the same place, in order that the lodging of a single grave may hold *membra* of saints brought together from various regions whom heaven had received with equal merit. Once these were honorably disposed and united, with violent devotion and pious boldness of faith he took from the place where the blood of the martyr had flowed a lump of earth in which it was visible that the ground was red... . When all these things were revealed and made known, a huge crowd of people was brought to God ... .<sup>210</sup>

Germanus is here shown praying at Saint Alban's gravesite and taking some of the soil surrounding the remains of the martyr. This soil, stained red by the Alban's blood, is then carried to Auxerre. Germanus' visit to Alban's tomb is mentioned by Constantius, too: "and so after suppressing the abominable perversity and confounding its leaders, and calming the spirits of all with the purity of faith, the priests went to the holy martyr Alban to give thanks to God through him."<sup>211</sup> The passage is very brief and lacks details, a fact hinting at the strong possibility both Constantius and his audience were well aware of the connection between Germanus and Alban, which would give strong support to the idea that the PSA was indeed known in Auxerre around the time the VG was composed.<sup>212</sup> This can only mean, Sharpe continues, that the PSA had been written earlier than the VG, but most likely after the death of Germanus, as he is described as *beatus*, an adjective usually given

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<sup>25</sup> Sharpe, "Alban," 35.

<sup>211</sup> VG 16, 262: *Conpressa itaque perversitate damnabili eiusque auctoribus confutatis animisque omnium fidei puritate conpositis, sacerdotes beatum Albanum martyrem, acturi Deo per ipsum gratias petierunt*.

<sup>212</sup> Sharpe, "Alban," 36.

to a holy man after death.<sup>213</sup> This is also underlined by Wood,<sup>214</sup> who emphasises the relevance of Germanus' historical role in the fight against the Pelagians in Britain in association with the cult of Alban and the diffusion of the PSA.

The reference to Germanus in the PSA and, even more strongly, Constantius' mention of the same episode in the VG, gives incredible clues about the date of composition of Alban's life; the PSA returns the favor by providing interesting information about Germanus and his historical figure in return. Germanus is not only mentioned in the E version of the PSA, but also in the Turin (T) manuscript, which is, Sharpe argues, a "bulked up" version of the original E.<sup>215</sup> Among the additions, the redactor of T mentioned that Alban's relics collected by Germanus were brought to Auxerre and exposed, along with a life of the saint written on *tituli*. This particular part of the T text is well analysed by Wood<sup>216</sup>, who points out how Germanus, prior to his voyage to Britain, did not know about Alban and his cult, but he was in fact informed about the martyr's existence by Alban himself, who appeared to Germanus in a dream. Because of this dream Germanus decided to visit Alban's grave and to introduce his cult to Auxerre, as well as having the story of his life written on *tituli*.<sup>217</sup> Sharpe quite convincingly implies that this particular detail may have been how the redactor knew about the PSA, a fact supported by the *Gesta Pontificum Autissiodorensium* (ninth century), where it is said Germanus did found a basilica in honor of Saint Alban, which contained the relics he brought over from Britain.<sup>218</sup>

These details, all discovered and supported by literary and historical evidence by Wood and Sharpe, help to define better Germanus' historical persona, as they seem to demonstrate not only his role in the birth and rise of a cult of Saint Alban in Auxerre, but also his relevance in the creation of a literary text, the PSA: those very placards mentioned in T probably contained the E text, considered by Sharpe and Wood the core of the original passion of Saint Alban.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Wood, "Germanus, Alban and Auxerre," 126.

<sup>215</sup> Sharpe, "Alban," 33 and 36.

<sup>216</sup> Wood, "Germanus, Alban and Auxerre," 123–124.

<sup>217</sup> Sharpe, "Alban", 35: *sed cum ad basilicam ipsius noctu vigilasset, matutinis transactis, dum se sopori dedisset, sanctus Albanus adfuit, et, quae acta fuerant de persecutionibus eius, revelata tradidit utque titulis scripta retinerunt publice declaravit.*

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 35–6; *Gesta Pontificum*, 38–39.

The literary ties between the PSA and the VG also introduce a wealth of information about Germanus the man that would have been very difficult to retrieve and understand should the two texts not have been considered in pair: it is in particular to the idea of the *tituli* as a way of transmission of the PSA I refer. If it is true that E represent the text of such *tituli*, it also embodies the closest witness to a text written for bishop Germanus of Auxerre, the man. It is a sign, written and spelled clearly, of his presence in Auxerre and of his direct influence on the cultural and spiritual life of the town: such an incredible proof, considering Germanus himself did not leave any written text of his own.

### 1.11 THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION<sup>219</sup>

The manuscript history of the text has been fundamental to my approach to Constantius's work. Although I ultimately based my translation and all my research on W. Levison's 1922 edition, getting acquainted with the history of the text has been essential, especially for the full understanding of its diffusion in time and space. The best study of the VG's manuscript tradition is still, undoubtedly, that put forward by Levison as part of his introductory chapter to the MGH's 1922 edition of the text. The only other relevant study on the subject has been undertaken by Borius for his *Sources Chrétiennes* edition and translation of the text, but Borius himself openly based it on Levison's magisterial work.

The first, main subdivision Levison applied to the various manuscripts of the VG he examined relates strictly to the text itself: the A manuscripts reproduce Constantius' text, the B manuscripts, which, Levison says, are most likely those from which the *Vita Germani Interpolata*, an elaboration of the VG, have originated.<sup>220</sup> Such division is essential in order to understand the history of the text itself, as for centuries the *Vita Interpolata*, in name of its length, had been considered by specialists the actual work of Constantius. The very first edition of the VG created by Mombricitus in 1480 was to be the only edition for about four centuries, during

<sup>219</sup> Crucial for the study of the manuscript history of the text are, of course, Levison's introduction to the "Vita Germani" in his edition of the text, 234–239 and "Die Quellen," 101–107, and Borius, 41–47. Two years ago, Corinna Bottiglieri produced an up-to-date and well discussed overview of the text's manuscript tradition in "L'Épître de la *Vita di S. Germano di Auxerre* nel ms. Paris, BNF lat. 12598," the full bibliography of which is in footnote 93.

<sup>220</sup> VG, 234.

which the heavily interpolated version of Constantius' original composition kept on being published as his own. Surius reinforced this trend in 1573, when he brought out his edition of the VG in Cologne, and relied entirely on the *Vita Interpolata* for it: most notably and importantly, the Bollandists, in the figure of Peter Van der Bosche, reproduced in the *Acta Sanctorum, julii vii*, (1731) Surius' version as the original. The first doubting of the veracity of Surius (and the Bollandists)'s edition was Wilhelm Schoell in 1851,<sup>221</sup> who denied the originality of the Letters introducing the VG, in spite of their presence in Mombritius' edition –the earliest of all– and described them as being one of the many additions made to Constantius' text throughout the centuries.

In 1881 K. Kolher, just as C. Narbey<sup>222</sup> was to maintain a few years later, affirmed the manuscript A4\* (the incomplete Paris MS no. 2178) was not of the VG, but of a different hagiography. Kohler compiled an edition of the text giving, according to Levison, too much importance to fragments of manuscripts A6 and B6.<sup>223</sup>

In 1884, C. Narbey created a shorter edition of the VG, unfortunately based only on three, incomplete manuscripts. These are certainly interesting examples, especially for their age (one of them is from the eighth century), but they are, nevertheless, incomplete and only contain fragmentary passages of the VG. This factor made Narbey's work sadly deficient.<sup>224</sup>

Only in 1899 Constantius' *Vita Germani* finally reappears in the panorama of late antique hagiography, thanks to the work of B. Krusch, who brought to light a thirteenth-century manuscript containing, in his opinion, the most complete version to date of Constantius' work: this is the A4 manuscript in Levison's classification, London British Library MS no. 17357 After him, Levison claimed the rediscovery of Constantius's text, first with an article clarifying the thorny matter of the various sources of the *Vita Interpolata*,<sup>225</sup> then publishing his edition of Constantius' VG,

<sup>176</sup> K.W.Schoell, *De Ecclesiasticae Britonum Scotorumque Historiae Fontibus*, 24 and following, cited in Levison's introduction to the VG, 234 footnote 15.

<sup>222</sup> For an analysis of Narbey's work, see Levison "Die Quellen," 103–104, and "Vita Germani," 234–235, but also Bottiglieri, 95–124.

<sup>178</sup> VG Introduction, 235.

<sup>179</sup> Borius, 10.

<sup>180</sup> Levison, "Die Quellen."

introduced by a seminal work on the text's manuscript's history. Before Levison had published his magisterial work, S. Baring-Gould (1904) worked on Constantius' text, but unfortunately based his study only on one manuscript and entirely ignored Levison's article on the *Vita Interpolata*.

A valuable collection of lectures presented in Auxerre in 1948, in occasion of the commemorative conference for the fifteenth-century anniversary of Germanus' death has given an overview on the various themes treated by critics and scholars on the figure and the cult of Saint Germanus of Auxerre.<sup>226</sup> In 1965, R. Borius published another edition and translation of the VG by Constantius, using the oldest among the A manuscripts classified by Levison as its foundation, and the London MS no.17357 as a support.

### 1.11.1 THE "A" MANUSCRIPTS

Levison identified two major manuscripts' families: those which followed closely the original text by Constantius, and those which, on the other hand, gave origin to the interpolated text. The number of manuscripts belonging to each group is very important, as it attests to the great diffusion of the work itself; Levison, after having classified twenty-one manuscripts in the group he defines A (the closest to the original work of Constantius) and nine in group B (from which, most likely, the *Vita Germani Interpolata* originated) admitted to know of at least another seventy manuscripts, potentially related to the Vita II.<sup>227</sup>

The A manuscripts correspond, in Levison's subdivision, to those closer to the original work of Constantius of Lyon. In spite of being numerically lower than those containing some form of interpolation (the B family), the A manuscripts have represented, since Levison's cataloguing, the core of at least one more recent, major edition of the work of Constantius, that of Borius for the *Sources Chrétiennes* in 1965. After an in depth study of Levison's manuscripts' analysis, Borius decides to focus on the seven older archetypes of the VG still extant, which cover a period stretching from the eighth to the eleventh century, plus the thirteenth-century London MS no.17357, kept in the British Library.

<sup>181</sup>The already cited *Saint Germain d'Auxerre et son temps*.

<sup>227</sup> VG, 244–245.

Chronologically, the oldest A manuscripts are the following:

- I. A6a: *Codex Parisiensis 12598* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, no. 12598, eighth century). Incomplete. This has been used by Narbey for the compiling of his edition of the VG. He edited it with the incomplete manuscript Cambray no.855.
- II. A2: *Codex Vindobonensis* (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, no. 420 ninth century). The Letters and the Prologue are missing, and the narrative itself is incomplete (it only reaches chapter twenty-seven, “emendatione frueruntur”).
- III. A4a: *Codex Romanus Vaticanus Reginae Christinae Latinus* (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, no. 140. This manuscript contains a ninth-century double folio, inserted before the original folio 1<sup>a</sup>-2’, which contains two fragments of the VG).
- IV. A3a: *Codex Parisiensis 17002* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France no. 17002 (tenth century), incomplete.
- V. A1: The *Codex Turicensis* (Zürich Zentralbibliothek c.10.i, tenth century). This manuscript misses the letter to Censurius, and has been emended in a different hand from manuscripts of the B1-2-3-4 types.
- VI. A3: The *Codex Carnotensis* (Chartres, no.507, eleventh century). The manuscript, which was incomplete, was destroyed during the Second World War. Borius substituted it with another exemplar from Chartres (Bibliothèque Municipale, no. 516, ninth century).
- VII. A4\*: *Codex Parisiensis 2178* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines, no. 2178, eleventh century). It is the MS on which Baring-Gould based his 1904 edition of the VG.
- VIII. A4b: *Codex Romanus Bibliothecae Vallicellianae* (Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, tome 23, eleventh century). Incomplete.
- IX. A6b: *Codex Cameracensis 864* (Cambrai, eleventh century). Incomplete.

The A manuscripts all originate from a non-extant archetype  $\Omega$ : Levison divided them in six sub-categories, namely A1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. The stemma of A1, 3 and 5 is straightforward:

-A1 (tenth century) originated directly the *Codex Rheno-Traiectensis* 390 (A1a, beginning of the fifteenth century); A1b (*Codex Bruxellensis*, fifteenth century); A1c (*Codex Hagensis* L.29, late fifteenth century); A1d (*Codex Berolinensis*, late fifteenth century).

-A3, the now destroyed *Codex Carnotensis* no.507 (eleventh century), originated A3a (*Codex Parisiensis*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, no17002, tenth century) and A3b (*Codex Romanus Bibliothecae Vallicellianae*, Biblioteca Vallicelliana no. g. 98, seventeenth century).

-A5, The *Codex Cameracensis* no. 864 (eleventh century) has been catalogued on its own, as directly stemming from the archetype.

The situation of the A2, 4 and 6 manuscripts needs a more detailed overview.

-A2, *Codex Vindobonensis* no.420 (ninth century) originated directly a manuscript A2a of which no trace is extant, but from which A2a<sup>1</sup> (*Codex Londiniensis Inter Harleianos*, London, British Museum, no. 2801, beginning of the thirteenth century), A2a<sup>2</sup> (*Codex Bruxellensis* no. 98-100, thirteenth century), A2a<sup>3</sup> (the Bonn MS, fourteenth century) and A2a<sup>4</sup> (the *Codex Duesseldorfensis*, C 10 b, fifteenth century) all derived. The A2\* manuscript (*Codex Vindobonensis* no. 336, thirteenth century, but in part from 1181) stems directly from A2 (just like the hypothetical A2a), as it is demonstrated by the following characteristic: A2, which is an incomplete manuscript, misses a full quaternion, the probable content of which is also missing from A2\*. A2\*, on the other hand, does not appear to depend from A2a, hence it cannot be part of such a group.

-A4 and A4\* (*Codex Londiniensis*, British Library no. 17357 –thirteenth century– and the *Codex Parisiensis*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, “Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines” no.2178– eleventh century) both stem directly from the Ω archetype; they are connected by the order in which the letters to Censurius and Patient are written (Censurius’ precedes Patient’s, whereas it is usually the opposite) and also by their origin (they both originated in Spain). The dependent manuscript A4a (*Codex Romanus Vaticanus Reginae Christianae Latinus*, 14), and A4b, (*Codex Romanus Bibliothecae Vallicellianae*, tome xxiii) appear to stem from both A4 and A4\*.



-A6a, the oldest manuscript of the VG extant (*Codex Parisiensis*, Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France, no.12598, eighth century) and A6b (*Codex Cameracensis* no. 855, beginning of the thirteenth century) both derive, according to Levison, from a supposed A6 manuscript, of which all traces have been lost.

### 1.11.2 THE “B” MANUSCRIPTS

The B MSS are those from which the *Vita Germani Interpolata* may have originated. The importance of these manuscripts relies particularly on the fact that the *Vita Germani Interpolata* was thought to be, for at least four centuries, the actual work of Constantius. Whereas R. Borius decided to bypass these manuscripts for his 1965 edition of Constantius’ *Vita Germani*,<sup>228</sup> they are of fundamental value for the history and the evolution of the text itself, not only for the reason mentioned above, but also for the fact that the best known elaborations of the *Vita Germani*, the *Vita Germani Metrica* and the *Miracula* by Heiric of Auxerre (ninth century) are both based on *Vita Germani Interpolata* and not on the shorter original by Constantius. All of the B MSS stem from a  $\Omega$  archetype which is not extant:

- I. B1 (*Codex Montepessulanus H*, Montpellier, Bibiothèque Universitaire, Séction de Medicine, no. 124, ninth- tenth century) contains, interestingly, also the *Vita Amatoris* and the *Revelatio Corcodemi*. It has been the origin of B1a (*Codex Romanus Vaticanus Reginae Latinus*, Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, no 541, twelfth century) and B1b (*Codex Leidensis* 1685, ninth century).
- II. B2 (*Codex Bernensis*, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, no. 48, eleventh century).
- III. B3 (*Codex Coloniensis inter Wallraffianos*, Köln, Stadtbibliothek, no. 163, twelfth century), it contains both the *Vita Germani Metrica* and Constantius’ VG.
- IV. B4 (*Codex Florentinus inter Ashburnhamianos*, Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, no. 38, ninth century). This is, with B1, the oldest manuscript of the *Vita Germani Interpolata*. From this manuscript directly depends B4a (*Codex Venetus Bibliothecae Marcianae Latinus*, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, no. 2797, thirteenth century).

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<sup>183</sup> Borius, 50–62.

- V. B5 (*Codex Rotomagensis*, Rouen, no. 1388, twelfth century).
- VI. B6 (*Codex Parisiensis*, Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France, no. 16820, twelfth-thirteenth century).<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> See Bottiglieri for an interesting discussion of the text of the VG contained in this particular ms, which is considered a shortened version of the *Vita Germani Interpolata*, most likely produced to be read in particular liturgical occasions.

**CHAPTER TWO****THE STRUCTURE OF THE *VITA GERMANI*****2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the history of the VG and its protagonist and then outlined the aims of this study. The first step to understand this text in all its complexity is the analysis of its literary structure. By this, I mean the distribution of events within the text and their role in both the development of the narrative and that of Germanus' persona. It is important, however, not to forget that the whole text also provides fundamental information about the process of Germanus' sanctification, not only through its content, but also because of the distribution and interpretation of other miracles and actions. It will become evident that many passages are truly supporting the sense and the idea of ongoing spiritual development of the protagonist, a development which is fully exposed in the selected episodes central to each of the sections of this dissertation. The next pages will address the matter of the text's narrative structure: this will help to contextualise the central episodes which will be discussed later in this work. It will be shown how these episodes, which stand out for their vocabulary and are pivotal in a reading of the narrative that sees Germanus' sanctifying development as central, direct also the content and meaning of those before and after them, which become respectively introduction to and expansion of the powerful moments narrated in the most crucial sections of the VG.

Of great support to this analysis will be the study of its division in chapters and sections: as discussed in the Chapter 1 above and detailed exhaustively in Levison's edition to the VG,<sup>1</sup> the text's manuscript tradition is varied and plentiful, but, with the majority of the exemplars dating between the tenth and the eleventh century, and the earliest surviving being incomplete, the matter of how the text was originally conceived by Constantius, in reference to its external structure and division, may never be clarified. It will be, nevertheless, of the greatest relevance to discuss Levison's choices, as they were based upon the first-hand view and study of

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<sup>1</sup> "Introduction," VG, 232–46.

the manuscript corpus, including essential, but no longer existing exemplars, such as the A3 Chartres manuscript, which was destroyed during the Second World War.

Secondary sources, in particular works by Picard and Stansbury on the *Vita Columbae* will provide a methodological context supporting the idea of a structure of the text dictated not only by its physical division in chapters, as those proposed by Levison and Borius, but also, and more importantly, by themes. In the case of the VG, it shall be discussed in the next pages, these themes correspond to the stages of Germanus' spiritual movement from man to saint, and are identified by semantic instances and fields unique to the text.

## 2.2 THE *VITA GERMANI* AND ITS STRUCTURE

In his 1922 edition, Levison opted not to divide the VG into books or chapters;<sup>2</sup> he limited his intervention upon the structural appearance of the text by adding paragraph numbers<sup>3</sup> at the beginning of what he saw as new sections of the narrative. This division, which is based on Levison's own study of the VG's manuscripts, has been adopted also by Borius in his 1965 translation and edition of the text for the *Sources Chrétiennes*. Borius also divided the text into thematic chapters, largely based on the main, recognisable historical events of the text. In truth, Borius was not the first to employ a chapter division of the text: about a century earlier, L.M. Duru, who had based his edition of the text for the *Bibliothèque Historique de l'Yonne*<sup>4</sup> on the Bollandists', edited by Bosche and de Tillemont, hence publishing what Levison was to name the *Vita Interpolata*, introduced a titled division of the text. Duru chose to half the text into two books, each divided in a series of chapters; each chapter carried a short summary of the events as a title. The text was also ordered in paragraphs very much parallel to those introduced by Levison. Both the Bollandists and Duru, however, had favoured the interpolated

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the practice of chapter division and, in particular, titling, see Joseph-Claude Poulin, "Un élément négligé de critique hagiographique: Les titres des chapitres," in *Scribere Sanctorum Gesta*, 309–342. (316 in particular, for a specific reference to the *Vita Germani Interpolata*).

<sup>3</sup> The numbered sections of the VG are, in terms of their length, more similar to paragraphs than real chapters and they are referred to as such in the context of the first two sub-sections of this chapter. It is also true, however, that each paragraph presents a fully developed action, or set of actions. For this reason, I will usually refer to "chapters," rather than paragraphs, in the rest of this work, where the literary analysis of the text will often call to refer directly to each specific section.

<sup>4</sup> *Vita Sancti Germani Interpolata*, 47–89.

version of the VG, hence the breaking up in books and chapters of that text which is not relevant in this context. The textual partition applied by Borius, on the other hand, is. Whereas the editing differences between Levison's and Borius' versions are limited, the introduction by the French of a more structured approach to the text represents a point of departure from what is still, in fact, considered as the quintessential edition of Constantius' hagiography. Just as Duru before him, Borius applies short, yet revealing titles to each section of the text, which nevertheless still follows the sectioning into paragraphs applied by Levison. If it is true that the creation of chapters and titles modernises greatly the text, and makes it somewhat more readable, it is also true that Borius' sectioning only takes into account the narrative in its most superficial form, that is, as a series of facts and episodes, some of which are tied in together more closely than others.

It is certain, however, that the textual subdivision provided by Borius is important in the history of Constantius' text, as it is the very first of its kind: all other examples, as already said, referred to the *Vita Interpolata*, a much longer, complex and less organized text than the original. At the same time, Borius did not set out to analyze the structure of the VG to any greater extent than its narration would require: the division in chapters is based exclusively on the facts told in the text, but its evolutive and epiphanic connotations, especially in reference to the figure of Germanus, are not explored. The study proposed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation provided the means to deepen the structural analysis on the text, emphasising passages, events and actions with little apparent relevance, but which become important when analysed metaphorically. The next pages will delineate the process leading to a different view of the VG's structure, from that brought forward by Borius, and by Duru and the Bollandists before him, as it will not focus on the mere facts told in the text, but on what such facts mean when approached as part of Germanus' sanctifying process, which is, as this thesis will try to show, the leading light behind Constantius' words.

Before doing so, it is necessary to discuss in more detail Levison's structural approach, as it represents the factual basis for all successive editions of the text, as well as the choices made by Borius, the only editor of the VG by Constantius to have

worked on its structure by defining contextual boundaries to the events and having grouped them together on such basis.

### 2.2.1 LEVISON'S DIVISION

As mentioned in the previous pages, Levison's work on the manuscripts of the VG is invaluable to today's scholars: the analysis of the manuscript tradition he produced for the MGH is still unrivalled and is fundamental for the understanding of the history of the text. Levison chose to discuss his proposed paragraph subdivision within the text itself, rather than in its introduction, by recording peculiarities and differences in the apparatus; this made for rapid and efficient consultation and comparison of the differences detected in the manuscript exemplars. Levison took into account both the A and B manuscripts, but I will discuss only the relevant findings within the A group, in which only witnesses to Constantius' VG are catalogued.<sup>5</sup>

He based his division on how the great majority of the manuscripts proposed it; such division is clearly emphasised – and most likely dictated – by the very language of the text: thirty-three of the forty-six sections are clearly marked by a temporal or consecutive connector,<sup>6</sup> *per se* a sign of a new narration beginning. None of the A manuscripts proposed chapter or section titles, nor an index of chapters, as it can be seen for instance, in the anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* and Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.

When discussing the historicity of Germanus' British missions, Barrett notes how the use of temporal locutions such as *eodem tempore* fail to denote a specific time-frame, and only provide a time sequence for the actions.<sup>7</sup> Barrett's point is strong and its truthfulness undeniable: Constantius did not provide the reader with

<sup>5</sup> As explained in the "Introduction," the B manuscripts are those on which the *Vita Germani Interpolata* is based.

<sup>6</sup> 1: *igitur*; 2: *cum subito*; 3: *iam vero*; 6: *itaque*; 7: *erat in illo tempore*; 8: *quodam tempore*; 10: *quodam tempore*; 12: *eodem tempore*; 13: *itaque*; 14: *interea*; 15: *cum subito*; 16: *compressa itaque perversitate*; 17: *interea*; 18: *et iam*; 19: *itaque*; 23: *itaque*; 24: *Auxiliaris etiam regebat*; 25: *interea*; 26: *interea*; 27: *cum subito*; 31: *decursis itaque*; 32: *erat autem dies*; 33: *Egressus urbe opulentissima, dum ...*; 34: *interea*; 35: *ferebatur iam*; 36: *quadam die*; 37: *crescebat cotidie admiratio*; 38: *Volusiani cuiusdam filius, qui tum patricii ...*; 39: *Acoli eunuchi, tum praepositi ...*; 41: *quadam die*; 42: *factum est, ut post die ...*; 43: *Ereditas deinceps ...*; 44: *deinde*; 45: *Placentiam corpus, dum praeterit ...*

<sup>7</sup> Barrett, 201–202.

specific timelines of Germanus' life and actions and the temporal and consecutive connectors and adverbs are used only to create the idea of time passing. I do not consider, however, this lack of precision or interest in a more factual time-frame detrimental to the text: one particular characteristic of hagiography is the lack of specific time context for the actions described in the texts. Moreover, the use of this type of temporal connector was to become a topos itself in later hagiography, as pointed out by Stansbury, who detected their overwhelming presence in the *Vita Columbae*.<sup>8</sup> In it, too, these are little more than connectives, used by the author to give to the event about to be described a generic time frame.

Nehring, in his study on the VH, noticed the same lack of a precise timeline: the events of a hagiography are not always chronologically ordered, and the text can often resemble a list of simple successive episodes;<sup>9</sup> the same opinion was supported by Picard.<sup>10</sup> In this context, it has to be kept in mind that the ultimate aim of a hagiographical work was not to be historically accurate (hence providing an accurate time frame for the saint's actions) but edifying,<sup>11</sup> and time as a narrative lead was secondary, if relevant at all.

If read in this light, Constantius' use of generic temporal connectors throughout the text does not surprise and, far from shedding a negative light on the value of the text as a historical source, it rather confirms a hagiographical topos of extreme relevance for the literary history of late antique Latinity, which was to be confirmed in later, largely disseminated texts.

The A1 manuscript<sup>12</sup> proposes a different cataloguing and numbering of the paragraphs, which mirrors quite closely that proposed in the B1<sup>13</sup> manuscript of the

<sup>8</sup> Mark Stansbury, "The Composition of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*," *Peritia* 17–18 (2003–2004), 154–182, especially 164–165.

<sup>9</sup> See 2.4.1 An Eidological Structure of the *Vita Germani*.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> As well as, possibly, politically relevant, as well explained by Miele for the VG itself (2.2.2 Borius' Division and Miele's Narrative Voice; 2.3.2 History and Miracles).

<sup>12</sup> The *Codex Turicensis*, Zürich Zentralbibliothek, C.10.i., a 10th-century exemplar from Zürich.

<sup>13</sup> The *Codex Montepessulanus H*, Montpellier, Bibliothèque Universitaire Séction de Médecine, no. 154, another 10th-century manuscript from Montpellier, which includes, beside the VG, also the RC and the VA.

*Vita Interpolata*, from which it had been corrected in a different hand.<sup>14</sup> The differences are listed in the table below:

CODEX TURICENSIS (10TH CENTURY) A1	LEVISON
Chapter 1	Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
Chapter 2	Chapters 5, 6
Chapter 3	Chapter 7
Chapter 4	Chapters 8, 9
<i>Chapter 5 not mentioned</i>	
Chapter 6	Chapter 10
Chapter 7	Chapter 11
Chapter 8	Chapters 12, 13
Chapter 9	Chapter 14
Chapter 10	Chapter 15
Chapter 11	Chapter 16 to “ <i>corporis propaganda</i> ”
Chapter 12	Chapter 16 from “ <i>Et dum aliquadiu</i> ” to end
Chapter 13	Chapter 17, 18, 19 to “ <i>ingreditur</i> ”
Chapter 14	Chapter 19 from “ <i>Itaque Gallias lustraturus</i> ” to <i>not mentioned</i>
<i>Chapter 15 not mentioned</i>	
Chapter 16	Chapter 23 from “ <i>Itaque advenientem beatissimum virum,</i> ” chapter 24
Chapter 17 ( <i>number omitted</i> )	Chapter 25, 26
Chapter 18	Chapter 27

<sup>14</sup>A1 was quite heavily corrected following not only the B1 manuscripts, (the Montpellier text – which originated a B1a exemplar, the *Codex Romanus Vaticanus Reginae Latinae*, Biblioteca Vaticana n. 541 and the B1b exemplar, the *Codex Leidensis*, Bibliotheek n. 1685), but also the B2 and B4 manuscripts (the *Codex Bernensis*, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, and the *Codex Florentinus Laurentianae inter Ashburnhamianos*, Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana n. 38). For a full description of the mss cited, see “Introduction” and Levison’s preface to the VG, 234–46.



CODEX TURICENSIS (10TH CENTURY) A1	LEVISON
Chapter 19	Chapter 28
Chapter 20	Chapter 29, 30 to “ <i>elata praeifulgeant.</i> ”
Chapter 21 ( <i>number omitted</i> )	Chapter 30 from “ <i>Territorium sane</i> ” to end of chapter
Chapter 22 ( <i>number omitted</i> )	Chapter 31
Chapter 23 ( <i>number omitted</i> )	Chapter 32
Chapter 24 ( <i>number omitted</i> )	Chapter 33
Chapter 25	Chapter 34 to Chapter 35 “ <i>retinebat</i> ”
Chapter 26	Chapter 35 from “ <i>Regebat etiam Romanum Imperium Placidia</i> ” to end of the chapter
Chapter 27 ( <i>number omitted</i> )	Chapters 36, 37
Chapter 28	Chapter 38
Chapter 29	Chapters 39, 40
Chapter 30	Chapter 41
Chapter 31	Chapters 42, 43, 44
Chapter 32	Chapters 45, 46

The first difference to be noted is that A1 has thirty-two versus forty-six paragraphs. Of more interest are the paragraphs presenting an original subdivision: Levison’s VG 16 forms the Codex Turicensis 11–12. VG 19 is, again, parted between two different sections of CT(13–14), just as it happens for VG 23 (the *number omitted* CT 15 and CT 16) and 30 (CT 20 and *number omitted* CT 21). VG 35 forms part of CT 25 and 26. In all cases, with the exception of the beginning of CT 21, which starts at VG 30 *territorium sane*, the breaking up of the VG happens in conjunction with the use of a temporal or consecutive preposition or adverb.<sup>15</sup> In the

<sup>15</sup> In A1 chapter twelve starts with *et dum aliquadiu*; chapter fourteen with *itaque* Gallias lustraturus; chapter sixteen with *itaque* advenientem beatissimum virum; chapter twenty-six with *regebat etiam* Romanum Imperium Placidia.

cases of CT 12, 16 and 21 (*number omitted*) CT differences match the starting point of paragraphs in the B1 manuscript. The A1 manuscript is also the only one reproducing Constantius' work to present short titles introducing each section;<sup>16</sup> in spite of being an early extant example of the text, Levison's study proves it had been heavily emended following the B1, B2 and B4 manuscripts.<sup>17</sup> Each of the headings provides a concise description of the following events, but does not add any detail to the content of the text itself. Levison does not insist either on their presence, or on the reasons behind his decision not to use them in his own edition. Considering this, and the fact that the very subdivision of the A1 manuscript appears so different from other manuscript witnesses of the A group (none of which presents chapter headings), it seems unlikely they were actual part of the original work produced by Constantius.

This brief analysis certainly reiterates the influence of the B1, interpolated manuscripts on the recensor of the Codex Turicensis, but does not diminish in any way the value of the choices, based on the majority of the A manuscripts, made by Levison. The narrative itself and the relevance of each episode does not change; more than anything, the close reading of the A1 recension helps to strengthen Levison's own choices, which prove to be faithful to the narrative evolution of the text, as well as its manuscripts. The righteousness of Levison's subdivision, as mentioned previously, is confirmed by lexical analysis and the presence of temporal and consecutive clauses at the beginning of most sections.

### 2.2.2 BORIUS' DIVISION AND MIELE'S NARRATING VOICE

The VG edition proposed by Borius for the *Sources Chrétiennes* is largely based on the paragraph division of Levison's.<sup>18</sup> According to its French editor, the first part<sup>19</sup> of the text goes from VG 1 to VG 6: it includes Germanus' family history, his rise to the see of Auxerre and the description of his ascetic ways. Considering

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<sup>16</sup> VG ,247–248.

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 14 for details.

<sup>18</sup> Borius, 39–43.

<sup>19</sup> Excluding, clearly, the dedicatory letters, which represent in all editions an independent body from the narrative itself, and are introduced with a title and salutation of their own provided by the author, and the Preface, for the same reasons.

how powerfully asceticism is described in five of the six paragraphs within this section,<sup>20</sup> the lack of any reference to it in the title chosen for the section by Borius seems peculiar: “Le Jeune Aristocrate, le Fonctionnaire, l’Evêque,” certainly defines, in three phrases, what Germanus was and becomes. Still, it seems to leave out the very essence of his change: the embracing of a way of life which is characteristically made for sainthood. In the next chapter I will discuss how Germanus’ own ascetic ways are, in fact, a first sign of the epiphany received –and barely described– and how important in his own spiritual development such early events are. In light of the discoveries made during this study, Borius’ decision not to consider asceticism one of the capital themes of the first pages of the VG is disputable.

This first, introductory section of the text is followed, according to Borius, by “Quelques miracles opérés par Germain:” from VG 7 to VG 11, where the first miraculous actions of the Auxerrois are described: from the first episode where Germanus helps to recover stolen money, to the last, where he cures cockerels, each miracle –some of them will be discussed in the next chapters– could still be interpreted as a human action and its mundane characteristics are very defined and recognisable once the language used is analysed.<sup>21</sup> The general tone used by Borius in titling this part of the text, emphasised by the indefinite adjective “quelques,” certainly underlines a fact: that these miracles are not the most outstanding in the text, although, it will be discussed, some of them are of immense symbolic and semantic importance.<sup>22</sup> Again, it appears Borius aimed mostly at defining the sequence of events in the text and their literal role. The same idea is reinforced by the following sections, all identified by Germanus’ travels and role in historical events: section three is defined by his first trip to Britain, section four by his trip to Arles, section five by his second voyage to Britain. These include VG 12 to 34 and represent the central dénouement of Germanus’ spiritual growth, which is very much accomplished once he reaches Italy (his stay in Ravenna and his death form the core

<sup>20</sup> VG 2, where Germanus is forced to take up the episcopate and eventually abandons his wealth for a life in poverty; 3, where his frugal eating habits are described; 4, where his clothing is listed; 5, where his sense of hospitality, which carries a strong parallel with the figure of Christ and which will be discussed below, is only reiterated by the mention of his fasting and, finally, 6, where he is described as “choosing a life of solitude among the crowds” and founds his monastery.

<sup>21</sup> “Constructing the Saint,” 104–32.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

of the last “chapter” created by Borius) where he carries out the symbolically most powerful of his miracles, a resurrection and a post mortem healing.<sup>23</sup> Both of these are the ultimate representation of Germanus’ achieved sanctity,<sup>24</sup> yet they are not taken into account by Borius when it comes to defining the last events of the VG.

The reason behind Borius’ decision to divide the text into chapters following a simple, straightforward literal idea derives directly from the type of approach he used when dealing with the text: as compiler of an edition, and of a brief excursus of the history of the text, which works as a corollary to it, Borius’ interest in the symbolic and theological value of the narrative is only peripheral. If read in this light, his sequencing of the VG into thematic sections is well articulated and mirrors the evolution of the text’s plot. His focus on Germanus’ travels as central to the sequence of events is also representative of the little that is known about Germanus historically, therefore mostly apt to give structure to Constantius’ work. And in truth, Borius’ division does follow a *topos* typical of hagiography, that of the pseudo-historical framing of the saint’s actions, usually rendered by tales on his or her family and origins, studies, profession before taking up fully fledged pioussness and, often travels after the holy epiphany has taken place. Often, for the sake of narrative, events of historical relevance in which the protagonist have been involved are described to provide more credibility to his or her actions and reinforce the dénouement of the narrative:<sup>25</sup> if read in this light, Borius’ division in chapters certainly acquires a more defined stylistic resonance. As a text, the VG does not require to be divided into anything more than the forty-six paragraphs defined by Levison, but a chapter division such as that presented by Borius makes the reading more palatable to a modern audience, used to the itemisation of texts into smaller units. From this point of view, Borius’ choice is certainly to be lauded, as it makes the VG a more accessible piece of work. Although not focused on the literary side of the text and its stylistic potential, Miele’s mention of the VG’s structure is

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<sup>23</sup> VG, 38 and 45.

<sup>24</sup> “Germanus’ Holiness Revealed.”

<sup>25</sup> See, for instance, David N. Dumville, “St Cathroé of Metz and the Hagiography of Exoticism” in J. Carey, M. Herbert and P. Ó’Riain eds, *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (Dublin: Four Court Press, 1999), 176–88; Clare Stancliffe, “Jonas’ *Life of Columbanus and His Disciples*” in *ibid.*, 189–201.

interesting: his discussion centers on the double voice present in the narrative, that of Constantius, man of letters and friend to the highest echelons of the Gallic church, found in the two letters opening his work, as well as in the *praefatio* and the *epilogus*, and the narration of Germanus's life. Miele points out how, in fact, the very style of the Latin used differs greatly between the two sections, the mirroring the elevated writing style of the author, the other seemingly more basic:

Here (in the letters, the *praefatio* and *epilogus*) the biographer talks in the first person; the *sermo* – which is *humilis* by default in the rest of the *Vita*, in order to emphasize the saint's *sublimitas* – is more refined and shows notable literary skills.<sup>26</sup>

This is, Miele says, because the direct addressees of the letters, *praefatio* and *epilogus* are the “colte orecchie vescovili” of Patiens and Censurius, whereas the rest of the text is created for a larger public. More important still, is Miele's consideration that, in name of this switch of registers, Constantius gives to his work a depth of interpretation that goes beyond the literal: although not necessarily rooted in the same ground, Miele's view, I believe, underlines that same structural richness and complexity I found in the text.

### 2.3 HAGIOGRAPHY AND ITS STRUCTURE

Eby begins his study of the *Vita Cuthberti* with words I feel could be also applied to the VG: “the organisation and patterning of this *Vita* illuminate the meaning of the work itself, and carry the essential messages to convey to his (Bede's) audience.”<sup>27</sup> Of a similar opinion is Boesch-Gajano, when she writes that: “one of the best known characteristics of hagiographical texts is their well defined schematisation. This is their true value, as the texts' formalisation within stereotypical patterns makes every change from the norm greatly significant.”<sup>28</sup> It truly can be said that the structure of a text can tell as much to its reader as the very

<sup>26</sup> Miele, 150: *Il biografo in questi brani si esprime in prima persona; il 'sermo' – nel resto della 'Vita' obbligatoriamente 'humilis' al fine di esaltare la 'sublimitas' delle opere del santo – si fa più ricercato, tradisce una notevole maestria letteraria.*

<sup>27</sup> Eby, 316.

<sup>28</sup> Sofia Boesch-Gajano, “Il Culto dei Santi: Filologia, Antropologia e Storia,” *Studi Storici* 23, no.1 (Jan.–Mar., 1982), 119–136: *si sa che una delle caratteristiche proprie ai testi agiografici è la loro schematizzazione molto accentuata. Ma proprio qui nasce il loro valore affatto eccezionale. La loro formalizzazione in stereotipi fa sì che ogni cambiamento del contenuto o la sua assenza sia grandemente significativo* (121).

content of it; for this reason, the structural literary analysis of the text takes such a relevant position in this dissertation. It is a type of study that can be approached in different manners all aiming at, nevertheless, shedding light on the content, history and literary value of a piece. The works of Nehring, Eby and Derouet suggest patterns of interpretation of the hagiographical text based on the structure and narrative of the text itself, and provide a solid background to the validity of this method.

In its work on the VH, for instance, Nehring<sup>29</sup> approaches the text from a rhetorical point of view and, on the basis of its narrative, divides it into five specific sections: the *prologue*, the *narratio*, the *argumentatio*, the *narratio hagiographica* and the *epilogus*.<sup>30</sup> These sections have originated by well documented *caesurae* of narrative, in part previously identified by other scholars.<sup>31</sup> The idea –and presence– of narrative turning points is paralleled in my own structural analysis of the VG,<sup>32</sup> as Nehring, just I shall do, uses narrative episodes to identify them.

Even more strikingly, Eby's thesis about the narrative structure of the *Vita Cuthberti* supports, by means of its similar approach and overviews, my own take on the structure of the VG: Eby emphasises how strongly the text's structure defines Cuthbert's evolution from layman to holy man,<sup>33</sup> and how, especially during his youth, the saint's secular features could be strongly perceived in the narrative.<sup>34</sup> Another point underlined by Eby shared by both the VG and the *Vita Cuthberti* is the chronological aspect of the texts, which, unlike the majority of hagiographies,<sup>35</sup> seem to follow a well defined timeline. In the case of the *Vita Cuthberti*, this has been noticed also by Claudio Leonardi, who writes: "Bede creates a structure based on a series of miracles displayed within a precise chronological thread; the fully biographical necessity, absent in martyrologies and only rarely witnessed in monastic

<sup>29</sup> "Jerome's *Vita Hilarionis*," 417–434.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 422–434.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 420–422.

<sup>32</sup> 54–60.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>35</sup> As Nehring himself has noticed in the case of the *Vita Hilarionis*.

and episcopal hagiography is, here, securely kept, even though within endless examples of miracle narrative.”<sup>36</sup>

Derouet’s study on the hagiographical corpus of Jonas of Bobbio and that produced in the same period in the Moselle area of France is based on the semiotic analysis of miracle narratives within the texts: his distinction between “horizontal” and “vertical” miracle, also cited by Ward,<sup>37</sup> considers healings and exorcism miracles as horizontally structured, that is, channeling the saint’s power on a line conjoining him/her to another human being. Visions, dreams and premonitions, on the other hand, are vertically structured, as they identify the communicative channel between the saint and God. However, it is not Derouet’s distinction in itself that interests me,<sup>38</sup> but rather his idea, based on Saussure’s analysis of discourse,<sup>39</sup> that each miracle described in a hagiography could be part of a parallel narrative addressing a particular (Derouet suggests human fears and anxiety, for instance) theme. As already mentioned, it is my belief that the very structure of the VG and, in particular, the succession of determined episodes, highlights the presence of the developmental pattern residing at the core of this work: these episodes, if read side by side, one after the other, would provide the account of Germanus’ rise from man to saint, a *bona fide* narrative in the narrative, as suggested by Derouet in the case of miracle readings in the Jonas of Bobbio and Moselle corpora.

### 2.3.1 HAGIOGRAPHY AND CLASSICAL BIOGRAPHY

As pointed out by Corti,<sup>40</sup> the very content of a text can mould its language and its structure, so much so that it was customary, even since the earliest of times

<sup>36</sup> “Modelli Agiografici del Secolo VIII: Da Beda a Ugeburga,” in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (III<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle)*, Collection de l’École Française de Rome 149 (Rome: École Française, 1991), 521: *Beda riesce a comporre una struttura basata su una serie di miracoli entro un preciso filo rosso cronologico; l’esigenza pienamente biografica, assente nella tradizione martiriale e raramente presente in quella dell’agiografia monastica e vescovile, è qui mantenuta saldamente, pur entro l’episodicità di per sé inesauribile dei racconti dei miracoli.*

<sup>37</sup> Derouet, 155 onward, Ward, “The Spirituality of Saint Cuthbert,” in Bonner et al. *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community*, 65.

<sup>38</sup> Derouet’s idea is certainly valid, especially if based on communication: between the saint and the healed or exorcised person (horizontal miracles) or between the saint and God (vertical miracles). On the other hand, it seems it could be reductive, as it appears not to take into account the intrinsic communication between the saint and God during the performance of healings and exorcisms.

<sup>39</sup> Derouet, 156; Ferdinand De Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, études et documents Payot (Paris: Payot, 1968), 170–172.

<sup>40</sup> *Latinità Merovingia*, 7.

(as in the case of the VG) to follow a pattern based or, at least influenced, by earlier literature. At the time the VG was composed, western hagiography was taking its very first steps in the literary world of Late Antiquity; texts such as Sulpicius Severus' VM became the example to follow for all other hagiographers in the West.<sup>41</sup> It is true, though, that the development of hagiographical structure did not originate *ex novo* from the minds of Late Antique writers, but had a well defined origin in pagan literature. It is necessary to discuss these ties, because it is, in fact, from Classical literature hagiography has obtained its shape and, to a certain extent, even its content.

According to Picard, in a hagiography “structure allows us to perceive general trends (*topoi*) more clearly than the wide variety of themes and motifs.”<sup>42</sup> This point of view is also shared by Fouracre, who, a few years later, was to underline the importance of understanding the literary structure of the *Vitae* to reach potential historically and socially relevant content. This was particularly true for early Merovingian hagiography, as it represents the largest bulk of primary sources available to the study of the period.<sup>43</sup> It cannot and must not be forgotten, though, that hagiographies were primarily written neither as a historical document, nor as a biography as we conceive it today, that is, a detailed, objective excursus of an individual life.<sup>44</sup> To say it with Stancliffe, “a hagiographer, even one writing close enough in time and place to his subject to be reliably informed, selects and presents his material with specific aims in mind; and these aims are not the aims of a

<sup>41</sup> Levison, “Die Quellen,” 114 and VG Introduction 231. His opinion has become since a matter-of-fact statement, which only increased the relevance of the Sulpicius Severus' text in the history of western hagiography, as it is seen as its first, real example (see, for instance, Kim McCone, “An Introduction to Early Irish Saints' Lives,” *The Maynooth Review/ Revieú Mhá Nuad* 11 (December 1984), 26–59.

<sup>42</sup> J.M. Picard, “Structural Patterns in Early Hiberno-Latin Hagiography,” *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 4 (1985), 67.

<sup>43</sup> Fouracre, “Merovingian History,” 3–10.

<sup>44</sup> It is Fouracre again (*ibid.*, 5–6) to underline how, very often, scholars made the mistake of trying to tease out historical details directly from the text when, instead, a literary critical approach may have been more productive. By definition, the literary critic would be interested not only in the content, but in its form and the way it is expressed, and could reach incredibly valuable information –also historical– from linguistic and stylistic research. It is through a literary critical analysis with a historical focus that the *Vitae*, Fouracre concludes, should be investigated when treated as primary historical sources.



disinterested historian.”<sup>45</sup> Historical events, in other words, are mentioned, at times at length, in hagiographies, but not to identify a particular event or moment in time, but, rather, to provide a narrative background to the protagonist’s main qualities: holiness and miracle working. The goal of the hagiographer was different, and it may have resembled that of classical biographers, as it has been also pointed out in the particular case, for instance, of the VH and its many structural parallels with classical literature.<sup>46</sup> As underlined by Picard, who identified three, main points where both classical biography and hagiography have similar characteristics, they needed “not to relate the life of great men, but to immortalise their virtues;” they were both produced as works of edification;<sup>47</sup> they very often did not respect any specific chronological order.<sup>48</sup>

Directly dependent from this tripartite sequence are the concepts, advanced by Weizsäcker, of *chronologie* and *eidologie*,<sup>49</sup> the first referring to the chronological events of a person’s life, the second to a systematic record of all his (or her) most striking actions, not necessarily in order of time. Even more important than the individual presence of either one or the other, is their overlapping which happens often in classical biography and hagiography.<sup>50</sup> *Chronologie* and *eidologie* mirror closely the concepts of *praxeis* and *ēthos*, proposed by Xenophon in the *Agésilas*

<sup>45</sup> Stancliffe, “Life of Columbanus,” 189; in agreement with Stancliffe is Van Dam who, in “Hagiography and History: The Life of Gregory Thaumaturgus,” (*Classical Antiquity* 1, no. 2 (October 1982), 272–308) underlines the difficulties connected to the extrapolation of valuable historical material from an hagiographical narrative. Interestingly, though, he also maintains that those very episodes that appear to lay the furthest from reality and historical accuracy (miracles) can be used to disclose and interpret the historical and social background in which the text was composed.

<sup>46</sup> E. Coleiro, “St. Jerome’s Lives of the Hermits” *Vigiliae Christianae* 11, no.3 (September 1957), 161–78. An interesting interpretation of this very work is given by Virginia Burrus in “Queer Lives of Saints: Jerome’s Hagiography,” *Journal of History of Sexuality* 10, no 3/4, Special Issue: Sexuality in Late Antiquity (July–October, 2001), 442–479.

<sup>47</sup> On the role of hagiography as edifying literature for the masses, see Marc Van Uytvanghe, “L’Audience de l’Hagiographie au vi<sup>e</sup> Siècle,” in *Scribere Sanctorum Gesta: recueil d’études d’hagiographie médiévale offert à Guy Philippart*, Étienne Renard, Michel Trigalet, Xavier Hermand and Paul Bertrand, eds., (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2005), 156–177.

<sup>48</sup> Picard, “Structural Patterns,” 69–70, Herbert, 32–3.

<sup>49</sup> Weizsäcker, *Untersuchungen über Plutarchs biographische Technik* (Berlin, 1931).

<sup>50</sup> Picard, “Structural Patterns,” 70.

and considered by both Leo and Cox as basic literary<sup>51</sup> ideas of biography. *Praxeis*, which can be associated with Weizsäcker's *chronologie*, is the chronological description of a person's life, whereas *ēthos* is that of a person's character.<sup>52</sup> Another characteristic which seems to liken hagiography and biography is well defined by Plutarch in his introduction to the *Alexander*:<sup>53</sup> the division between *life* and *history*. The first focuses on "personal details, and may abbreviate its historical narrative. Its concern will be the portrayal of a character and its ultimate purpose will be protreptic and moral."<sup>54</sup> This is, evidently, a fundamental similarity between Plutarchian biography and hagiography.

Although the very existence of a classical biographical typology, albeit proposed,<sup>55</sup> has been strongly debated,<sup>56</sup> it is still significant to recognise the presence of patterns by which hagiographers may have been inspired. The fundamental division proposed by Leo in 1901, that between Plutarchian biography, centred on chronologically ordered events and more historiographically oriented, and Suetonian biography, which was topically, rather than chronologically organised seems to be, as underlined by Cox and Momigliano,<sup>57</sup> almost too restricted for a

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<sup>51</sup> Stylistics is certainly a discipline born from last century's need to analyze the interaction between the text in its linguistic, grammatical and syntactic structure, and the effect the same has on the reader. Although it is not strictly with a stylistic analysis I intend to proceed in the development of this dissertation, it may be useful to get a grasp on what stylistics are and how they have evolved and influenced literary criticism. For a general approach, see Roger Fowler, *Essay on Style and Language: Linguistic and Critical Approaches to Literary Style* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), and Joanna Thornborrow and Shân Wareing *Patterns in Language: An Introduction to Language and Literary Style* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); seminal are Bakhtin's essays, available in English in Michael Holquist ed., trans. and Caryl Emerson trans., *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Nils Erik Enkvist, John Spencer, and Michael J. Gregory, *Linguistics and Style, Language and Language Learning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); Robert Scholes, *Semiotics and Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>52</sup> Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 6–9; Friederich Leo, *Die Griechisch-Römische Biographie nach ihrer literarischen Form* Leipzig: Teubner, 1901); for more about genre and literary canon see Alistair Fowler, "Genre and the Literary Canon," *New Literary History* 11, no. 1, Anniversary Issue ii (Autumn 1979), 97–119; David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton eds., *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 1–13.

<sup>53</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*, Bernadotte Perrin, trans. vol. 46, Loeb Classical Library. Greek Authors (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914).

<sup>54</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 68.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Cox, *Biography*, 61–5, Momigliano, 8–9.

genre that failed to be stylistically acknowledged until the fifth century;<sup>58</sup> as a consequence, even though all of the above considerations stand valid, it would be reductive to consider hagiographical style as strictly and exclusively rooted in Greek and Roman biographical works.

If, on one hand, the ideas discussed above and associated with biography and its style are, with due consideration and limitations, very much applicable to hagiography, they cannot justify the preponderant presence of miraculous deeds and their significance in its narrative: although it may be seen as a logical choice to focus on otherworldly events when describing the life of a spiritual man, it may be argued that stress on morality, ethics and clean living may have been sufficient, just as it had been for the classical figure of the “sage.” It is in this particular context, then, that the figure of Jesus truly takes literary centre stage. For a time, biography had been considered as a possible stylistic source for the most archetypal of all holy man’s Lives, the Gospels, although some scholars had made, throughout the years, valid points indicating how thorny the question of the stylistic origin of the Gospel is.<sup>59</sup>

What is of greater relevance in this context, I believe, is how the figure of the hagiographical saint is, fundamentally, a synthesis of the Classical biographical hero, or sage, and the New Testamental figure of the Messiah, which is of particular importance when trying to identify the origins of the widespread use of miracles.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Momigliano, 61.

<sup>59</sup> Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels: A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). The main problem detected by scholars, as emphasized successfully by Cox and Momigliano (Cox, *Biography*, 1–66. Momigliano, 60–75) is the fundamental differences between Classical biography and the New Testament; differences which have forced scholars to presuppose *a priori* the existence of the hypothetical genre aretalogy, which was thought to have originated “from early ‘cultic’ practices of reciting the virtuous and miraculous acts (*aretai*) of a divinity.” (Ibid., 3) In relation to both genres, biography and aretalogy, and potential influence on hagiography, Cox makes the more than valid point that there are virtually no examples within the corpus of Classical biography where miracles are described; she also doubts the credibility of a genre, that of aretalogy, which is only presumed to have existed (Cox provides a very interesting overview on the possible sources, other than aretalogy for hagiographical works, outlining in depth the relevance of both early Greek and Roman forms of biography from page 4 to 10).

<sup>60</sup> The narrative value of miracles will be discussed largely in both “Constructing the Saint” and “Germanus’ Holiness Revealed.” See also Derouet, “Interprétation sémiologique,” 153–62, Francisco Pejenaute Rubio, “Los Milagros de Santa Radegunda y dos Apéndices,” *Archivium. Revista de la Facultad de Filología de la Universidad de Oviedo* 60 (2010), 289–340; Boesch-Gajano, “Il Culto dei Santi.”

### 2.3.2 HISTORY AND MIRACLES

Miracles and their effect on the potential historical value of hagiography has been a topic of academic discussion for decades.<sup>61</sup> For scholars of the nineteenth century, fully immersed in the atmosphere of positivism, some hagiographical texts may have been considered too incongruent and imbued with the fantastic to be approached historically.<sup>62</sup> Although hagiography as a historical source still remains a perilous ground to tread,<sup>63</sup> modern scholarship has re-evaluated the relevance of the *Vitae* as a source. Boesch-Gajano, Van Uytfanghe and Fouracre have all underlined how the presence of miracles should not be seen as a sign of lack of historicity of the hagiographical text, but rather as a sign of its very presence:

More and more often, miracles appear to be ... a crucial point for the understanding of the Middle Ages, in spite of the difficulty of their interpretation. They are the place where theological thought and magical beliefs, the Church as an institution and the needs of the lower classes, politics and potential pagan influences all meet and, at times, clash.<sup>64</sup>

The analysis and interpretation of miracles, Boesch-Gajano says, can potentially help the historian for what concerns both the events described in the text and its

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<sup>61</sup> I think a good definition of how miracles were, for centuries, regarded as a by-product of a less-than-intellectually-engaging time is given by Van Uytfanghe, who writes: *un des clichés les plus communément reçus pour caractériser la mentalité du haut Moyen Âge est l' 'invasion du miraculeux' véhiculée, au niveau de la littérature, par les nombreux récits et recueils hagiographiques qui, en s'assurant le quasi-monopole de la production littéraire, témoigneraient de la régression mentale de cette époque.* ("La controverse biblique et patristique autour du miracle, et ses répercussions sur l'hagiographie dans l'Antiquité Tardive et le haut Moyen Âge Latin," in *Hagiographie, culture et société*, 205–221, 205). We know, today, this is not true, but it was the high presence of the miraculous in literary narrative that for centuries has caused the segregation of hagiography to a dusty corner of many a historian's library. For the use of biographical detail in an hagiographical context, see Barbara Yorke, "Carriers of Truth: Writing the Biographies of Anglo-Saxon Female Saints," in Bates and Crick, eds., 49–60.

An excellent historical overview of the debate is provided, among others, by Fouracre, "Merovingian History," as well as Guy Halsall, "The Sources and Their Interpretation," in Paul Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, volume I c.500–c.700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56–75; Collins, "Observations on the Form, Language and Public of the Prose Biographies of Venantius Fortunatus in the Hagiography of Merovingian Gaul," 105–131; Marc Van Uytfanghe, "La Bible dans les vies des saints Mérovingiens," *Revue de l'Église de France* 62, no.168 (1976), 103–111.

<sup>62</sup> Fouracre and Gerbending, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640–720*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 26–44.

<sup>63</sup> Wood, "Continuity or Calamity," 9–18.

<sup>64</sup> Boesch-Gajano, "Il Culto dei Santi:" *il miracolo appare ... sempre più un punto nodale, di difficile interpretazione, ma proprio per questo essenziale alla comprensione del Medioevo tutto, il punto in cui si congiungono e si scontrano riflessione teologica e credenze magiche, affermazione della Chiesa istituzionale e bisogni delle classi subalterne, interessi politici e presunte sopravvivenze pagane* (122). Boesch-Gajano's view is embraced by Fouracre in "Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography," as discussed in chapter one, "Introduction."

audience.<sup>65</sup> While discussing the subject of the structure of the VG, it becomes necessary to underline how the historically centred chapters of the text relate to, influence and support the main argument of this study. Historical events are disseminated along the text, following a pattern of overlapping *praxis* and *ēthos* that is typical of Classical biography and parallel to that presented in the VM, RC and VA.<sup>66</sup>

Interesting in the context of hagiography and history is the study proposed by Coleiro, focusing on Jerome's *Vitae*. In it, the role of history –parallel to how the matter was treated by Classical writers– in a hagiographical context is not that of detailing the historical facts related to the protagonists, but to “build (an) heroic personality.”<sup>67</sup> in a Christian context, this means nothing more than using history with the aim of supporting or emphasising the creation of the holy man's sanctity. History becomes a means to create the literary saint's persona, the holiness of whom culminates in his or her miraculous actions. This was the very reason hagiography had been considered a poor historical source. As discussed and mentioned already above, hagiography can provide distinctive, essential historical and cultural information, but it needs to be approached with an open mind and, very relevantly, literary and linguistic flair:<sup>68</sup> if approached so, the hagiographical text can become fertile ground for historical knowledge. Boesch-Gajano and Van Uytfanghe, even before Fouracre's groundbreaking discussion in “Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography,” agreed on the fact that hagiography, to say it with Boesch-Gajano herself, “even though with difficulty, (has) finally regained full dignity as a historical source.”<sup>69</sup>

Let us follow for a moment Borius' organisation of the text: in it, it has been argued, the historical events described by Constantius provide a backbone to the narrative. They give a timeline, a pragmatic order to miraculous and spiritual

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>66</sup> 42–6.

<sup>67</sup> Coleiro, 169.

<sup>68</sup> This is, indeed, Fouracre's main point in “Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography:” that it is with the eye of the literary critic one has to look at hagiographical material to discern the factual from the narrative.

<sup>69</sup> Boesch-Gajano, “Il Culto dei Santi:” *ha(nno) recuperato, sia pure faticosamente, piena dignità di fonte storica* (120).

episodes. These are the chapters within the VG that give it its *praxis*, its *chronologie*: they provide a frame and a support to the narrative and are essential for its success as a reading piece. These connective, historical passages are the glue keeping together the narrative itself, in manner not only to emphasise Germanus' skills as a secular leader,<sup>70</sup> but also the greatness of his miracles (the text *ēthos* or *eidologie*) which are even more striking when placed against a background of worldly episodes. How miracles in late antique texts could be interpreted historically as a sign of political power expressed through the use of a spiritual, extraordinary event, could be the topic of an entire discussion, as largely and exhaustively explained by Cracco Ruggini,<sup>71</sup> who understands the miracle as an act symbolising, in particular, the relevance of the Church within the political context of the time in which the text was written. This is not, however, the aim of this dissertation and, in its context, miracles will be read through the lens of a different type of allegory, one that sees them always as a sign, but not of the power of one institution in relation to another, but rather of a precise stage in the protagonist's *iter* to holiness.

The very first chapter of the text, where Germanus' origins are described<sup>72</sup> is its first chronologically driven section, and does not relate of any miracles. It is followed, in its historical content, by large sections of VG 12, 14, 17–18, all related to the saint's first trip to Britain, which narrate in details the circumstances of his voyage and his role in preaching against the Pelagians. VG 17–18 relate of Germanus' possible first hand involvement in the disputes between the Saxons and the Picts, united on one front, and the Britons.<sup>73</sup> VG 19 and 25<sup>74</sup> discuss relevant events of the saint's return to Gaul, and of his second trip to Britain. VG 25 also

<sup>70</sup> See "Deconstructing the Man" for a bibliography on the historical role of bishops in Late Antiquity and to read how Germanus' figure fit it.

<sup>71</sup> Lellia Cracco Ruggini, "Il Miracolo nella Cultura del Tardo Impero: Concetto e Funzione," in *Hagiographie, Culture et Société*, 161–204 (164–173). Cracco-Ruggini underlines, for example, the case of Gregory of Tours and the political role of the miracles in his corpus can often be related to the particular historical situation of Gaul of the time. A miracle, Cracco-Ruggini says, can be sign, for instance of superiority of one diocese or parish above another, especially in times of factual dispute (170–171).

<sup>72</sup> The details of his origins are scarce and conflicting with the political and administrative status quo of Gaul in the fifth century. See for instance, Brigitte Beaujard, "Germain d'Auxerre, Aignan D'Orléans et Médard de Noyon, trois évêques Gaulois et la justice de leur temps," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1993), 295–303.

<sup>73</sup> VG 17–18, 263–4.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 19, 265; VG 25, 269.

serves as introduction to some of most impressive of Germanus' miracles. VG 28<sup>75</sup> refers again to historical figures and events,<sup>76</sup> mentioned also by Bede in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>77</sup> Historical references are also made closer to the end of the VG, especially in VG 35,<sup>78</sup> where both the Empress Galla Placidia and her son Valentinian III<sup>79</sup> are presented in the narration, and one final time in a short and transitional chapter, VG 40,<sup>80</sup> where the reason for Germanus' trip to Ravenna, the Armorican's issue, is mentioned as solved without any need for his intercession.

As already mentioned, what characterises the historical chapters in the VG is their secondary role: although factual events are described, it is impossible to consider them as the main focus of the narrative. The first trip to Britain, just as that to Ârles once Germanus returns to Gaul, as well as the second expedition to Britain (the historicity of which, though, seems to be doubtful)<sup>81</sup> are the settings upon which the principal action takes place, the stage props needed to frame and enhance the moves and words of the actors. The trip to Ravenna works very much the same way in the narrative, with the added pathos derived by the saint's death and the presence of the imperial court, which, nevertheless, bows down to the holiness of the old man entirely, his indisputable—yet benevolent—superiority demonstrated by Placidia's submission to his sanctity. Certainly, the dynamics of Germanus and Placidia's relationship could be read politically, as symbolising the superiority of the Church upon temporal power, this is not the place to discuss it. Historical chapters seem to fulfil a background role of transition in the text, they serve to frame Germanus' actions and contextualise them. The events narrated there, though, are not relevant to the true value of the text, at least in the eye of its author. It is also true that nothing more than such a secondary role should be expected for history in a hagiography: it

<sup>75</sup> "Constructing the Saint," 106–32; VG 28, 271–2.

<sup>76</sup> See Wood, *The End of Roman Britain*, 1–26; Thompson, 7–14; 29–46; to understand the socio-religious changes between the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the eight century, see Wood, "Christianisation and the Dissemination of Christian Teaching," in Paul Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, volume I c.500–c.700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 710–734.

<sup>77</sup> Bede goes as far as copying almost ad verbatim Constantius' words on Germanus in Britain, in chapters 17 to 21 of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

<sup>78</sup> VG 35, 276–7.

<sup>79</sup> Boriis, 103–6.

<sup>80</sup> VG 40, 280.

<sup>81</sup> See "Introduction," 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre.

is not the historical Germanus whom Constantius was asked to write about, not Germanus “the man,” who lived enthralled in the harrowing twists and turns of physical existence, but the saint, the holy man, who originated from the human and transcended it.

## 2.4 A NEW APPROACH

In this dissertation, I propose a reading of the text based on a close analysis of episodes characterised by the presence of particular vocabulary items, which create a series of inter and intra textual connections emphasising the increasing spiritual powers of Germanus. The human and the spiritual walk hand in hand throughout the central section of the text, only to finally part towards the end of Germanus’ life, where his sainthood is fully represented by the type of actions he performs. As mentioned above, Eby has found a similar pattern to be present within Bede’s *Vita Cuthberti* and based his own belief upon the same type of literary study I applied to the VG. In the context of the relationship between the VG and the *Vita Cuthberti*, is certainly important to underline that Constantius’ work was known to Bede, therefore the possibility of a structural influence of the former on the latter is possible.

The episodes central to my argument strike for their nature and language, and it is for these reasons they became so relevant; it is important to realise, however, the entirety of the text seems to support the findings and conclusions derived from the study proposed. The text as a whole appears to support the crucial events that make up the underlining structure of my argument: to understand how, the text needs to be read as whole, each chapter or section analysed keeping in mind both the argument and the main events supporting it.

The holy and its visible results are at the core of the VG as a work of literature. This is true also –and even more powerfully– for the interpretation given to the text in this dissertation, where the process of Germanus’ sanctification is seen as its real intra-textual motor. This is why miracles and actions with strong connotations of religious and spiritual power are central to this study. It is true, though, that the entire narrative, and not only the selected episodes, propose the idea



of sanctification as cardinal to the evolution of the text; they do so by creating, through their content and position within the very structure of the hagiography, a corollary to the most solid examples described in the chapters analyzed with more attention within the context of this dissertation.

#### 2.4.1 AN EIDOLOGICAL STRUCTURE FOR THE *VITA GERMANI*

The constructs of *praxis* (*chronologie*) and *ēthos* (*eidologie*) introduced by Xenophon are considered central also to the structure of hagiography.<sup>82</sup> What has been largely noted by scholarship, we saw, is the co-occurrence of the two in a great majority of texts, both of Classical and Christian origin. Nehring emphasised, in his study of the VH, the presence of distinct chronological and eidological sections, an emphasis that greatly helped to develop his interesting rhetorical study. In particular, he maintains that whereas the *narratio* and the *narratio hagiographica*, respectively the second and fourth section identified by the author, propose a strict timeline, the central –and narratively pivotal– section dedicated to the saint’s miracles, the *argumentatio* (section three) lives as a literary *ex tempore*.<sup>83</sup> This is of particular interest, when compared to those classical biography’s characteristics which more closely seem to have been applied to hagiography, the ideas of *praxis* and *ēthos*, or *chronologie* and *eidologie*: it is not their presence, but rather their blunt separation that strikes the most in Nehring’s outlook on the text.

What Nehring forgot to mention, mostly because it was not relevant to his argument, is that the moment of “separation” between one section and the other is not always clear-cut. For instance, whereas it is true, as suggested, that the *caesura* between the first *narratio*, which relates of Hilarion’s early life and embrace of asceticism (chapters two to twelve in the PL’s version of the text),<sup>84</sup> and the *argumentatio*, the part of the text relating the majority of Hilarion’s miracles (chapters thirteen to twenty-three),<sup>85</sup> clearly defines a contextual change in the

<sup>82</sup> 2.3.1 Hagiography and Classical Biography.

<sup>83</sup> Nehring, “Jerome’s *Vita Hilarionis*,” 422–433.

<sup>84</sup> vol. 23, col. [0029C–0033C].

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., col. [0033C–0040C].

narrative, temporal references are not entirely forgotten.<sup>86</sup> This realisation shows how *chronologie* and *eidologie* truly cohabit within the same text, even when parts of it strongly contextually refer to either one or the other approach. Such a severe partition cannot be applied to the VG: Constantius has developed *praxis* and *ēthos* side by side, providing a temporal context to Germanus' miracles by dutifully placing chronological chapters within the main eidological narrative, as well as the heavy employment of temporal and consecutive clauses at the beginning of each section.<sup>87</sup> In the context of the hagiographical texts of the corpus, the contiguous, yet not overlapping nature of *praxis* and *ēthos* shown by the VH seems to determine the peculiarity of the same text when compared to the VM, VA and RC, which appear all to have followed a pattern, at least from this point of view, closer to that expressed in the VG.

The *chronologie* of the VG is maintained throughout its development by the emphatic and repeated use of temporal and consecutive adverbs and clauses at the beginning of chapters,<sup>88</sup> as well as by the continuous presence of “historical chapters,” which are introduced by Constantius to support, deepen and contextualise the narration. The central motor of the narrative, though, does not lie within its historical or strictly biographical data, but, as the entirety of this thesis aims to show, in the idea of Germanus' evolution from secular man to holy man, an evolution that, contrarily to what happens in other relevant texts of the corpus<sup>89</sup> and, for instance, in the case of the *Vita Cuthberti*,<sup>90</sup> invests the entirety of the literary Germanus' life. This very spiritual *motus*, I believe, represents the core of the VG's *ēthos*.

By keeping this in mind, I propose to apply to the VG a different type of structure, not based, as Borius did, on the literal sequence of events and in particular on their historicity, that is, on the chronological aspect of the text, but rather on how

<sup>86</sup> See for instance the beginning of VH 13, where Jerome tells the reader Hilarion had spent twenty-two years in seclusion (*Viginti et duos jam in solitudine habebat anno*, [col.0033C], and the exordium of the following chapter [col. 0034A], where it is stated that *hoc signorum ejus principium, magnus aliud signum nobilitavit*, where the temporal succession is hinted at by *principium*, donating the idea of the possibility of a succession of other miracles to happen, which is then confirmed by the following clause.

<sup>87</sup> 2.2.1 Levison's Division.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> “Deconstructing the Man.”

<sup>90</sup> See Eby and 2.3 Hagiography and its Structure.

the same events appear to build up with literary and contextual flair to the idea of evolution from human to saint which, I believe, becomes crystal-clear in the passages chosen for the analysis of the text. In other words, I suggest to analyse the VG from the point of view of its eidology,<sup>91</sup> to emphasise how Germanus' evolution from secular to holy man represents both its narrative force and fundamental structural pattern.

In a hagiographical context, working on the eidology of a text means dealing with a large amount of miraculous events.<sup>92</sup> The *Vita Columbae*, for example, has been originally divided by Adomnán into three main sections, revolving around three different forms of miracles: *profeticas revelationes, ... divinas per ipsum virtutes effectas, ... angelicas apparationes ... et quasdam super hominem dei caelestis claritudinis manifestationis*.<sup>93</sup> The core of the narrative is formed, therefore, by the spiritual and preternatural achievements of Columba, rather than the linear, chronological recollection of his own human life, upon which the narrative of miracles can flourish. This is expressed by Adomnán himself who, in the introductory paragraphs to the first book of the *Vita*, underlines the lack of temporal order in its narrative.<sup>94</sup> The structure of the *Vita Columbae* seems to represent faithfully the idea of an eidological approach to textual creation: if a focus on miracles and the figure of the holy man are paramount to early Christian literary efforts, it is rare for the hagiographer to state so clearly his intent not to discuss events of the saint's mundane life. If it is true that the aim of every hagiographer was to focus on the *eidologie* of the text, no one said it as clearly as Adomnán.

<sup>91</sup> 2.3.1 Hagiography and Classical Biography.

<sup>92</sup> As mentioned in the section on history and miracles, miracles and their detrimental effect on the potential historical value of hagiography has been topic of discussion for decades; an excellent historical overview of the debate is provided, among others, by Fouracre, "Merovingian History," as well as Fouracre and Gerbending, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640–720*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 26–44; Guy Halsall, "The Sources and Their Interpretation," in Paul Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, volume I c.500–c.700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 56–75; Collins, "Observations on the Form, Language and Public of the Prose Biographies of Venantius Fortunatus in the Hagiography of Merovingian Gaul," 105–131; Marc Van Uytenghe, "La Bible dans les Vies des Saints Mérovingiennes."

In the first few pages of his "Introduction," (133–137), Miele discusses the difficulties in assessing historically the VG itself.

<sup>93</sup> Adomnán, *Life of Columba*, Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, ed. and trans., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), "praefatio secunda," 6: "prophetic revelations, ... divine miracles performed by him, ... and the appearance of angels and heavenly light to him."

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 1.1, 10b, 18.

Each chapter of this thesis is constructed around essential events representing pivotal moments in the saint's life and characterised by exceptional lexical items, which can be clarified on the basis of intertextual references and comparison, as specifically addressed at describing the process of Germanus' growth from man to saint.

Even a superficial reading of the other miracles described in the text will reveal that, in spite of being similar in content (there are plenty of healings and chased demons throughout the text), they are somehow less flamboyantly described. For a start, their vocabulary does not present the same lexical interest and intertextual connotations as that of the main episodes; some of the miracles are not the central narrative of the section of the text in which they are presented, as it happens for instance, in the case of the healing of VG 24, where the actual miraculous aspect of the narrative is only a corollary to the more relevant description of Germanus' sense of humility.<sup>95</sup> There is also a strong sense of dependence of these episodes from those described in the main events, a true sense of awaiting or consequence, as if those miracles should open the way for bigger, brighter things to come, or underscore the spiritual weight of those that have already happened.

According to this type of analysis, the VG structure could be redefined and approached in an entirely new manner, which does not deny or try to dismantle the simple and clear paragraph division proposed by Levison, nor the historical and action-based one endorsed by Borius. The approach proposed is dependent on Levison's paragraph parting, because it uses it as a basic and essential reference to each episode in the text and because it represents the most logical subdivision of the narrative itself. It can also be run parallel to the more prosaic and historical chapter sectioning proposed by Borius.

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<sup>95</sup> VG 24, 268–9: *Auxiliaris etiam regebat tum per Gallias apicem praefecturae. Qui praesentiam sacerdotis duplicata gratulatione suscepit, quod et insignem virtutibus virum desiderabat agnoscere, et quod uxor eiusdem longo iam tempore quartano tabescebat incommodo. Ingrediente longissimo praeter consuetudinem famulatur occursu simulque admiratione defigitur. Ita enim dignitas vultus, sermonis eruditio, praedicationis auctoritas stupentis animum compleverunt, ut merito fama eum minorem fuisse cognosceret; inventus est enim rebus maior esse quam nuntiis. Offert munera, ingerit beneficia, ambiturque a beatissimo viro, ut dignaretur accipere, quod querebat Incommodum etiam confitetur uxoris; qua visitata ita vis passionis extincta est, ut tremor praecedens et febris subsequens deleatur; redditaque pristinae sanitati, fidelis matrona remedium caeleste suscepit, quo et corpus salubritate et anima credulitate convaluit. Acceptis itaque ex voluntate beneficiis, optatum levamen propriae detulit civitati, licet in se maximum civibus et remedium referret et gaudium.*

The division proposed is mirrored in the very chapters of this dissertation, each focusing on a defining part of Germanus' sanctification:

- ***Germanus, Asceticism, and the beginning of the path to holiness (VG 1–VG 6):*** it is the first part of the hagiography and comprises of the chapters from one to six: it includes the epiphanic moment of Germanus' election to the episcopate (VG 2) and his beginnings as an ascetic leader, described with emphasis in VG 3. The other chapters, the first telling about Germanus' origins and his early life, the others building with pathos upon the narration of VG 2 and 3, are corollary to the events described before and, in fact, after.
- ***Holy acts and human character (VG 7–VG 30):*** includes the central, lengthier part of the narrative, which focuses on the most significant episodes of Germanus' eventful life. It starts with the low-key miracle of VG 7 and ends with another low-key, non ritualised miracle, the healing of VG 30. This part of the text does not only present miracles whose performance joins together the spiritual and the practical, but also comprises the largest part of Constantius' historical narrative: both trips to Britain are discussed here, as well as Germanus' travels through Gaul and the beginning of his last trip to Italy.
- ***The Holy Man (VG 31– VG 46):*** it starts with two essential chapters,<sup>96</sup> VG 31 and 32, which are an allegory of the very moment of Germanus' final passage from man to saint; his new status of Holy Man is proven and celebrated in the remaining chapters of the narrative, which ends with the arrival of the saint's body in his own city, Auxerre.

## 2.5 THE FIRST SECTION:

### GERMANUS, ASCETICISM AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS PATH TO HOLINESS

Let us take the episodes identified as central to the epiphany of Germanus and his consequent embracing of asceticism as a way of life: the first describes his initial refusal of the episcopate and then a sudden, hardly mentioned epiphany. The second relates his early, painful, steps into asceticism, with a particular focus on his eating habits. The first depicts Germanus' human rebellion against an imposed duty

<sup>96</sup> "Germanus' Holiness Revealed."

and, to a certain extent, against a spirituality he may not have any desire to embrace. The second presents him to the reader<sup>97</sup> as a changed individual, who tries to control his own human nature by controlling his food intake, and achieve purity of spirit. In one, Germanus is shown in his humanity, expressed by the fiery resentment towards a duty he does not wish to obey, but also, after his epiphany, in his spiritual afflatus towards conquering that same humanity. Similarly, Eby notices the presence, in the early chapters of Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*,<sup>98</sup> of the same juxtaposition of secular and holy, of mundane and extraordinary. The first two chapters of Bede's text show "how unique ... and how secular the young Cuthbert was."<sup>99</sup> This, he continues, is important to note, because it creates Cuthbert's uniqueness as a hagiographical character. Eby's insistence in defining both the human and the holy in Cuthbert's character, supports the reading of the hagiographical text as a piece that can be read also as the story of a man and his becoming holy. In Eby's reading of the first two chapters of the *Vita Cuthberti*, my own reading of this first section of the VG is supported, and confirmed in its applicability to a hagiographical text.

After these first two, pivotal episodes, the narrative carries on through chapters that are contextually dependent from VG 2 and, especially, VG 3. They are semantically less remarkable: their vocabulary does not evoke the same powerful, almost painful images drawn by Constantius when describing Germanus' violent opposition to the episcopate first, and his approach to asceticism and the mortification imposed upon his own body, after.<sup>100</sup>

Both VG 2 and 3 are characterised by interesting lexical features. Their interdependence, in particular when considering how the events of VG 3 are a direct consequence and continuation of VG 2, is supported by *iam vero*, by which the chapter is introduced, and which gives to the following events –in spite of being formed by an adverb of time and one of manner– a consecutive meaning.

<sup>97</sup> I should probably refer, as explained by Van Uytanghe in "L'Audience de l'Hagiographie au vi<sup>e</sup> Siècle," to *legentis* and *audientis*, as only a small part of the original audience of hagiographical works could actually read. The majority, most likely, had the text read aloud to them, either as part of the liturgy and public areas or, in case their rank allowed them to do so, in the comfort of their own residences.

<sup>98</sup> Bede, "Vita Sancti Cuthberti," PL, vol. 94, [col.0735B–0738A].

<sup>99</sup> Eby, 319.

<sup>100</sup> VG 3, 252–3; see "Deconstructing the Man," for a full analysis of both Germanus' epiphany and the language and significance of his first approach to asceticism, as embodied by his eating habits.

VG 4, 5 and 6 fail to strike the reader in the same way. VG 4, for instance, is dedicated preponderantly to Germanus' clothing and, beside the appearance of the word *capsula*, which is mentioned for the first time in text, fails to offer a lexical context as striking as the previous; the second half of it relates of Germanus' martyrdom of the body and his sense of endurance in lyrical –and rhetorical– terms, but it fails to convey the same level of emotional involvement obtained, for instance, by the description in VG 3 of the saint's perseverance in mortifying his own body:

It was a continuous moaning, a constant prayer, so much so that, among such torments, he could never rest for long. One can say whatever he thinks, but I, without a doubt, believe the blessed Germanus has endured a long sufferance because of so much anguish.  
How noble are the goodness and the love of Our Lord, who compensated his servant, faithfully advancing on the path of truth ....<sup>101</sup>

The passage is heavy in pathos and ascetic imagery, but it is not original: it roots its reason of being in what Constantius has written in VG 3, in the idea, already advanced with powerful prose, of Germanus' voluntary sacrifice in name of God. The presence of words like *virtus*, *pietas* and *martyrium* certainly places the atmosphere of this section in the field of asceticism, but this is not new to the reader, it is the reiteration of an idea already expressed, a literary flourish upon a theme already introduced by the author. Within its words, the passage also presents a special reference to what I believe to be the very essence of the VG: Germanus' path to holiness. He is *in via veritatis fideliter gradientem*, he is “advancing with faith along the path of truth”: and what, if not sainthood, could this very path be? This clause, too, however, seems to be a corollary addition, in this case to events to come, which will vividly sketch the Auxerrois' road to full devotion to God.

Narrative and informative, VG 5 serves the same purpose to the one preceding it: it expands on the chief idea of Germanus' asceticism and the abandonment of his human, material behaviours to embrace with a clean heart a life of physical mortification. The passage is short and conceptually focuses on the importance of hospitality for the saint, but it does so by proposing it in parallel with

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<sup>101</sup> VG 4, 253: *Iugis gemitus, oratio perseverans; longum enim tempus somnum capere inter tormenta non poterat. Dicat quisque quod senserit, ceterum absolute definitio, beatum Germanum inter tot cruces longum traxisse martyrium. O quam praeclara Dei nostri virtus et pietas! Qui famulum suum in via veritatis fideliter gradientem ....*

his own refusal of food, therefore depending narratively, again, from the essential facts of chapter three:

He observed hospitality with extraordinary attention; indeed, he offered his home to all regardless of status, without any exception, and the fasting shepherd, offered them a feast. The guardian and servant of the Lord's teaching, washed the feet of all with his hands.<sup>102</sup>

These lines describe two vibrant images, set one beside the other, even in the construction of the sentence in question: after mentioning the attention with which Germanus followed the rules of commensality, and how all were truly welcome to his table, an open parallel with the figure of Christ, Constantius says "the fasting shepherd offered them a feast," *et convivium ieiunus pastor exhibuit*. The opposition between the feast offered and his state of fasting shepherd aims at accentuating Germanus' newly acquired status of spiritual leader, but also and essentially, his status of penitent, fasting hermit. In the narrative, it is *ieiunus* that catches the reader's attention, not *pastor*: the defining characteristic of Germanus in this chapter is the mortification he inflicts to his body while pastorally taking care of his flock, his people. It is thanks to his fasting, to the adjective *ieiunus*, that the entire passage acquires such a relevance in the narrative. It is a relevance, therefore, still strongly subordinated to the crucial description of Germanus' embracing asceticism given in chapter three.

Both VG 4 and 5 describe very poignant and essential moments for the development of Germanus' narrative life. They both are, though, characterised by a lack of lexical depth in comparison to that presented in VG 2 and 3. They also appear to be conceptually and narratively dependent from them, in particular to the concepts of mortification of the body and human needs represented by Germanus' fully fledged asceticism, as presented in chapter three. They are beautiful corollary to a part of the narrative crucial to the development of Germanus from man to saint and, by doing so, they appear to underscore the presence of a structure not only

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<sup>102</sup> VG 5, 253: *Hospitalitatem peculiari observatione servavit; omnibus enim sine ulla exceptione personae domum praebebat et convivium ieiunus pastor exhibuit. Pedes omnibus manibus suis lavit, dominicae institutionis minister et custos.*



based upon the actual events of the text, such as the structure proposed by Borius, but upon the most meaningful idea of a man's spiritual maturation.

## 2.6 THE SECOND SECTION: HOLY ACTS AND HUMAN CHARACTER

This part of the text, just as the one formed by its last chapters, focuses greatly on the idea of the marvellous and the miraculous; as pointed out by Picard, who mentions, in turn, an idea developed by Fontaine in his own edition of the VM, early continental hagiographies are characterised by the presence of “*evangelical miracles*, that is to say, exorcisms, raising from the dead and release of prisoners –in short miracles that comfort human misery and restore human dignity.”<sup>103</sup> Healings, too, are evangelical miracles and are particularly common in Gallic hagiography of the sixth century, just as resurrections are.<sup>104</sup>

The cardinal moments of this section correspond to those discussed in “Constructing the Saint.”<sup>105</sup> These are defining episodes for the development of Germanus' figure, because they propose a multifaceted image of the saint: just like one of the many *Pietà* Michelangelo had sculpted before his final masterpiece is testament to a precise moment of the aesthetic evolution of the work of art, so these heavily ritualised miracles, so closely resembling human acts of healing or worship, witness the evolution of Germanus to his final and complete sanctification.

Healings are performed in VG 8, where Germanus cures an illness caused by demons, VG 11, where cockerels are healed, VG 15, where a young, blind girl is cured and VG 29 where a mute girl regains speech.<sup>106</sup> VG 17–18 and VG 28 present Germanus in a military milieu and carrying out military actions, which, nevertheless, have supernatural –in VG 17–18– and spiritual –in VG 28– results.<sup>107</sup> These episodes belong firmly to the narrative's dénouement, of which they constitute the backbone.

<sup>103</sup> Jean-Michel Picard, “The Marvellous in Irish and Continental Saints' Lives of the Merovingian Period,” in eds. H.D. Clarke and Mary Brennan *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 92; Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, 988.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> 104–32.

<sup>106</sup> VG 8, 256; VG 258–9; VG 15, 261–2; VG 29, 272–3.

<sup>107</sup> VG 17, 263–4; 264–5; VG 28, 271–2. The episode of Germanus' encounter with Gochar, which is analysed in “Constructing the Saint,” could be read through the lens of Martínez Pizarro's theory on *topos* and *scene*. See Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, “The King Says No: On the Logic of Type-Scenes in Late Antique and Early Medieval Narrative,” in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe*, 181–192.

The chapters surrounding them have the very important duty of introducing, supporting and connecting them one to another, as well as, especially in the case of the miracles to demonstrate the profound change of attitude of Germanus towards his own actions. The miraculous episodes presented in the central part of the text are characterised by a high display of rituality; the other miracles seem to differ not only for the less vivid imagery and the non-centrality of the episodes in the narrative, but also for a less complex sense of rituality itself. If a less remarkable presence of ritual is a certain sign of Germanus' achieved status as a saint in the last part of the text, it seems that the same could be interpreted as a lack of awareness of his own powers throughout the central part of the narrative. The evident decrease of ritual in the performance of miracles has been noted and discussed by Van Egmond, the similarities and differences between his and my interpretation analysed in the introductory chapter to this dissertation.<sup>108</sup>

The first miraculous event in the text takes place in VG 7,<sup>109</sup> when Germanus brings a man to confess he stole money off an official of the tax system, Ianuarius. This event is important because its true nature –miraculous or mundane– is ambiguous, so much so that a reading of it as a down-to-earth, socially oriented episode seems to be more possible than a miracle. Grey states that, in many hagiographical instances, exorcisms could be read as physical or psychological illness, also because very little detail is usually given about the “possessed” and his or her story. This view fits perfectly in the context offered by the miracle of VG7.<sup>110</sup> The importance of this secular, but exuberantly narrated, event, lives in its placement just before the first highly ritualised miracle performed by Germanus, where he heals a number of people from an internal disease. It serves as a bridge joining the descriptions of Germanus' entry in the world of church, asceticism and sanctity, as described in the first chapters of the VG, to the first steps of his adventure as a bishop and a man of faith. Although the possibility of divine intervention in the

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<sup>108</sup> “Introduction.”

<sup>109</sup> VG 7, 254–6; this particular miracle is discussed extensively by Cam Grey in “Demoniacs, Dissent and Disempowerment in the Late Roman West: Some Case Studies from the Hagiographical Literature,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13, no.1 (Spring 2005), 39–69 (54–55; 64–65).

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 55–66. For a more socio-historical approach to the episode, see Miele, 187, but also Beaujard, 297–299.

events of VG 7 is not discounted, the accent seems to be placed on the influence the bishop may have had on the thief not spiritually, but socially and, to a certain extent, morally. The thief, it seems, is touched by Germanus in his conscience, not necessarily because of his holiness, but rather because of his moral and social righteousness. The episode becomes a mirror of Germanus' power as a man and as a public figure, although its results are not as blatantly spiritual as those achieved in, for instance, VG 17–18, where his words and his actions are not only steeped in Christian symbolism, but also produce a spiritual change within the other actors the action. VG 7 seems, then, to provide a contextual introduction to VG 8, where the first miraculous healing of the text takes place because it hints at the possible supernatural and miraculous powers of Germanus, without discarding the possibility of a human and mundane side to his actions: the conducting line of the central part of the hagiography.

VG 6 and its description of the foundation of Germanus' monastery on the Yonne is interesting both for the *chronologie* and the *eidologie* of the text: if, on one hand, the mention is important as historical evidence for the settling of an early monastic community, the rest of the chapter focuses on Germanus' enjoyment of solitude and meditation, a sign of his character and newly acquired humility. Very relevant in the narrative is the presence of the river Yonne, which brings about the allegorical importance of water for the first time in the text: as pointed out by Eby in relation to Cuthbert's creation of his own monastic community on the Tyne,<sup>111</sup> rivers and, more generally, water, symbolise the liminality between the material and the spiritual world, the body and the soul. Both monasteries were built near water and it is interesting that the authors decided to mention it, because of the idea of liminality associated to water itself. In the case of Germanus, referring to water in a chapter which is, in a sense, structurally liminal, seems even more dense with allegorical meaning than the example offered in the *Vita Cuthberti*, to which, in fact, it may well have been the inspiration.

The construction of the monastery joins the first structural section of the text to the early events of the second, which includes almost the full development of the

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<sup>111</sup> Eby, 321–322; 2.3 Hagiography and Its Structure.

narrative, as well as the most of the miraculous episodes. The same sense of connection between the two sections is achieved with the use of *erat in illo tempore* at the beginning VG 7, which delivers a sense of time contiguity between the narration to come, and the facts discussed in VG 6. Creating a temporal and contextual connection between the chapters' closing and opening two structural parts of the text helps to make the narrative fluid and homogeneous.

This sense of narrative support and climatic preparation to a main miraculous event, which is also strategically placed and described to identify key moments of Germanus' sanctification process, is also found in VG 9 and 10. Again, these chapters seem to open up the narrative to the miracle of VG 11, which possesses strong theological connotations.<sup>112</sup> If VG 9 shows Germanus in a fully passive position, where the main events happen far from his physical presence,<sup>113</sup> VG 10 sees him as an active agent, but humanly so: the ghosts haunting the small house where Germanus and his monks take residence for the night are finally put to rest by the simple, Christian act of a proper funeral and burial, which Germanus gives as a man of the church, not as a holy man.<sup>114</sup> He actively participates in the narrative of the chapter (as opposed to his passive presence in the previous), but he does so as a priest, as a man. Arguably, any other priest could have set those ghosts to rest by giving them a proper Christian burial. It is important to emphasise this detail, as it makes clear to the reader how the actions in the chapter are to be read as a narrative introduction to those of VG 11, where Germanus' acts have something of the medical, certainly, and hence tie him to his deepest humanity, but they also belong so profoundly to the lexicon of the marvellous and the miraculous to leave little doubt about the spiritual power of Germanus.<sup>115</sup>

The chapters following the miracle of the cockerels begin to address the attention of the reader to the first relevant historical event of text, the saint's first trip in Britain. As I mentioned, the historical chapters are important because they provide

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<sup>112</sup> "Constructing the Saint".

<sup>113</sup> VG 9, 256–7: in this chapter, a possessed monk has a vision of Germanus waiting for a boat to cross the Yonne river to reach his monastery, after he had, in fact, stated he would have not been able to visit because of a series of bureaucratic commitments.

<sup>114</sup> VG 10, 257–8.

<sup>115</sup> "Constructing the Saint."

a factual background to Germanus' miracles, they make them *vraisemblables* to the eye of the audience, and they represent the chronological backbone of the text.<sup>116</sup> These chapters, however, are not the real motor of the narrative, they are a complement to it: the force behind Constantius' writing is the miraculous, not the historical.

So strong is Constantius' need to reiterate its presence within this long historical parenthesis, he inserts the evangelical episode of VG 13, where Germanus' acquiesces a demonic storm by means of a blessing, delivered with holy oil.<sup>117</sup>

The first healing miracle he performs in Britain is narrated in VG 15<sup>118</sup> and it will be discussed further in the next chapters; it is followed by the episode of Germanus and the fire, where the saint, bed ridden because of an injury, rests unharmed in a house devoured by flames:<sup>119</sup> this episode, albeit interesting, is fundamentally a transition between two major moments of the narrative, that of the healing of the young, blind girl, and the powerful chapters of the "Alleluja victory," where the saint takes up arms and shows the prowess and courage of a soldier, and which, again, will be widely analysed in the next pages.<sup>120</sup> As it is placed between two pivotal narrative moments in the text, VG 16 is quintessentially transitory, this characteristic represented especially by the lack of linguistic flamboyance and pathos which, on the other hand, is a feature the events described in the previous and following sections.

After Germanus's return to Gaul, a series of lesser episodes are narrated, which appear to be preparing to the Auxerrois' second trip to Britain.<sup>121</sup> This part of the text is very transitional in nature. It includes the chapters from nineteen to twenty-seven and only one specific episode, the healing/exorcism of VG 22 can be truly considered miraculous: in it, a man is freed from demonic possession thanks to

<sup>116</sup> See Eby and Leonardi on Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*.

<sup>117</sup> VG 13, 259–60; Mk 4:35–41, Lk 8:22–25, Mt 8:23–27. For an interpretation of the miracle see J. Rougé, "Topos et Realia: La Tempête Apaisée de la Vie de Saint Germain d'Auxerre," *Latomus: Revue d'études latines* 27, no.1 (Jan–Mar. 1968), 197–202.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 15, 261–2; "Constructing the Saint," 4.2.5 The *Capsula*.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 16, 262–3.

<sup>120</sup> VG 17–18, 263–5; "Introduction," 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre; "Constructing the Saint," 4.3.2 Germanus the Warrior.

<sup>121</sup> VG 20, 265–6; 22, 267; 24, 268–9.

the straw where the Auxerrois has slept the previous night, piously kept by his host, Nectariola.<sup>122</sup> The miracle, a perfect example of a holy act carried out by the saint's *potentia*, is not endowed with the same, powerful semantics of Germanus' other healings; nor is the other partly miraculous event proposed in this transitional section of the text, in chapter twenty-four.<sup>123</sup>

It appears that the real core of this part of the VG is Germanus' astonishing humility, kept unaltered in spite of his popularity:

When he became known for miracles this man full of God sought privacy and hiding from all. In that, the saying of the Gospels according to which a city built on a mountain cannot be concealed, was truly confirmed. He would avoid the solace of his own people's company as well as meeting strangers; still, he could not stay hidden, surrounded as he was by the light of his majesty. For the inhabitants of all villages and towns would placed themselves in his way, they flocked to meet him with women and children, and a continuous, large procession would form, when those arriving joined those who followed him already.<sup>124</sup>

The passage, which refers clearly to Mt 5, 14,<sup>125</sup> is more important for the development of the episode than the miracle narratives, which appear to be narrative fillers, rather than builders, of the section .

As a moment of transition between the two trips to Britain and, even more importantly, between the first trip to Britain and the final voyage of Germanus to Italy, this part of the text strives to reiterate how powerfully divine Germanus' humility is, proposing yet another example of how his very own humanity can be in

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<sup>122</sup> Nectariola and her husband Senator are, according to Costantius, old friends of the Auxerrois, who stops to visit them *pro studio antiquae caritatis*. Germanus' friendship with Senator is, in fact, mentioned once more in chapter 29, when the saint pays him and his wife another visit full of pathos. It is with Senator, for the first time, that Germanus recognizes the imminence of his death: "*vale in eternum, frater karissime, vale, animae meae portio. Tribuat Deus ut nos in die iudicii sine confusione videamus; ceterum in hac luce mutuo numquam fruemur aspectu.*" For a view on the relevance of friendship in a western, late antique context, see Ian Wood, "Family and Friendship in the West," in Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins and Michael Whitby eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. xiv "Late Antiquity and Successors A.D. 425–600" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 416–436.

<sup>123</sup> VG 24, 268–9.

<sup>124</sup> VG 21, 266–7: *Quaerebat vir Deo plenus secretum et abiectioem oculi, cum virtutibus proderetur; in quo vere evangelica sententia probatur, civitatem supra montem positam latere non posse. Vitabat suorum solatia, extraneorum declinabat occursum; sed obscurari non poterat, maiestatis luce circumdatus. Nam vici omnes, municipia, civitates, quot sese per itineris eius tramitem porrigebant, in occursum cum coniugibus ad liberis convolabant et cunctinuatim plerumque agmen, dum occurrentes iungebantur prosequentibus, cohaerebat.*

<sup>125</sup> As mentioned by Levison himself in his edition (VG 21, 266). Mt 5, 14: *Vos estis lux mundi. Non potest civitas abscondi supra montem posita.*

fact read as a sign of holiness. Ultimately, this part of the text has the duty of underlining the Auxerrois' position as a man of humbleness and faith, and serves as a rich preparatory passage not only to the miracles to come, but also to the rising social and political role of Germanus, which is strengthened in the narrative by his second trip to Britain.<sup>126</sup>

This brief, transitional section, placed strategically at the centre of the largest part of the VG's thematic subdivision I propose, helps "constructing the saint" by placing the accent on Germanus' human touch and humility, more than on his miracles, which are, rather, used as a form of support to the description of the saint proposed in chapter twenty-one; in other words, Constantius' aim is, at least in this short series of chapters, to show the audience how Germanus' status as a holy man had been growing, rather than focus on miracles. It is, indeed, keeping in mind this idea of status, I believe, this part of the text has to be read: it proposes examples of Germanus' political and religious' prestige, all supported by token miraculous episodes of lesser relevance and intensity than others. By doing so, Constantius prepares the reader for the last, incredible events of the narrative central section, which are themselves, in turn, the introductory chapters to Germanus' final and full embrace of holiness.

## 2.7 THE HOLY MAN

The last structural section of the text is associated with the final events of Germanus' life, his trip to Ravenna, his profound relationship with the Empress, Galla Placidia, his last miracles and his death. Enclosing the chapters from 31 to 46, this portion of the VG begins crucially with a powerful allegory describing the very moment of Germanus "becoming" as a saint. VG 33 and 34 are fully transitional, the first by presenting a generic healing miracle, of little narrative or linguistic relevance, the second by introducing a short summary of the rest of the trip between Milan, where demons recognise Germanus,<sup>127</sup> and Ravenna, his arrival described in

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<sup>126</sup> To note, as discussed in the "Introduction," that some scholars do not believe in its historicity.

<sup>127</sup> The healing miracle of chapter thirty-three is said to have taken place just outside the city of Milan: VG 33, 275 (*Egressus urbe opulentissima ...*).

<sup>128</sup> VG 35, 276.

detail in VG 35.<sup>128</sup> VG 34, which describes Germanus' visit to the family introduced in VG 33, is a real vademecum of all the actions typical of a holy man:

Meanwhile, they hasten their pace. They arrive and, just as manifest good health had come upon them, so the arrival of the holy man lifted up the spirits of all. He offers and shows his known remedies: while lying prostrate he prays to Christ and purchases joys for others with his tears. Masters are visited, servants are also visited: without treating any differently on account of status, he goes around the huts, visits all the beds. Within the space of one day, the heavenly remedy prevailed in such a way that, upon the arrival the third day, he departed accompanied by the master, who had been lying in bed upon his arrival, leaving the entire household happy with their good health. A praiseworthy reputation preceded the venerable man so that when his arrival was announced making his acquaintance was desired.<sup>129</sup>

Beside the healing in itself, which is carried out through prayer,<sup>130</sup> the passage is striking for a series of other signs: the use of the present tense gives accessibility and immediacy to the actions described, making them vivid. There is no ambiguity in the actions described, they are clear and clipped, just as happens in VG 2, when the moment of Germanus' epiphany is not described using words, but rather delivered by the immediacy of the actions.

Once he arrives in Ravenna, only one of Germanus' miracles, the resurrection of VG 38,<sup>131</sup> takes centre stage instead of him in the narrative; Germanus becomes the fully sanctified object of Constantius' words, just as his actions have been for the majority of the narrative. The figure of Germanus, in the events leading to his death, is characterized by a sort of "impalpability," as he is still physically living, yet fully belongs to the realm of the spiritual and the otherworldly already. The way he frees prisoners in VG 36 lacks not only rituality, but also any type of physical connection to the place and the people involved in the miracle itself. The duality between man and saint, which distinguishes the central section of the VG, is here symbolically re-

<sup>129</sup> VG 34, 275–6: *Interea gradum accelerant; pervenitur, et tamquam manifesta sanitas fuisset ingressa, ita omnium animos sancti relevavit adventus. Notas profert et exerit medicina; Christum prostratus exorat suisque lacrimis gaudia mercatur aliorum. Visitantur domini, visitantur et famuli, ac sine ulla discretione personae tuguria circuit, cubilia universa perlustrat ....*

<sup>130</sup> "Germanus' Holiness Revealed," 5.2.4 Tears in the *Vita Germani*.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.



elaborated until the moment of Germanus' death: his humanity is no longer supported by human actions or words, but only by his silent presence.

He is silent during his final miracles, except for words of prayer—signs of connection with both nature and the divine. When rising the dead, in VG 38, Germanus becomes at once witness of life and death: he returns a dead body to life, and does so through his spiritual connection to the divine and to the realm of, indeed, the dead. It is only through such a deep connection to what lies beyond the end of human life, that he can return it, fully and miraculously. From the moment he crosses that river on his way to Italy,<sup>132</sup> from the moment he symbolically accepts to carry Mankind's burden of sins and pain on his own shoulders, Germanus "dies" as a man and keeps living on exclusively as a saint. It is, finally, his spirit that resurrects the youth in chapter thirty-eight: his body, albeit still present, is no longer useful.

After his death, occurring in VG 42, the narrative focuses on the preparation of Germanus' funeral<sup>133</sup> and of his final voyage back home, to Auxerre. VG 43, 44 and 46 provide a glimpse of both the authority represented by Galla Placidia and her son, as well as that of Germanus' bishops, who had accompanied him to Italy;<sup>134</sup> it is in this context that Constantius places the last miracle of the VG, a post-mortem healing.<sup>135</sup> It is a healing reminiscent of evangelical literature, which concludes the active narrative of the text and represents the ultimate proof of Germanus' finally achieved sanctification.

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

The main edition of the VG, Levison's for the MGH, proposed a structure of the text strongly based on the logical sequencing of the events as presented in the manuscripts. Still today, this subdivision remains the main practical reference for the study of the text. Borius proposed a historical and literal itemisation of the VG,

<sup>132</sup> "Germanus's Holiness Revealed" 5.2.1 The Crossing.

<sup>133</sup> It is Placidia, the empress, who takes care of the body of Germanus, dressing it. The symbolism of her act is poignant and indicative of the cultural attitudes towards the dead typical of her times, as described by Bonnie Effros in "The Symbolic Significance of Clothing for the Dead," in *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2002), 13–40. For an archaeological take on the same topic see, again, Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the early Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

<sup>134</sup> VG 43, 281, VG 44, 281–2; VG 46, 282–3.

<sup>135</sup> 5.2.6 The *Feretrum*.

which resulted in the production of seven chapters, for which Levison's paragraphs' division was, nevertheless, still essential.

The reading of the VG proposed in the following chapters revolves around the concept of sanctification, that is, of the spiritual development of a man, Germanus, into a holy man. It is theoretically based on the differentiation between *chronologie* and *eidologie*, or *praxis* and *ēthos*, that is, the biographical and chronological aspects of the narration and those related to the protagonists' moral and spiritual characteristics. Although the historical chapters offer a biographical and temporal insight into Germanus' life –and are, for this reason, essential to give depth and context to the narration– the idea of sanctification and its development in the text belongs fully to an eidological context.

The path from human to holy is described within the text by crucial episodes that stand out from the rest in virtue of their language and their inter-textual references. The rest of the narrative, it has been discussed in the previous pages, aims at supporting and emphasising these episodes, providing a useful frame for them. It is by keeping this in mind that I suggested a different structural approach to the text,<sup>136</sup> based on the pivotal events in the process of Germanus' sanctification, and on how the rest of the text seems to support them, still keeping, for clarity and reference, Levison's standard paragraph division. Such an approach offered a tripartite partition of the text, which follows the three main moments of Germanus' path to holiness: the introduction to spiritual life and the struggle of his humanity to adapt, his long, eventful voyage toward holiness, characterised by a visible association of human and spiritual, and rendered by a juxtaposition of human practices and holy results, and the final revelation of his holiness, which is described in the last ten chapters of the text and symbolised in the narrative by miracles entirely spiritual, both in essence and results.

The previous pages have shown how this structural approach is supported by the narrative, not only because of how the main episodes are described, but also because of how the rest of the text appears to enhance them. The variety of events and miracles told by Constantius is far from being a mere collection of episodes, but

has a very specific aim and duty within the text itself: bringing out even more evidently the importance of the central events of the text, which are cardinal points for Germanus' sanctification, and the core of the next chapters of this study. Some of the minor chapters focused on the historical events of Germanus' life, and provided a background to some of his most amazing miracles; other chapters have underlined his adherence to asceticism or the growth of his popularity not only as a holy man in the making, but also as a leader, a bishop and, indeed, a man of political weight. All of these have appeared, it has been discussed, clustered around essential miraculous events of the saint's life, a fact that supports the reading of the text given in the previous pages, as well as the proposed division of it. The true relevance of the main miracles is central to each of the next three chapters, to which the previous pages are a brief but essential introduction.

**CHAPTER THREE****GERMANUS, ASCETICISM, AND THE BEGINNING OF THE PATH TO HOLINESS: DECONSTRUCTING THE MAN****3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The next pages will focus on the events of VG 2 and VG 3 and discuss Germanus' first steps towards holiness. In VG 2, Constantius describes the saint's election to bishop and his spiritual epiphany; VG 3 is fully dedicated to his eating habits. These two sections are not merely connected by juxtaposition: Germanus' eating habits are a direct consequence of those last few lines in the previous chapter, where renunciation of material belonging and poverty are chosen as a way of life.

These narratives are a continuum representing the beginning of Germanus' voyage to sainthood: his election to the see of Auxerre, it will be discussed, is literary witness to his human nature,<sup>1</sup> which is sketched vividly by military metaphors; his eating habits symbolically represent that same human nature Germanus found so difficult to abandon but, by describing how unequivocally the saint renounces the pleasures of food, Constantius sets into words the beginning of his journey to spiritual perfection.

The first part of the chapter will discuss Germanus' reticence to take up episcopal duties, and will provide a comparison with other saints' lives: the aim is to emphasize the peculiarity of both Germanus' stance and Constantius way of describing it. This will show how Constantius intentionally chose to present Germanus as a human being – as prone to error as anybody else – to create the right premises to the narrative and conceptual development of his work, which has, at its core, the idea of Germanus becoming as a saint, rather than the mere description of his saintly acts. Germanus' epiphany will be then taken into consideration and compared to the spiritual awakening of other saints: this parallel, too, will mark the Auxerrois' singularity when set side by

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<sup>1</sup> On the saints' human individuality see, for instance, Herbert, 33.

side with other holy figures. The uniqueness with which military metaphors and language are used by the author to underscore both Germanus' human character and his personal strength will be approached, and the premises for a further study of the same in relation to his spiritual growth laid down.

The second part of the chapter will focus on how Constantius introduces the idea of Germanus' sanctification by emphasising what is inherently human in him and by making it, thanks to narrative, a sign of the holy path he has taken up. The theme of food is here introduced and symbolically transformed from mere nutrition to sign of holiness: what makes Germanus human is taken apart and reshaped to become a true sign of his imminent sainthood.

### 3.2 FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH FAITH

*Cum subito divina procedit auctoritas, quam consensus universitatis exsequitur. Nam clerici omnes cunctaque nobilitas, plebs urbana vel rustica in unam venere sententiam Germanum episcopum omnium una vox postulat; bellum indicitur potestati, cuius subiectio facilis fuit, cum etiam ab his quos pro se paraverat, vinceretur. Suscepit sacerdotium invitus, coactus, addictus: sed repente mutatur ex omnibus. Deseritur mundi militia, caelestis adsumitur; saeculi pompa calcatur, humilitas conversationis eligitur, uxor in sororem mutatur ex coniuge, substantia dispensatur in pauperes, paupertas ambitur.<sup>2</sup>*

The second chapter of Levison's edition of the VG is central to the story of Germanus' ascension to sainthood. This is the beginning: here Constantius describes Germanus' election to bishop, his spiritual epiphany, and changes in his life related to asceticism and spirituality. Stylistically, the passage is characterised by the use of historical present and asyndeton to emphasise the actions' immediacy and urgency.

<sup>2</sup> VG 2, 252: When suddenly divine authority springs forth, accompanied by the agreement of all. For all the clergy and the entire nobility, the people of the city and of the countryside, all came to a single opinion: one voice demanded that Germanus be bishop of all. War is declared on a power whose subjugation was easy, because it was achieved by those qualities that he had prepared for himself. He embraced priesthood reluctant, forced, unwilling. But he suddenly turns away from everything. The army of this world is abandoned, that of heaven is taken up; the vanity of this world is forsaken, humility is chosen as a way of life. His wife is transformed from a spouse to a sister; his riches are given to the poor; poverty is embraced.

Germanus' voyage to holiness begins in these brief, concise lines, which are imbued with the rigour and strength of the language of war, one of the VG's recurring themes. A close, comparative reading of the chapter along with relevant passages of texts from the corpus, as well as other contemporary saints' lives, will highlight the idiosyncrasies in Germanus' approach to the episcopate and to spirituality.

Constantius' words portray a strong, almost stubborn figure who, it will be seen below, seems to abandon the secular world with true difficulty. This characteristic of Germanus, if not historical, at least as he is portrayed, is hinted forcefully in the VG by semantic and stylistic choices, but in the later renditions of the text, the topic is approached openly. In the *Vita interpolata*,<sup>3</sup> a section is added between VG 1 and 2 that provides more detail about Germanus' life. He is depicted as a dedicated hunter who habitually hung the heads of his prey on a tree in the town centre of Auxerre. His actions are condemned by bishop Amator, who decides to have the tree felled. When news of this event reaches Germanus, his reaction is far from holy: he becomes enraged and even considers killing the bishop.<sup>4</sup> The same events are described in the *Vita Metrica*, in sections two and three of the text.<sup>5</sup> More details about the moment of the Auxerrois' election to his city's see are given in the *Gesta Episcoporum*. As discussed in the Introduction,<sup>6</sup> the *Gesta Episcoporum* can be useful in providing historical details about the figure of Germanus, as many original documents related to his episcopate may have still been available to the authors at time of composition. Just as in the case of the *Vita Interpolata*, the *Gesta* sketch an intrinsically human image of Germanus, an image which in many ways can be likened to that of an abrupt, if not violent, man.<sup>7</sup> The story of Germanus included by Jacobus de Voragine in the *Legenda Aurea* cites the *Vita*

<sup>3</sup> Duru, ed., *Vita Germani Interpolata*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 3: *atque iram suis suasionibus exaggerans, cujus iam fuerat ritu atque munere insignitus, mortem beatissimo viro minitaret.*

<sup>5</sup> In PL vol.124 [col. 1146C–1153].

<sup>6</sup> "Introduction," 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre.

<sup>7</sup> In the *Gesta* (pp. 32–35), Germanus and his people express their desire to enter the cathedral dedicated to Saint Étienne in Auxerre fully armed. They were to be eventually dissuaded by Amator himself, who also imposed upon Germanus a full tonsure.

*interpolata*'s episode of Germanus' anger against Amator, and mentions the same reasons for it.<sup>8</sup>

These examples of humanity and stubbornness proposed by later biographies of the saint, which I will discuss in the last pages of this dissertation, implicitly support the idea of Germanus' humanity, but, more important, they underline its presence within the pages of his hagiographies, just as I propose to show in the next pages. The question remains open on why so much importance was given to a saint's peculiarly aggressive ways, and whether their origin was rooted in oral and documented history or not.

### 3.2.1 GERMANUS' EPISCOPAL ELECTION<sup>9</sup>

As Fouracre and Gerberding say, "...the Christian bishops had been assuming more and more of what had been secular governmental functions in the cities in all parts of the Empire. In Gaul in the fifth and sixth centuries, most bishops had been members of the Gallo-Roman senatorial aristocracy, often proud, erudite men, very used to acting as local rulers and judges."<sup>10</sup> It is right to say that the role of the bishop in late antique Gaul sat between the political and the religious: his election was a complex matter in which, as pointed out by Van Nuffelen and Leemans,<sup>11</sup> many different variable played a role.

<sup>8</sup> Amator had a tree used by Germanus to hang the heads of his hunting prey felled. (p.448).

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of episcopal influence on town and country, as well as the specific liturgical role of prelatures, see Ian Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," in Derek Baker, ed., *The Church in Town and Countryside* (Oxford: published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by Basil Blackwell, 1979), 61–76. A summary of the main issues at play in episcopal elections is given by Van Nuffelen and Leemans (see footnote 10); for an approach focusing on the entirety of the Merovingian era see the dated, but still of interest E. Vacandard, "Les élections épiscopales sous les Mérovingiens," in *Études de critique et d'histoire religieuse* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1909), 123–187; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: the Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); interesting view presented by Simon Coates in "Venantius Fortunatus and the Image of Episcopal Authority in Late Antique and Early Merovingian Gaul," *The English Historical Review* 115, no. 464 (Nov., 2000), 1109–1137, who relates the historical role of the bishop to his depiction in hagiography.

<sup>10</sup> *Late Merovingian France*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> In "Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity: Structures and Perspectives," in Johan Leemans et al., eds., *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 1–22. The same volume provides a series of monographic studies of interest, especially: Bruno Dumézil, "La Royauté Mérovingienne et les élections épiscopales au VI siècle," 127–144; Susan Loftus, "Episcopal Elections in Gaul: The Normative View of the Concilia Galliae versus the Narrative Accounts," 423–436 and Jaclyn Maxwell, "Education, Humility and Choosing Ideal Bishops in Late Antiquity," 449–462

Influences from the reigning bishop, doctrinal and political issues, and the voice of the local people, all played a part in the process. Because of the involvement of authority and public, episcopal elections did represent an important moment in the socio-political life of the diocese.<sup>12</sup> Germanus' election, as described by Constantius, is not only part of a topos typical of hagiography; it symbolises a crucial moment of late antique history, where political and ecclesiastical authorities would meet with people's consensus.<sup>13</sup>

If temporal authority's reasons to choose a particular individual for the episcopal seat could have included political alliances, a lot was at stake for religious leaders, too. For them, the maintenance or support of particular doctrinal positions may have dictated the choice.<sup>14</sup> Because of this connotation, episcopal elections in Late Antiquity have presented an abundant source of debate about the political history of the area where they took place, as well as on the possible doctrinal disputes within the relevant diocese.<sup>15</sup>

The successful candidate was usually an elder member of the community, firstly because of the authority bestowed by age, but also because of the relevance the *cursus honorum* still had in the late Empire. Because of this, it was unusual to see a bishop younger than forty-five.<sup>16</sup> It was not unusual, on the other hand, to see a lay individual rise to the episcopal position, just as it happened in the case of Germanus, although, especially after the rise of the Merovingians in Gaul, the regulation of episcopal

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<sup>12</sup> For the history of the relevance and role of late antique bishops see Richard Bartlett, "Aristocracy and Asceticism: the Letters of Ennodius and the Gallic Italian Churches," in eds. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 201–216; André Vauchez, "Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages: 'Vox Populi' and Episcopal Power," in trans. Jean Birrell *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13–21;

<sup>13</sup> Van Nuffelen and Leemans, "Episcopal Elections," 9; Vauchez, "Vox Populi," 17–18.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.; Georg Scheibelreiter, "Church Structure and Organization," in Paul Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History volume I, c.500–c.700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 675–703; David G. Hunter, "Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections in the Latin West: from Siricius to Leo I," in Leemans et al. eds., *Episcopal Elections*, 183–202.



appointments became stricter, and it was often prerogative of the king to decide whether a lay member of the community was fit for the role.<sup>17</sup>

The role of local people may not be as easily detectable within the same context.<sup>18</sup> Although people's influential position in the election of bishops had been discounted by many, recent scholarship, Peter Norton's in particular,<sup>19</sup> has underlined its undying relevance well into the late antique period. However, the development of a better established church hierarchy in the last years of Antiquity and the early Middle Ages has been considered by some as the beginning of its decline.<sup>20</sup>

The events of VG 2 narrate the election of a lay man, Germanus, to the episcopal seat of his own city. Its description follows a well established pattern<sup>21</sup> for hagiography, yet presents those very historical characteristics briefly discussed above.

The first part of the chapter centres on the events surrounding Germanus' election to the see of Auxerre and introduces, towards its end, the themes of war and the military:

*Cum subito divina procedit auctoritas, quam consensus universitatis exsequitur. Nam clerici omnes cunctaque nobilitas, plebs urbana vel rustica in unam venere sententiam Germanum episcopum omnium una vox postulat; bellum indicitur potestati, cuius subiectio facilis fuit, cum etiam ab his, quos pro se paraverat, vinceretur.*<sup>22</sup>

When suddenly divine authority springs forth, accompanied by the agreement of all. For all the clergy and the entire nobility, the people of the city and of the countryside, all came to a single opinion: one voice demanded that Germanus be bishop of all. War is declared on a power whose subjugation was easy, because it was achieved by those qualities that he had prepared for himself.

<sup>17</sup> Bruno Dumézil, "La royauté mérovingienne et les élections épiscopales au VI<sup>e</sup> me siècle," in Leemans et al., des., *Episcopal Elections*, 127-144.

<sup>18</sup> Van Nuffelen and Leemans, "Episcopal Elections," 12,

<sup>19</sup> *Episcopal Elections 250-600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Roger Gryson, "Les élections épiscopales en Orient au IV<sup>e</sup>me siècle," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 74 (1979), 301-344.

<sup>21</sup> details of which will be discussed further down in this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> VG 2, 252.

The first characteristic to be noticed is that the saint's election to bishop is presented much earlier than in the VM and the VA, virtually at the beginning of the active narration of his life.<sup>23</sup> The other is Germanus' almost violent reaction when offered the episcopate. Because VG 1 provided enough background to identify Germanus as an aristocrat of fine education, already holding a position of responsibility and power, it seems obvious he did not rebel against the idea of becoming a social or political leader, as he already, according to his biographer, held a similar position in a secular context.<sup>24</sup> What Germanus must have been rebelling against so violently, then, was the spiritual aspect of his situation, which sheds an entirely different light on his figure, and sets him apart from other bishop saints such as Martin and Amator. If both Martin and Amator are introduced as fully spiritual individuals from the beginning, Germanus undergoes a spiritual epiphany within the boundaries of his literary life; as a consequence, one can affirm he started life, at least when it comes to spirituality, as a common man, a fact in stark contrast with the extraordinary religious composure demonstrated since a very young age by Martin, Amator, and Hilarion.<sup>25</sup>

It is at this stage that the language of war, one of the three, recurring lexical themes of the text, appears for the first time. "War" Constantius writes, "is declared on a power whose subjugation was easy, because it was achieved by those qualities he had prepared for himself:" *bellum indicitur potestatis cuius subiectio facilis fuit, cum etiam ab his, quos pro se paraverat, vinceretur*.<sup>26</sup> The military overtone of the main clause is given by its subject and verb, *bellum indicitur*; strengthened by the genitive *potestatis*, and reiterated by the causal subordinate's verb, *vinco*. The verb of the second relative clause of the sentence (*quos pro se paraverat*), *paro*, has to be read in relation to the

<sup>23</sup> The issues presented by Constantius' narrative of Germanus' election from a historical point of view are discussed in R. Laprat, "La carrière cléricale de Saint Germain et le droit canonique de son temps," in *Saint Germain et son temps*, especially paragraphs one, "La *Vita Prima* et l'élection épiscopale de Germain, (155–171) and two, "La *Vita Secunda* et la carrière de Germain avant l'épiscopat," (171–179).

<sup>24</sup> About Germanus' social status and political career before his episcopal election, see J. Gaudemet, "La carrière civile de saint Germain," in *Saint Germain et son temps*, 111–118.

<sup>25</sup> See below, 3.2.2 Episcopal Elections in the Corpus and Coeval Hagiography: A Comparison to the *Vita Germani*.

<sup>26</sup> VG 2, 252.

final clause of VG 1, where the same verb appears in the context of those skills Germanus had learned through his education and experience in the temporal world. These prepared him (*parabatur*) to achieve excellence in those he needed to be a bishop and a man of faith: *parabatur eloquentia predicationibus, iuris doctrina iustitiae, uxoris societas ad testimonium castitatis*.<sup>27</sup> The verb *paro*, therefore, creates a connection that enables a different interpretation of the clause in VG 2: *ab his* in the causal clause introduced by the *cum narrativum* should refer to *eloquentia, doctrina iustitiae* and *uxoris societas*, disciplines and life choices he himself had cultivated to his own advantage (*pro se paraverat*). This reading is also supported by a syntactical characteristic, which directly affects the style of the passage: *ab* is used with *vincere* to indicate the personification of the grammatical subject of the verb.<sup>28</sup> The translations proposed by both Hoare and Borius identify *his* with “people,”<sup>29</sup> favouring the idea that it was Germanus’ legal and political entourage who influenced his election to the see of Auxerre. Although this may be plausible, it seems unlikely Constantius would have mentioned it without making any previous or further reference to its members in the text. If, as this analysis appears to prove, the last clause of VG 1 is syntactically connected to the above-discussed passage in VG 2, a strong argument could be developed for the two chapters, as proposed by Levison on the basis of his study of the manuscripts, having been originally part of a single, uninterrupted narrative stream. This could also be supported by the temporal locution starting VG 2, *cum subito*, which, in spite of defining a time frame for the actions to come, does not contextually break the

<sup>27</sup> VG 1, 251.

<sup>28</sup> Friedrich Stolz, J. H. Schmalz, Manu Leumann, J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Grammatik: Laut- und Formenlehre, Syntax und Stylistik* (München: C.H. Beck, 1928), 435.

<sup>29</sup> Borius, 125: *la guerre est déclarée à une puissance dont la soumission fut facile puisqu’elle fut vaincue par ceux-là mêmes qu’elle s’était ménagés*. His translation is somewhat ambiguous because of the gender of *guerre* (bellum) and *puissance* (potestas), both feminine in French. This creates confusion in the interpretation of the causal clause, where the subject (elle) could grammatically refer both to *guerre* and *puissance*. In any case, the subject of the clause is conquered by *ceux-là mêmes* (those very ones) *ceux* being a masculine, demonstrative pronoun used in the generic, gender-inclusive manner typical of the French and Italian languages. Because the translation lacks any specification to whom or what *ceux* could be, one must assume it refers to people, embracing a straight-forward interpretation of the passage; Hoare is faithful to the impressionistic style of his translation of the VG and rather freely translates the passage as “a war was declared by the people against their magistrate, who was easily overcome, since even his own staff had turned against him.” (79).

narrative of VG 1 and VG 2 in two distinct sections, as it would happen, by contrast, with other temporal constructs, such as *in illo tempore* or *quodam tempore*, both used extensively by Constantius.<sup>30</sup>

A closer look to the manuscript tradition seems to support this reading. According to Levison, the adjective *civile* is present in several of the manuscripts of both the A and the B group as a modifier of *bellum*.<sup>31</sup> The presence of the adjective in both families of the tradition, although omitted in Levison's edition, hints strongly at the idea of an inner, personal conflict within Germanus' soul, caused by the fact his own education and life choices had made him a perfect candidate for the episcopate. This reading reinforces an interpretation of the events of VG 2 as a moment of strenuous conflict for Germanus, not only with external authority, but within himself, a reading fitting seamlessly with the idea of a human struggle not only against external forces – with the powers demanding his episcopate – but also intimately fought, between human longing and spiritual duties.

Germanus' reluctance to join spiritual life is reaffirmed later in the same section, where Constantius writes he *suscepit sacerdotium invitus, coactus, addictus*, "he took up priesthood reluctant, forced, unwilling."<sup>32</sup> This is the very passage introducing his final epiphany, its pathos created by asyndeton and lexicon. Far from perfect, far from holy, unwillingly taking up a duty he not only does not want, but against which he feels quite strongly, Germanus is shown in all his human fallibility. He is a man of strength and integrity, certainly,<sup>33</sup> but still deeply rooted in the transient. What may seem a peculiarity in such a text as a hagiography is, I believe, fundamental for the VG's narrative evolution, and for the conceptual realisation of Constantius' literary plan, that is, creating a piece of literature that is not mere description of events proving the sanctity of a man, but, indeed, description of the very process through which the same man

<sup>30</sup> "The Structure of the *Vita Germani*," 2.2 The *Vita Germani* and its Structure; 2.2.1 Levison's Division.

<sup>31</sup> VG 2, 252, note g.

<sup>32</sup> VG 2, 252.

<sup>33</sup> As the reader would already know from VG 1, where his origins and education have been described.

becomes a saint. This distinct pattern starts just here, in the narration of the beginning of Germanus' life as a cleric.

Let us look at the passage more closely, focusing especially on its lexicon. The first feature to strike the reader is Germanus' apparent reluctance to become a bishop, which had already appeared at the beginning of the chapter: *suscepit sacerdotium invitus, coactus, addictus*, he embraced priesthood reluctant, forced, unwilling. The adjectives are quite evenly distributed throughout the centuries and do not present any evident variation in their meaning.<sup>34</sup> Striking words, as the use made by Virgil, Jerome and Augustine show:

*inuitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi.*<sup>35</sup>

*pascite qui est in vobis gregem Dei providentes non coacto sed spontanee secundum Deum neque turpis lucri gratia sed voluntarie.*<sup>36</sup>

*Et ipsi miseri addicti sunt spectantium cupiditatibus, spectantium insanientibus voluptatibus.*<sup>37</sup>

The passages, though coming from different contexts, all embrace the force of the adjectives *invitus*, *coactus* and *addictus*: the first, reporting the words of Aeneas to Dido at the moment of their farewell in the underworld, truly delivers the sense of almost violent coercion the Trojan hero undergoes, coercion imposed from above, from a power which cannot be controlled, in a way just as it happens to Germanus, who is forced into priesthood because of a higher decision, against which he has no power. The second quote is, at least contextually, closer to Constantius and his work, as it belongs to the same Christian milieu: a short sentence from I, Peter, where the power of *coactus* is

<sup>34</sup> Brepolis *LLT-A*: *addict\**: Antiquitas: 89; Aetas Patrum I: 171; Aetas Patrum II: 59. *Invit\**: Antiquitas: 1188; Aetas Patrum I: 1970; Aetas Patrum II: 849. *Coact\**: Antiquitas: 717; Aetas Patrum I: 517; Aetas Patrum II: 192. The latter seems to present a lesser diffusion in the centuries from the sixth to the ninth.

<sup>35</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid*, R.A.B. Mynors ed., (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1972): Book vi, ll. 460: against my will, my queen, I abandoned your shores.

<sup>36</sup> Peter, 5:2: tend the flock of God –which is among you- and oversee not by constrain but spontaneously, in accordance to God, not for shameful profit but willingly.

<sup>37</sup> Augustine of Hippo, "Sermo xiv In Natali Cypriani Martyris" in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Sermones Inediti. Sermones Admixtis Quibusdam Dubiis*, PL 46 [Col. 0865]: and these miserable ones were enslaved to the desires of those watching, to their insane pleasures.

enhanced by the adverbs *spontanee* and *voluntarie*, both introduced by the adversative conjunction *sed*. The value of the adjective is clarified by the presence of those adverbs and their meaning, which is in stark opposition to that of the adjective itself. The last example, from Augustine's sermon on the martyrdom of Saint Cyprian (a text of dubious origin, yet of Christian imprint), presents the passive verbal form of *addico*, which graphically and painfully hints, at once, both at the physical violence martyrs are subjugated but also and perhaps even more relevantly, at the moral violence of those watching the games, to which they are *addicti*, enslaved. These examples are not only useful to understand the semantic value of the adjectives in a wider temporal and literary context, but also to emphasise the power of their meaning: the decision imposed on Germanus does have a very strong, almost violent connotation: Germanus of Auxerre did not want to become a priest and accepted his faith for the sake of duty, not for love of God. This detail shows with clarity Germanus' lack of spiritual awareness and, consequently, the powerful humanity of his own behaviour, which stands, as it shall be discussed below, in blunt opposition to the attitude of other hagiographical coeval figures.

### 3.2.2 EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS IN THE CORPUS AND COEVAL HAGIOGRAPHY: A COMPARISON WITH THE *VITA GERMANI*

The election of bishops in Gaul was characterised by a selection often involving the appointment of already known characters –political or administrative– to a position that was religious; in truth, the power and role of a bishop invested that of a governor, too, and it is for this reason the boundaries between political and religious figure were blurred to such an extent. Constantius underlines the unanimity of the election, by noting how both the higher strata of society, *nam clerici omnes cunctaque nobilitas*, but also commoners, from both city and country, *plebs urbana vel rustica*, agreed in electing Germanus as a bishop. This passage resembles closely the parallel narratives in both the VM and the VA,<sup>38</sup> which would suggest it is a typical characteristic of the genre, rather than mirror to the reality of Germanus' historical election. The VM only describes

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<sup>38</sup> See below.

Martin's election to bishop in chapter nine, considerably later than in the VG and, most importantly, after Martin had already established himself as a holy figure:

*Sub idem fere tempus ad episcopatum Turonicae ecclesiae petebatur: sed cum erui monasterio suo non facile posset, Rusticius quidam, unus e civibus, uxoris languore simulato ad genua illius provolutus ut egrederetur obtinuit. ita dispositis iam in itinere civium turbis, sub quadam custodia ad civitatem usque deducitur. mirum in modum incredibilis multitudo non solum ex illo oppido sed etiam ex vicinis urbibus ad suffragia ferenda convenerat. una omnium voluntas, eadem vota eademque sententia, Martinum episcopatus esse dignissimum: felicem fore tali ecclesiam sacerdote.<sup>39</sup>*

Almost at the same time, he was called to the episcopate of the church at Tours; but as he could not easily be drawn from his monastery, a certain Rusticus, one of the citizens, pretending that his wife was ill, and throwing himself at his knees, prevailed on him to go forth. Multitudes of the citizens having already been placed by the road on which he traveled, he is thus escorted to the city almost as guarded. An incredible number of people not only from that town, but also from the neighbouring cities, had assembled to give their votes. There was but one wish among all, there were the same prayers, and there was the same fixed opinion that Martin was most worthy of the episcopate, and that the church would be happy with such a priest.

This passage has clearly been an inspiration to Constantius: both texts express the idea of a public plebiscite bringing the election. In both texts, the protagonist appears reluctant to accept, albeit for different reasons; the idea of a sole, united will calling for the election of Martin and Germanus is also common, down to its wording: *una omnium voluntas, eadem vota eademque sententia, Martinum episcopatus esse dignissimum* in the VM, and *in unam venere sententiam Germanum episcopum omnium una vox postulat* in the VG. It seems, though, that Martin's and Germanus' dislike for their newly acquired position has different origins: whereas Martin, the reader learns, fights

<sup>39</sup> VM 9, 118–119. Translation is my own. The conflict between the pastoral role of the bishop and the need for solitude of the hermit is well analyzed by Stancliffe in “Cuthbert and the Polarity between Pastor and Solitary,” in Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe, eds., *St Cuthbert*, 21–44. The duality of Martin's answer to the episcopal call, the sense of duty in answering and that of recoil from fully becoming a public figure is present at later stages of the VG, too. Stancliffe underlines the influence of eastern hermits on the creation of ascetic ideal in a western context (36), but also the ultimate departure of the latter from the former because of the increasingly public connotations of the episcopacy in the West (37), bringing as an example both Martin and Cuthbert (38–44).

becoming a bishop because of his will to conduct an ascetic type of life, to the point that it is only by innocent treachery he is led into the city on the day of his election, Germanus' opposition is somehow stronger, more violent and, I believe, of an entirely different nature.

Martin's sense of rejection is rooted in his dislike of power and of an existence led far from the paucity and humility of asceticism, which is embodied in the text by the simple, yet self-explanatory fact he did not wish to abandon his monastery cell to be formally elected. By chapter nine of the narrative, Sulpicius Severus has already largely defined Martin's persona and presented him as, firstly and mostly, a profoundly holy hermit. Germanus' election, on the other hand, happens very early in the text and clearly is the reason, and not a consequence, of his embracing of a religious and spiritual form of life. This is of incredible importance, as it seems to propose the idea of a struggle not, as it would be expected in a hagiography, against mundanity, but in fact against spirituality itself.

Different still is Amator's introduction to the clergy. Stephanus Africanus describes Amator as a Christian since the earliest age, who had already tried to escape the duty of secular life by taking a wife and refusing (in full accord with her) to ever consume the marriage. In chapter seven the devout couple finally take the holy votes, Martha entering a convent and becoming a nun, Amator becoming a priest.<sup>40</sup> His election to the see of Auxerre will be described only in chapter fifteen, after several miracles had been already performed:

*Tunc exorta est felix populorum, concordi voce clamantium, pastorem basilicae Amatorem succedere et Elladii spiritalem haereditatem susciperet. Quorum voces dignis sunt Dei ordinationibus confirmatae, et eorum desideria beatissimo Amatori dedita, inania non fuerunt, sed statim in episcopatus est honorem promotus.*

The textual similarities with the election of Martin and Germanus are blatant: Amator is elected *concordi voce clamantium*, and becomes bishop by *furor populis*. There

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<sup>40</sup> VA 7, 140–1.



is no mention, though, of any reluctance on his part to the undertaking of his new position, of which he is morally and spiritually worthy. Eutropius, too, is elected by popular acclaim, yet appears to be reluctant to embrace a position involving such a high status. Fearing the the idea of living in the town of Orange, he seeks comfort in meditation and solitude, in an escape reminiscent of that of Martin.<sup>41</sup>

A quick look at other hagiographies of the time could help to see how the idea of a reluctant bishop was not at all peculiar, indeed it followed a well known and well used pattern by authors of the time;<sup>42</sup> interesting is the example, proposed by three texts closely related to the VG, the *Vita Epifanii*, by Ennodius of Pavia, and *Vita Germani Episcopi Parisiaci* and the *Vita Sancti Albini*, both by Venantius Fortunatus. All the texts date between the beginning and the middle of the sixth century, and all appear to have been, at least in some of their content, influenced by Constantius' work.<sup>43</sup> In the *Vita Epifanii*,<sup>44</sup> Ennodius briefly presents the moment of Epiphanius' (438–496)' ascension to the see of Pavia, underlining how the holy man felt unworthy of such a position:<sup>45</sup> albeit clear, Epiphanius' reluctance is closer in intensity to that of Martin and Amator, rather than the violent, almost uncontrollable reaction that characterised Germanus'. The same can be said for the election of another famous Gallic bishop, Germain of Paris (496–576), whose hagiography was composed by Venantius Fortunatus and dated to the late sixth century.<sup>46</sup> Germain, who is already abbot and follows an ascetic way of life, is chosen as bishop of Paris by King Childebart after the

<sup>41</sup> VE, 7: *Ordinatus sanctus Euthropius episcopus, qui vasta civitatis solitudine territus, fugam cepit cautissime meditari.*

<sup>42</sup> See E. Auerbach, "Sermo Humilis" in *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, Ralph Manheim, trans., Bollingen Series Lxxxiv (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), 27–66, for a discussion of the literary importance of humility, lexically and contextually, in Late Antique Christian literature.

<sup>43</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 31.

<sup>44</sup> Ennodius of Pavia, *Vita Beatissimi Viri Epifani Episcopi Ticinensis Ecclesiae*, F. Vogel, ed., in MGH Auct. Ant., vol. 7 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885), 84–109.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 87: *Resistebat in quantum poterat, et indignum se iam apostolica imitatione clamitabat: sed tantum magis surgebat in eo dilectio cunctorum, quantum in multitudine magna solus erat, qui se vocitaret indignum.*

<sup>46</sup> Venantius, Fortunatus, *Vita Germani Episcopi Parisiaci Auctore Venantio Fortunato*, B. Krusch ed., in MGH SS.Rer. Merov., vol. 7 (Hannover and Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1920), 372–418.

death of the previous bishop and although Germain is somehow forced to stay in the city to become its spiritual leader, his opposition is mild.<sup>47</sup> It is, again, the pen of Venantius Fortunatus which produces another example of reluctant bishop: Saint Albinus of Angers (470–550). It is Albinus' *studi(um) humilitatis*, his “devotion to humility”<sup>48</sup> that makes him uncomfortable with becoming bishop and there is, again, no sign of a reaction as dramatic as that of Germanus. Epiphanius' election to bishop happens well into the narrative, those of Germain and Albinus respectively in chapter twelve and ten, a characteristic already seen in the VM and the VA.<sup>49</sup>

This brief excursus is sufficient to formulate two considerations related to the description of episcopal elections in late antique hagiography: the first is the

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 380: *Ceterum revelationum suarum quis scrutator introeat, cui ante quattuor annorum curricula ipsa episcopatus sui causa non est abscondita? Itaque positus sopore, inspicit, a quodam sene claves sibi portae Parisiacae porrigi. Interrogans, quid hoc fieret, accipit in responsum, ut salvas eas faceret. Quod post civitatis eius episcopo decedente, dum praecellentissimo regi Childeberto, occurreret, in eius electione effectum illa vox meruit, ordinatusque pontifex, qualis quantusque se gesserit, hoc expedire lingua mortalis non sufficit, quoniam supra hominem fuit omne, quod edidit.*

<sup>48</sup> Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Albini Episcopi Andegavensis*, in MGH Auct. Ant., 4.2, B. Krusch ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1885), 27–33. Page 30: *Et quia tanti meriti fama sepulta non latuit, sed felicibus pennis cuncta pervolans occupavit, contigit Andecavam civitatem pastoris gubernatione nudari. Tunc universitate populi, eo humilitatis studio resistente, ad pontificalem gradum duce Christo concordanter eligitur.*

<sup>49</sup> Similar descriptions of episcopal elections characterize the great majority of bishops' hagiographies from the fifth to the end of the sixth century. See, for instance: Fulgentius Ferrandus, *Vita Sancti Fulgentii*, in PL 65 [col.0134C–01325D], where Fulgentius' election is described late in the text, when he is already an established ascetic figure. For a view of his particular case and figure, see Conrad Leyser, “‘A Wall Protecting the City’: Conflict and Authority in the ‘Life of Fulgentius of Ruspe’,” in A. Camplani and G. Filoramo eds., *Foundation of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism: Proceedings of the International Seminar, Turin, December 2–4, 2004*, Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 157, (Louvain: Peters Publishers and Department of Oriental Studies, 2007), 175–194. The article well describes the ambiguity of the bishop/hermit position at the time, and does so, just as in the case of this study, by a literary analysis of the text itself.

Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Aniani Episcopi Aurelianensis*, MGH SS. Rer. Merov. 3 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1896), 104–117, where the election is only mentioned in chapter two. The same happens in the *Vita Sancti Lupi*, MGH SS. Rer. Merov. 7 (Hannover and Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1920), 284–302, where Lupus' election is mentioned *en passant* by the author and more stress is placed on the saint's monastic background. No mention to an election is made in the *Vita Sancti Melanii Episcopi Redonici*, MGH SS. Rer. Merov. 3, 370–375, whereas it is only lightly that the author of the *Vita Sancti Niceti*, MGH SS. Rer. Merov. 3, 518–524, mentions Nicetus' reluctance to his new duties (page 521). The only example that can compare to Germanus' dislike to become bishop is related in the *Vita Viviani Episcopi Santonensis*, MGH SS. Rer. Merov. 3, 92–100, where Vivian is elected *unitae et probatae electionis assensu, clericum et civium voto* (95), but feels not worthy of such duty, *ille, qui sub humilitate cottidie magnis virtutibus habebat ascensum, rennuens, ne ambiens probaretur, dum tanto se ordine reclamaret indignum, elegit* (95). He is, in fact, so humble he feels like hiding to seek the safety and comfort of prayer, but as he does so by a holy shrine he *non culpam fugiens, sed meritum prodens, ibi se corpore, ubi mente serviebat, absonderet.* (95). Even though Vivian's reaction to episcopal election is more colorful than others, it is still firmly characterized by the saint's humility—and the author's will to show it.

overwhelming presence of a *humilitas* topos in most of the texts coeval to the VG, a factor well analyzed and discussed by Aeurbach in his “Sermo Humilis.”<sup>50</sup> The second is the fact the VG does not participate in this *topos* when describing Germanus’ rise to the see of Auxerre, although it does certainly throughout the rest of the narrative, starting from the very moments after his own epiphany, where he decides to embrace an ascetic way of living.

### 3.3 GERMANUS’ EPIPHANY

*... sed repente mutatur ex omnibus. Deseritur mundi militia, caelestis adsumitur; saeculi pompa calcatur, humilitas conversationis eligitur, uxor in sororem mutatur ex coniuge, substantia dispensatur in pauperes, paupertas ambitur.*<sup>51</sup>

From the point of view of the narrative, the most relevant part of VG 2 is Germanus’ epiphany: Germanus’ literary character begins his metamorphosis, which will transform the man into saint.<sup>52</sup> Described with a short, almost anti-climatic clause: *sed repente mutatur ex omnibus*, “but he suddenly turns away from everything.” The use of the passive is more indicative of a process of understanding – or indeed, spiritual awakening – rather than rational decision, a characteristic that seems only emphasised by the adverb *repente*; it is, one could say, a true moment of illumination for Germanus, about which, though, Constantius does not say much. If Germanus’ hostility to embracing spirituality and priesthood are, albeit briefly, strongly described, his change of mind is not. This is very peculiar: the reasons behind Constantius’ decision of avoiding to discuss the pivotal moment of Germanus’ spiritual awakening are not clear.

<sup>50</sup> See Note 29 above.

<sup>51</sup> VG 2, 252: he suddenly turns away from everything. The army of this world is abandoned, that of heaven is taken up; the vanity of this world is forsaken, humility is chosen as a way of life. His wife is transformed from a spouse to a sister; his riches are given to the poor; poverty is embraced.

<sup>52</sup> For the idea of character-development and the differences between literary and philosophical approaches, see Christopher Gill, “The Question of Character-Development: Plutarch and Tacitus,” *The Classical Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1983), 469–87, where not only the evolutive pattern of literary characters is compared to that proposed by moral philosophy, but the various influences involved in the formation of the individual are described. The reader will notice the similarities between those and the essential characteristics a potential saint needs to possess innately as a human being.

The clipped style of the entire chapter, seems to emphasise its content through style, rather than narrative. The saint's epiphany is presented, yet lacks narrative development. This is, however, justified by the narrative pattern Constantius chose: it is Germanus' actions that count, that need to be told, because it is through these actions his new found spirituality will be shown, and his sanctification will take full shape. Such view supports, for example, the interest and space dedicated to Germanus' eating habits and the way they mark him as a spiritual and ascetic leader. The following sentence, *deseritur mundi militia, caelestis adsumitur*, only reiterates the idea that Germanus has now entered a different state of mind and is fully engaged in a spiritual ascension which will be described through his acts in the rest of the hagiography: Germanus "abandons the army of this world, and embraces that of Heavens," *deseritur mundi militia, caelestis adsumitur*. The meaning of the sentence is clear and hardly needs any elucidation; its strongly martial overtones mirror how powerfully Germanus enters the world of Christian spirituality, hence allowing the process of his sanctification to begin. It is, indeed, in these five words, that Germanus the man begins his journey to become Germanus the saint.

There is more to this passage, though, than what meets the eye: whereas its meaning is simply understood, the overtones implied by a closer analysis of its vocabulary are quite striking. Its martial tone, for instance, is not only given by the presence of the noun *militia*, army, but also by the main verb of the first clause, *desero*, which can be generally translated with the English "to abandon" or "to leave," but is also tied to the idea of military desertion.<sup>53</sup> By choosing this verb, Constantius sets a contextual background to the entire passage, a background that is unmistakably permeated by military allure; Germanus does not simply abandon the "army of this

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<sup>53</sup> See, for instance, Julius Caesar, *De Bello Civili*, book 1, ch. 15, in "Bellum Civili," in *C. Iulii Caesaris Commentarii Rerum Gestarum*, Alfred Klotz, ed., Vol. 2 Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum Et Romanorum Teubneriana (Leipzig: Teubner, 1950): *id oppidum Lentulus Spinther X cohortibus tenebat qui Caesaris aduentu cognito profugit ex oppido cohortes que se cum abducere conatus a magna parte militum deseritur*. "Lentulus Spinther had occupied this city with his legion. Informed of the arrival of Caesar, he escaped from the city and, while trying to bring with him his legion, he is deserted by great part of his soldiers."

world,” he rejects its values and teachings, just as a soldier does when deserting his legion and disobeying his general. *Deseritur mundi militia* does not simply represent the abandonment of transient values and pleasures, but rather their complete and utter rejection.

The second clause in the sentence plays the opposition between its main verb and that of the first clause I have just analyzed: the verb *adsumo* has more to its meaning than “assuming”, “embracing” or “taking up,” especially when found in a Christian context:

... <sup>28</sup>*adsumpsit Petrum et Iohannem et Iacobum et ascendit in montem ut oraret*<sup>29</sup>*et factum est dum oraret species vultus eius altera et vestitus eius albus refulgens*<sup>30</sup>*et ecce duo viri loquebantur cum illo erant autem Moses et Helias.*<sup>54</sup>

... <sup>16</sup>*et Dominus quidem postquam locutus est eis adsumptus est in caelum et sedit a dextris Dei.*<sup>55</sup>

In the first passage, Christ fetches Peter, John and Jacob for a prayer, but the resonance of the verb *adsumo* is greatly amplified by the fact the Apostles witness a moment of enormous spiritual relevance –the apparition of Moses and Elias to Jesus– which enhances and makes visually real His connection to the divine (His face changed in appearance and his clothes shone white). The act of *adsumere*, to take with Him, His Apostles for that particular moment of prayer, turns into an epiphany for the three faithful, brought about by the otherworldly transformation of Christ while the apparition takes place: if read in such a context, the verb *adsumo* does get a truly spiritual implication, that of rising one up spiritually to a higher level of understanding of faith. Even more striking is, clearly, Mark 16:19, where Christ rises to Heaven and finally sits to “the right of the Father”: *adsumere* is here, quite literally, the verb

<sup>54</sup> Lk, 9:28–30: <sup>28</sup> He took Peter, John and Jacob to go pray on a mountain; <sup>29</sup>and, while he prayed, his face changed in appearance and his clothes shone with pure white. <sup>30</sup>And two men, then, were speaking to Him: they were Moses and Elias.

<sup>55</sup> Mk, 16:19: <sup>19</sup>and the Lord Jesus after having spoken to them, was taken up into Heaven and sat to the right of God.

indicating Christ' ultimate action of pure divinity, His assumption to Heaven. I believe the verb *adsumo*, as used by Constantius, has to be read and interpreted keeping these particular examples in mind: Germanus, who has refused the ideals and morals of the transient world, is not simply taking up the army of Heaven, but is truly lifted towards the divine and spiritually risen up to God.

Such interpretation of *deseritur mundi militia, caelestis adsumitur* transforms this metaphor already dense in meaning into the key to interpret the entire text as the rising of a man to sainthood: the first half of the clause is characterised by three words belonging to the context of war and the army, mundane and transient, the second to that of spirituality and heaven. On the level of its signifiers, the sentence is a perfectly balanced opposition of human and holy, of transitory and immanent, material and spiritual. On that of its signified, it embodies the very journey Germanus has just begun and Constantius is about to describe: the journey of a man, as human and fallible as any man can be, who has metaphorically risen above it all to embrace his spiritual self. The sentence also strongly defines what characterises the line of study of this chapter, as it sanctifies Germanus by means of what is human in him: as I will explain in the next pages, Germanus' martial attitudes and behaviours in the text are often associated with very spiritual results,<sup>56</sup> just as in this sentence the first half, "abandoning the army of this world", brings as a consequence his "embracing a heavenly one": Germanus acting upon his humanity, causes the blossoming of his spirituality.<sup>57</sup>

The chapter ends with a series of changes in the Auxerrois' life, changes that see him move from a mundane to a spiritual approach to his own existence:

*saeculi pompa calcatur, humilitas conversationis elegitur, uxor in sororem  
mutatur ex coniuge, substantia dispensatur in pauperes, paupertas ambitur.*

the pomps of this world are spurned, humility of life is chosen. His wife is transformed from a spouse to a sister; his riches are given to the poor; poverty is embraced.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See VG 17, 18 and 28.

<sup>57</sup> An interesting curiosity: the ms A3 presents the variation *malitia* instead of *militia*.

<sup>58</sup> VG 2, 252.

The first sentence revolves strongly around the word *conversatio*, whose meaning in this context is clearly that of “way of life,”<sup>59</sup> but that could also be associated with the idea of entering monastic life, as expressed by Cassian and Jerome.<sup>60</sup> Considering the strong ascetic echoes of Germanus' habits and the fact he did, in fact, founded his own monastery,<sup>61</sup> the presence of *conversatio* as the first, descriptive term used to define his new attitude to life seems to be even more symbolic of his change. Also interesting is the choice of the verb *calco*, which can, in fact, assume a strong military connotation when used in given contexts:

*curramus praecipites et,  
dum iacet in ripa, calcemus  
Caesaris hostem.*<sup>62</sup>

In this example from Juvenal's *Satires*, the verb is used in a military context, a fact emphasised by the presence of the noun *hostis* as its accusative; in general, it is clear that to “trample upon,” “to crush” or to “walk over” are all verbs which can be very easily applied to an act of war. Germanus' will to entirely dedicate himself to the spiritual is well embodied by such a powerful act of destruction. He tramples over the sins of life, just as a soldier would crush an enemy under his boot. He walks over the

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, Eph. 2,12: *quia eratis illo in tempore sine Christo, alienati a conversatione Israel et extranei testamentorum promissionis, spem non habentes et sine Deo in mundo*. “... as they were at that time without Christ, alienated from the way of life of Israel, and strangers of the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world.” The way of life embraced is, certainly, that of the ascetic monk, without a doubt inspired also by the communities of Marmoutier and Lérins.

For the early history of monasticism in Gaul, see J.M. Besse, *Les Moines de l'Ancienne France (Période Gallo-Romaine et Mérovingienne)*, vol. 2, Archives de La France Monastique (Paris: Librairie Veuve Ch. Poussielgue, 1906), especially the first two sections, dedicated respectively to Martin of Tours and the community of Lérins and “Les Premiers Monastères de la Gaule Méridionale,” in *Revue des Questions Historiques* lxii (1902): although dated, Besse's works are still informative.

<sup>60</sup> Cassian, *De Institutionis Coenobiorum et de Octo Principalium Vitiorum Remedii*, CSEL 17, M. Petschenig, ed. (1888), 2.5.2: *sanctae conversationis habitus*. “the demeanor of holy monastic life”; VH 14, *fundator et heruditor huius conversationis*. “founder and teacher of this type of monastic life.” Cassian was at times, though, critical of the extreme ascetic ways of eastern hermits, as explained by Mark Sheridan in “John Cassian and the Formation of Authoritative tradition,” in *Foundation of Power and Conflicts of Authority*, 157–174. In the same article, Sheridan also highlights Cassian's dislike for the use of miracles and wonders in literature.

<sup>61</sup> VG 6, 254.

<sup>62</sup> Juvenal, “Saturae,” in *A. Persi Flacci Et D. Iuni Iuvenalis Saturae*, W.V. Clausen ed., Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 10.85: “let us rush and trample over Caesar's enemy.”

mundane, just as an army would walk over unfriendly soil. And he does so to embrace with humbleness a simple way of life, or indeed, monastic life. The military reference embodied by the physical act of walking over sins, has as a consequence the very spiritual result of elevating Germanus towards sanctity.

### 3.3.1 EMBRACING OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE CORPUS AND COEVAL HAGIOGRAPHY

The peculiarity of Germanus' approach to Christian spirituality is made even more evident when compared to that of other saints, as described in the hagiographical texts of the corpus. Sulpicius Severus, for instance, makes clear from the beginning how Martin's spirituality was innate and followed him since his childhood:

... This, however, was not done of his own free will as almost from his earliest years, the holy childhood of this illustrious boy aspired more to the service of God. For, when he was ten years old, (acting) against his parents, he sought refuge in the Church, and begged that he might become a catechumen. Soon after, becoming in a wonderful way fully devoted to the service of God, when he was twelve years of age, he desired to become a hermit; and he would have done so, taking the adequate vows, had not his unsuitable age prevented it. His mind, however, thinking always of monastic things or the Church, already meditated in his childhood years what he later fulfilled, as a holy man.<sup>63</sup>

In the second chapter of the text, Sulpicius Severus outlines the first few years of Martin's life, as well as his early attitudes towards spirituality; the reader gets to know he came from a pagan family of means, whose *pater familias* was in the military, a career which had been chosen for young Martin, too. It was not, though, what the youngster desired, as it transpires clearly from the passage above: since the earliest

<sup>63</sup> VM 2, 111–112: *non tamen sponte, quia a primis fere annis divinam potius servitutem sacra inlustris pueri spiravit infantia. Nam cum esset annorum decem, invitis parentibus ad ecclesiam confugit seque catechumenum fieri postulavit. Mox mirum in modum totus in Dei opere conversus, cum esset annorum duodecim, eremum concupivit, fecissetque votis satis, si aetatis infirmitas non obstitisset. Animus tamen aut circa monasteria, aut circa ecclesiam semper intentus, meditabatur adhuc in aetate puerili, quod postea devotus implevit.* To be noted as well, in this very passage, the use of the adjective *invitus* (*invitis parentibus*), in reference to the position of young Martin's parents on his desire to join priesthood.



stages of his life, Martin *a primis fere annis divinam potius servitutem sacra (illustris pueri) spiravit infantia*, and he did not hesitate to go against his parents' wishes to *ad ecclesiam confugit, seque catechumenum fieri postulavit*. Evidently, young Martin knew well a life in the Church, following Christ' teaching, was in his destiny. One could almost say that, just as Germanus fought against his election to bishop, against entering a fully-fledged Christian life—as I will discuss below— so did Martin fight against having to live out of it. When time comes for his enrolment in the army, his father, who *felicibus ejus actibus invidebat*, did not approve of his son's holy acts,<sup>64</sup> put him in shackles and sent him away to be a soldier.<sup>65</sup> The rest of the chapter focuses on Martin truly humble and deeply Christian behaviour while in the army, to the vices of which he never bent to, preferring a life of solitary prayer and loving kindness towards his brothers in arms.<sup>66</sup> The parallel between Germanus and Martin's early attitude towards spirituality are opposed, to say the least.

When it comes to religious initiation, Amator's path resembles Martin's: in the first section of the VA, Stephanus Africanus details the origins of the future bishop, his education and, indeed, he informs the reader about Amator's early love of Christ. So deep was the young man's desire to strictly follow Christian doctrine, he took a vow of full chastity with his young, future wife, Martha (herself to become a saintly figure after entering a convent), somehow disappointing his own parents, who hoped to be soon blessed with the birth of a grandchild— and heir, in fact, as Amator's family was fairly wealthy according to his hagiographer.<sup>67</sup> It is, again, just as in Martin's case, an example

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 112: *captus et catenatus sacramentis militaribus implicatus est*.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 112: *sed cum edictum esset a regibus, ut veteranorum filii ad militiam scriberentur; prodente patre, qui felicibus ejus actibus invidebat, cum esset annorum quindecim, captus et catenatus sacramentis militaribus implicatus est, uno tantum servo comite contentus, cui tamen versa vice dominus serviebat, adeo ut plerumque ei et calciamenta ipse detraheret et ipse detergeret; cibum una caperent, hic tamen saepius ministraret. Triennium fere ante baptismum in armis fuit, integer tamen ab iis vitiis, quibus illud hominum genus implicari solet. Multa illi circa commilitones benignitas, mira caritas; patientia vero atque humilitas ultra humanum modum. Nam frugalitatem in eo laudare non est necesse, qua ita usus est, ut jam illo tempore non miles, sed monachus putaretur. Quibus rebus ita sibi omnes commilitones suos devinxerat, ut eum miro affectu venerarentur. Nec dum tamen regeneratus in Christo, agebat quemdam bonis operibus baptismatis candidatum: assistere scilicet laborantibus, opem ferre miseris, alere egentes, vestire nudos: nihil sibi ex militiae stipendiis praeter quotidianum victum reservans, jam tum Evangelii non surdus auditor de crastino non cogitabat.*

<sup>67</sup> VA, 136–141.

of early, yet fully developed dedication to Christianity, a dedication certainly not present in the events narrated by Constantius in Chapter two of the VG.

Eutropius, whose origins resemble closely those of Germanus,<sup>68</sup> is converted by his wife and, after her death, he becomes a deacon.

The hermit-saint Hilarion, at least according to Jerome, who composed his hagiography in Bethlehem around the year 390, came from a wealthy, yet pagan family, thanks to which he received excellent education;<sup>69</sup> just as Amator and Martin, his dedication to Christ and Christian faith blossomed at a very early age:

Hilarion was born in the village Thabatha, situated about five miles to the south of Gaza, a city of Palestine, As his parents worshipped idols, it could be said the rose blossomed from the thorn. By them he was committed to the charge of a Grammarian at Alexandria, where, *so far as his age allowed, he gave proofs of remarkable ability and character*: and in a short time endeared himself to all, and becoming an expert at the art of speaking. *More important than all these things, he believed in the Lord Jesus, and took no delight in the madness of the circus, the blood of the arena, the excesses of the theatre: his whole pleasure was in the assemblies of the Church.*<sup>70</sup>

These words are clearly evoked in VM 2, as I have mentioned earlier and, just as its Gallic counterpart, seem to underline the early adherence to Christian values and faith of Hilarion. Not only that: he refuses to take pleasure in the “madness of the circus, the blood of the arena, the excess of the theatre,” just as Martin “kept completely free from those vices in which that class of men (soldiers) become too frequently involved”. The two become Christian in prayer and behaviour, so much so it seems appropriate to emphasise

how much this sets them apart from those surrounding them. Martin, Amator and Hilarion mirror the ideal of a holy man born as such, who had been spiritually chosen to be a saint since the earliest years of his life, as a consequence, their hagiographies have

<sup>68</sup> VE, 6-7.

<sup>69</sup> VH 2 [Col. 0029C–0030A].

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.: *Hilarion ortus vico Tabatha, qui circiter quinque millia a Gaza urbe Palaestinae ad Austrum situs est, cum haberet parentes idolis deditos, rosa, ut dicitur, de spinis floruit. A quibus missus Alexandriam, grammatico traditus est: ibique quantum illa patiebatur aetas, magna ingenii et morum documenta praebeuit; in brevi charus omnibus et loquendi arte gnarus. Quodque his majus est omnibus, credens in Dominum Jesum, non circi furoribus, non arenae sanguine, non theatri luxuria delectabatur; sed tota illi voluntas in Ecclesiae erat congregatione.*

no need to tackle the possibly thorny matter of their rite of passage from ordinary, human man, to sanctified being. In more than a way, they were born so.

### 3.4 THE DIET<sup>71</sup> OF A REAL HERMIT

The role of asceticism in the creation of the holy man has been correctly defined by Krueger, who writes that:

The complex of technologies for the refashioning of the self, including controlling diet, renouncing sex, wealth, and power; regulating sleep, punctuating time with prayer and liturgy—even standing atop pillars—

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<sup>71</sup> Christians' habits in matters of food were not different from those of Roman and Judaic communities; the favored foods were olive oil, wine and bread, with the addition of cheese, milk, grains and pulses (Andrew Mc Gowan, *Ascetic Eucharist: food and drink in early Christian ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 1–142; Veronica E. Grimm, *From feasting to fasting: attitudes to food in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1996), 60–179). The attitudes to food of early Christian communities were also rooted in Classical examples, as it is excellently discussed by Jason König in his recent publication *Saints and Symposiasts: The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); the last section of the text also focuses on the matters of nutrition in the New Testament and early eastern hagiography.

Christ's ideas about food are made particularly clear in the New Testament (for an exhaustive review of the passages see Grimm, 60–73), especially in Mk 7: 18–19, where He declares that only what is rooted within an individual's conscience can taint the soul, hence freeing all food, needed for life sustenance, of its moral value. In his Epistles, Paul addresses the matter of food several times, and in very specific ways. This is because new converts came from both a Judaic and a Gentile background, and would have had different matters and doubts (Mc Gowan, *Ascetic Eucharist*, 79), based on what their social and religious habits were. Food should not be part of one's relationship to God: Paul emphasises how neither consumption nor renunciation of food can improve a faithful's tie with God; the same concept is reiterated in 1 Cor 10: 25–26. The stress is obviously placed on worship through spiritual connection with Christ, rather than on tangible signs of it through respect of the Law; very little importance is entrusted on those very regulations, which characterise so much of Judaic worship. The message of the Pauline Letters reinforces that expressed in the narratives of the Last Supper (Lk 22:7–23; Mt 26: 20–30; Mk 14: 18–26): a new covenant was born, a new spirituality was created, and the final separation between the ancient, Judaic creed and the new Christian community also passed through a renewed freedom towards food. The same approach is found in relation to fasting practices. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke does record examples of religious fasts associated with prayer, but he does not support the idea of renunciation of food neither as a full blown ritual practice following the example of Mosaic Law, nor as required staple of Christian worship (Acts 13: 2–3 and 14: 23). Fasting occurs in association with prayer and it seems to be more of a meditative support rather than a dogmatic requirement. In this, certainly, Luke's words do bow to Judaic tradition, as fasting to enhance the power of human prayer was commonly practiced, but they seem to be lacking the harshness and sense of enduring sacrifice it portrays in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus fasted only once Mt 4:1–4; Lk 4:1–4. Mark describes the same episode in 1: 12–13, but without any reference to fasting. Overall, Christian attitude to food and fasting is condensed successfully in Paul's own words from Rom 14:17, “and indeed, the Kingdom of the Lord is not about food or drink, but about the justice, peace and happiness (found) in the Holy Spirit.”

It is nevertheless essential to understand how Christian attitude towards fasting changed throughout the centuries: if at the beginning the practice was mostly a support to prayer, early Patristic literature seems to show that both fasting as practiced by the Jewish community and frugal eating, as endorsed by Roman philosophers—see Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, L. D. Reynolds, ed., Vol. 2, 2 vols., Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965–14.2 and 18.10–11), were assimilated in Early Christian rites. Bynum maintains food was symbolically associated, since the earliest times, and not exclusively in Christian culture, with the idea of vulnerability: food was needed by the body to survive, and was a continuous reminder of the lowest needs of mankind. A way to transcend the immanence of the flesh was denying basic nutrition to it, consequently controlling not only hunger but, by extension, the entire spectrum of material, bodily needs. Privation of nourishment for the flesh was, at once, a form of control over one's body and its most instinctual needs, impulses that needed to be erased from the life and actions of the good Christian.

articulated the growing religion's moral ideals. According to early Christian ascetic theories, these spiritual exercises produced a perfected self through the practice of virtues. The ascetic renouncers' performances reshaped both body and mind to cultivate impassibility through temperance, continence, charity, courage, patience, justice, obedience, and perhaps most distinctively Christian among the virtues, humility. With God's help, the various techniques might result in a new Christian.<sup>72</sup>

By exercising control and restriction upon the body and bodily needs, a man –or a woman<sup>73</sup>– could successfully transcend his or her mundanity and embrace a fully spiritual life. When read with this in mind, the presence of asceticism and especially food deprivation in hagiography does not surprise,<sup>74</sup> rather it becomes a pointer to the yearning of the protagonist for spirituality. It is not difficult to see why Germanus, at least according to the picture given by his hagiographer, was not a keen eater. Food had little importance in his daily life, to the point one can say he truly avoided it. Words related to food, on the other hand, have an essential role in the text, as they relate to the most human of all needs, that of nutrition, and transform it into a mirror of Germanus' holy behaviour. Thanks to this contextual oxymoron, Constantius reinforces throughout the text the idea of Germanus' transformation from mundane to holy. A good place to

<sup>72</sup> Derek Krueger, "Hagiography and Ascetic Practice in the Early Christian East," *The Journal of Religion* 79, no. 2 (April 1999), 216–232. The article offers a discussion on how the very composition of a hagiographical text could be read as an ascetic act of self mortification and penance, drawing textual examples from various late antique eastern sources. The article certainly offers an interpretation of hagiography taking into account, firstly and mostly, its authorship, rather than its religious, historical or political agenda.

<sup>73</sup> Susanna Elm engages with the topic of female hermits in the Middle East and Egypt in *Virgins of God: the Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>74</sup> See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast Holy Fast: the Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (London: University of California Press, 1986); David Rampling, "Ascetic Ideals and Anorexia Nervosa," *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 19, no. 2–3 (1985), 89–94; Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

For the particular association of food and "spiritual food" as described in epistolary work of Late Antique figures see Danuta Shanzer, "Bishops, Letters, Fast, Food and Feast in Later Roman Gaul," in Mathisen and Shanzer eds., *Society and Culture*, 217–236. For the Christian attitude towards pagan feasts and their potential role as fictitious symbol of kinship see Bonnie Effros, "The Ritual Significance of Vessels in the Formation of Merovingian Christian Communities," in R. Corradini, M. Diesenberger and H. Reimitz eds., *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 213–228. A specific view on the phenomenon of asceticism and "holy men" in Gaul is given by Christine Delaplace, "Érmîtes et ascètes à la fin de l'Antiquité et leur fonction dans la société rurale. L'Exemple de la Gaule," in *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Antiquité Tardive* 104, no. 2 (1992), 981–1024.

start this analysis is the third chapter in Levison's edition of the text, where Germanus' eating habits and his attitude to food are described:

Now it is indeed impossible to tell with what strength of enmity he did violence to himself, which torments and sufferings of the body he inflicted upon himself: he became his own persecutor. I will summarise briefly everything as faithfully as possible. From the very day he was introduced to the priesthood up to the end of his life, he fed his soul while he starved his body with such determination that he never accepted wheaten bread, nor wine, nor vinegar, nor oil, nor vegetables—he never even used salt as seasoning for his food. In fact, on Easter and Christmas, only single drinks were accepted, in which the flavour of the wine was weakened by large amounts of water, just as the sourness of vinegar is usually tempered in a diluted mixture. During his meals, first he would take a taste of ashes, then he ate spelt bread, which he had threshed and ground himself. And even though this food is considered more burdensome than hunger (*ieiuniis*), it was never served until evening, sometimes in the middle of the week, more often on the seventh day.<sup>75</sup>

Constantius starts out by emphasising the saint's disposition toward mortifying his body: the vocabulary of the first sentence is undoubtedly rooted in the semantic field of physical pain and privation, as the choice of the locution *vim sibi ipse consciverit* proves. The verb *conscisco*, associated with the accusative *vim* delineates the clear image of an act of violence and force bestowed willingly upon one's self (*sibi ipse*). The ablative of manner, *hostilitate*, almost painfully emphasises what can only be seen as contempt toward the body and its needs. The idea is reiterated in the following sentence, where Constantius introduces the *cruces* and *supplicia* Germanus inflicts upon his person with two lyrically emphatic relative pronouns, here used with a nuanced, yet crystalline interrogative connotation, an intelligent poetic stratagem that leaves the reader wondering about what such sufferings and torments may be. Germanus becomes

<sup>75</sup> VG 3, 252: *Iam vero enarrari non potest, qua hostilitate vim sibi ipse consciverit, quas cruces quaeve supplicia corporis sui persecutor induerit. Breviter iuxta veri fidem universam perstringam. Ex ea die, quam sacerdotii sumpsit exordium, usque ad terminum vitae tanta obstinatione tabe corporis animam suam pavit, ut numquam panem frumenti, non vinum, non acetum, non oleum, non legumen, numquam vel salis ad usum condiendi saporis acceperit. Sane die resurrectionis vel navitatis dominicae potiones singulae sumebantur, in quibus ita vini sapor aquis nimiis debebatur, ut aceti austeritas solet largis permixtionibus temperari. In refectonibus primum cinerem praelibavit, deinde panem ordeaceum sumpsit, quem tamen ipse excussit et moluit. Et cum hic cibus gravior ieiuniis iudicaretur, numquam nisi vespere, interdum tamen in ebdomada media, plerumque die septimo ponebatur.*

*sui persecutor*; his own persecutor,<sup>76</sup> he clearly restrains his own body's needs, a fact which can be interpreted as a way to bind physicality. The first lines of chapter three powerfully address Germanus' battle against his "being human" and create the premises for his sanctity to emerge.<sup>77</sup>

The rest of the narrative, if not necessarily as forceful, is just as striking. Constantius continues describing in detail Germanus's eating habits and his familiarity with the practice of fasting;<sup>78</sup> he declares the food eaten by Germanus *gravior ieiuniis* – more burdensome than a fast – and explains how Germanus would consume it only in the evenings, either on the middle of the week or on the day of the Lord (Sunday).<sup>79</sup> The lexical examples provided by the chapter already defines some very interesting characteristics: if the detailed account of the saint's eating habits points at a physical – hence human – need for nutrition, his attitude towards food seems to highlight his transformation from man to saint. This change is depicted in the text by using a truly human necessity as the very root of the saint's growing spiritual power. Germanus' diet, an openly human, basic need, and the way he controls it, turn into a sign of his own ability to transcend human nature, and embrace sainthood. If read in this light,

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<sup>76</sup> The same idea has been used by Venantius Fortunatus in his *Vita Radegundis*, one of the texts inspired by the VG, where she is defined "*se ipsa tortrix*" in chapter 26, her own torturer (Krusch ed., "De Vita Sancta Radegundis," MGH SS rer. Merov. 2 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1888), 364–95), as pointed out by Berschin in "Radegundis and Brigit" in Carey, Herbert, Ó'Riain eds., *Irish Hagiography*, 73.

<sup>77</sup> An interesting, although slightly anachronistic, interpretation of the narrative development of the ascetic leader is given by Brian Brennan in his article "Athanasius' 'Vita Antonii.' A Sociological Interpretation," *Vigiliae Christianae* 39, no. 3 (September 1985), 209–27.

<sup>78</sup> In the case of Germanus, the text points clearly to a full fast, interrupted once a week, either on the middle of the week or the Sunday, by one meal of ashes, barley bread and water. This becomes clear in the last four lines of the chapter, where Constantius compares Germanus' diet to fasting. Although Constantius does not openly state that Germanus' fasting is total, the text implies that it is, with the exception of the one day when the saint eats bread and water: there would not have been any need to specify on which day of the week Germanus consumed his meals, if it happened every day. Therefore Germanus, the text says, fasts six days a week and consumes only bread and water once every seven days. His treat, to be had on special occasions such as Christmas, would have been watered down wine.

<sup>79</sup> Even wine was so strongly diluted almost to no longer taste like it: the locution *ita...ut* in the text strengthens the comparison of Germanus' way of diluting his drink, to the habit of tempering vinegar with extremely large amounts of other liquids to make its taste more palatable. In some of the mss (A2. 3. 4. 6a; B1, 3. 4.) *ita* is added at the end of the relative clause, in addition to that at the beginning of the same to emphasize even more the unappetizing nature of the drink.

Constantius' interest in ascetic eating habits is not at all surprising,<sup>80</sup> as it represent a literary and contextual means used to emphasise Germanus' attempts to grow closer to the divine.<sup>81</sup>

The pattern becomes more evident when the textual presence of food vocabulary is compared to other hagiographical works of the time. The amount of foodstuff refused by the saint is astonishing,<sup>82</sup> so much so his eating habits are not comparable to those of any other saint protagonist of hagiographical works contemporary to the VG in the West. Even more strikingly, there is no mention of food in two of the four hagiographical texts of the corpus, the VA and the RC. The texts show a total lack of interest in food, both as a vehicle for the delivery of miracles, and in the context of the saints' habits. The VM 6 and 26 both refer to food; in the latter, Sulpicius Severus says that Martin "did not indulge neither in food nor sleep, except in so far as the necessities of nature required".<sup>83</sup> Beside another mention of meals and fasting in chapter ten, where the norm of his monastic community is described,<sup>84</sup> no more relevant mentions to Martin's diet are made. It is interesting to point out how the hagiographical works of

<sup>80</sup> The figure of Germanus is certainly that of a hermit and presents characteristics typical of the literary and cultural figure of the saint. See, for theological background, John Cassian, *Collationum* 22, CSEL 13 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004); for a cultural background, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: its rise and function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (San Francisco: University of California Press, 1989), 3–62, 103–95; J. Howard-Johnston, Hayward, P.A. ed., *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27–82; João Paulo Charrone, "Los Modelos de Santidad en las Biografías en Prosa de Venancio Fortunato," *Archivum. Revista de la Facultad de Filología de la Universidad de Oviedo* 57 (2007); John Crook, *The Architectural Settings of the Cult of Saints in The Early Christian West (c. 300–1200)*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 6–39; Hyppolite Delehaye, *Sanctus: essai sur le culte des saints dans l'Antiquité*, Subsidia Hagiographica 17 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1927); Alexandra Walsham, "Relics and Remains" in *Past and Present*, sup. 5 (2010), 9–36; Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), especially 3–64 and 81–100. For the possible link between food consumption and practices and social criticism, see Emmanuelle Raga, "Bon mangeur, mauvais mangeur. Pratiques alimentaires et critique sociale dans L'oeuvre de Sidoine Apollinaire et ses contemporains," *Revue Belge de philologie et d'histoire/ Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Philologie en Geschiedenis* 87 (2009), 165–196. The article also offer an overview of the eating habits of people in Late Antique times. (170–172).

<sup>81</sup> The saint endures long periods without food assumption, follows a dry eating diet –see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast*, and relies on "poor people's food," barley bread, as pointed out in Thomas Braun, "Barley Cakes and Emmer Bread" in *Food in Antiquity*, J. Witkins, D. Harvey and M. Dobson ed. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1995), 25–37.

<sup>82</sup> Germanus is said to refuse, besides meat (Chapter thirty-five), which does not constitute a huge surprise, salt, vegetables, oil and vinegar.

<sup>83</sup> VM 26, 136: *ne cibo quidem aut somno, nisi quantum naturae necessitas cogeabat (...)*.

<sup>84</sup> J.M. Besse, *Les Moines de l'Ancienne France*, 1–33.



Jerome, which present, it shall be discussed below, heavy references to food, are considered among the inspirational sources of Sulpicius Severus for the VM,<sup>85</sup> but very little mention is made in the text to matters of food and abstinence.<sup>86</sup> this could be explained by the fact that, whereas Constantius used food and diet in the narrative to define Germanus' human needs and his successful attempts to transcend them, Sulpicius Severus did not need to do so, as Martin's spirituality is created *hors de scène*, and described in the early chapters of the text as something with which the young man was born. In the VE, the will of Eutropius to refrain from food is clearly defined in the text as an act of expiation of previous sins,<sup>87</sup> along with other actions typical of asceticism. At the same time, Verus refrains from detailing the holy man's diet and fails to stress its relevance as a defining characteristic of his blessedness.

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<sup>85</sup> Stancliffe, *Martin*, 55–85.

<sup>86</sup> Sulpicius Severus mentions Martin followed an ascetic diet based on roots and poisonous herbs in Chapter 6 of the *Vita Martini*, but he also maintains he stopped following it when he realized he was poisoning himself. (6). See footnote 56 for the eating habits of his monastic community in Marmoutier.

<sup>87</sup> VE, 6: *cumque diaconatus officium suscepisset, praeteritos actos recolens, non solum levitam, sed et penitentem impleturus adreput. Jejuniis, abstinentia, elymosinis, orationibus, lacrimis, vigiliis, studebat non solum implere percepta, sed et flere praeterita.*

It is the VH, an eastern example of hagiography, slightly earlier in date than the VG, to carry a similar approach to food to that described in the VG:<sup>88</sup> its protagonist, Hilarion, embarks in a life long voyage of physical mortification, in great part, albeit not only, represented in the text by his strict, mortifying approach to food. It seems Constantius relied heavily on the example proposed by Jerome: renunciation of food mortifies the body—hence humanity— and rises one's soul to God. If read in this context, Germanus' embracing of asceticism becomes a sign of his renunciation of human fallibility, represented by the body's needs (food) and, consequently, of his getting closer to a state of blessedness. The parallelism between the VG and the VH is undeniable and the narratives related to food and fasting in the VG are intrinsically the same in nature to the descriptions offered, on the same matter, by Jerome. The weight placed on food by both authors underlines how both Germanus and Hilarion conquered their bodily needs; but whereas Hilarion, through sacrifice, only enhanced an already strong and early-set

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<sup>88</sup> In the *Vita Hilarionis* five chapters are dedicated to Hilarion's attitude to food. In chapter four his regular diet is described: "he only ate fifteen dried figs after sunset" [col.0031A]: *quindecim tantum caricas post solis occasum comedens*); in chapter five, when tempted by Satan with thoughts of lust, he decides to extinguish them by embarking in a partial fast: "so he sustained his defeating spirit with herbs' juice and only few dried figs for three or four days" [col. 0031B]: *herbarum ergo succo et paucis caricis post triduum vel quadriduum deficientem animam sustentabat*). Chapter eleven is entirely dedicated to his diet as it evolved with age: whereas the food eaten changed slightly from decade to decade, his eating patterns kept the same. Small amounts of very frugal aliments kept on being his only sustainment. [col. 0032D–0033B]. The similarities with Germanus' are striking: first of all, both Constantius and Jerome are very detailed about the *type* and *quantity* of food assumed by the two saints. Both barley bread and dried figs are 'food for the poor', usually consumed by commoners and they were certainly not a delicacy. Both Germanus and Hilarion's diets are based on very small portions of such foods: one loaf of bread or five dried figs can hardly be considered a lucullian meal. Even when Hilarion changes, decade after decade, some of the aliments he eats (from dried figs to half a loaf of bread to some lentil soup), his diet remains greatly insufficient to be considered balanced or even healthy. In another interesting passage from the *Vita Pauli Primi Eremitae*, St Anthony and St Paul are delivered bread by a raven; Paul notices how the portion brought by the bird is twice as big as what he would usually eat by himself. Another sign, Paul says, of Christ's foresight. The amount Paul defines as his usual is *half a loaf of bread per day* [col. 0025B–0025C]: *inter has sermocinationes suspiciunt alitem corvum in ramo arboris consedissee, qui inde leniter subvolabat, et integrum panem ante ora mirantium deposuit; post cujus abscessum: Eia, inquit Paulus, Dominus nobis prandium misit, vere pius, vere misericors. Sexaginta jam anni sunt quod dimidii semper panis fragmentum accipio: verum ad adventum tuum, militibus suis Christus duplicavit annonam*).

Another astonishing parallel between Germanus and Hilarion's eating routines lies in the time of day the saints have their meals: Hilarion consumes his five figs *post solis*, Germanus indulges in his barley bread *numquam nisi vespere*. Both saints, then, usually take their meals during the evening, after the setting of the sun.

For the topic of food in particular relation with living in the wilderness, see David Grumett and Rachel Muers, "Eating in the Wilderness," *Theology on the Table: Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 1–16.

spirituality, Germanus' sacrifice of his own human needs becomes embodiment of a first step towards sanctity, and symbol of a man now touched by divine strength.<sup>89</sup>

In the text, though, this first step is not only represented by the nature of food, but also by its sheer absence. Fasting as an act of privation and control becomes, in the context of Germanus' life, yet another human act mirroring divine strength, and ultimately embodies another way Germanus uses to overpower his humanity. From a lexical point of view, the term *ieiunium* is conspicuously absent from both the RC and the VA, but it appears three times, unsurprisingly, in the VM.<sup>90</sup>

Constantius chooses the terms three times and hints at it in another two occasions.<sup>91</sup>

Fasting is mentioned for the first time in chapter three, interestingly enough not as a practice, but as a term of comparison for Germanus' harsh diet:

<sup>89</sup> Germanus' asceticism, from this point of view, embodies more closely examples of eastern hermits, rather than western monks, as the comparison between Jerome's text and Constantius' proves. It becomes even more clear when taking into account the sources about eating habits at both Marmoutier and Lérins (see footnotes 57 and 58).

<sup>90</sup> It is recorded for the first time in chapter nine, where Sulpicius Severus describes the life of Martin and his monks at Marmoutier. He says that all would take their meals together *post horam ieiunii*, "after the fast hour had passed" (VM 10, 120). This particular example differs from those of the VG chiefly because it refers to a communal practice within a *cenobium*, rather than underlining the peculiar and unique habit of the saint. The word is found a second time in VM 14, where he attempts to destroy a pagan temple in a small village named Leprosus: some of the locals, still believers in the old gods, reacted violently, forcing the saint to seek refuge in the vicinities, where for three days "*cilicio tectus et cinere, ieiunans semper atque orans, precabatur ad Dominum*," he prayed the Lord, always fasting while doing it, covered only with his *cilicium* and ashes (124). In this instance, Martin matches the perfect image of the ascetic holy man who, covered in nearly nothing, fasts and prays without respite; the association of fasting while praying as a reinforcement to the prayer itself was common in Judaism, and it is also a typical feature of ascetic practices. The Old Testament also proposes detailed accounts of when fasting is necessary or advisable. It was, in fact, such a common practice in Judaism it was considered a typically Semitic feature by the Romans (see Grimm, 28). In a Judaic context, fasting is referred mostly to as total abstinence from food, from dusk to dawn, as it is, for instance, for the practices related to the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29–31; 23–26; Num 29:7), as well as other passages (Deut 9:9; 9:15–18; Ex 34:28). Overall, fasting was a manifold ritual instrument in Judaism: it was used to gain the favours of God, to mourn, to enhance the power of prayers, in atonement of sins (Ex 8:21–23; Dn 9:3–5). Asceticism is clearly hinted at also by the semi nudity of the saint who, we have seen, is only clothed in a sackcloth and covered in ashes. *Ieiunium* appears one last time at the very end of the text in VM 26 (see footnote 65) where Sulpicius Severus, while summing up his experience with Martin, defines one more time the greatness and holiness of the saint, about whom nobody will ever fully be able to describe with merit *illam perseverantiam et temperamentum in abstinentia et in ieiuniis*, "such perseverance and strength when it came to abstinence and fasting" (125).

<sup>91</sup> Once, as I mentioned, in VG 3, once in VG 5 and another in VG 10.

And even though this food is considered more burdensome than hunger, it is not served until the evening, sometimes on the middle of the week, more often on the seventh day.<sup>92</sup>

Germanus' eating habits are compared to the hardness of a fast, and considered even worse. This is an idea pregnant with meaning, because it exalts the quasi supernatural willpower necessary to achieve such a level of commitment: the image created by the use of the adjective-noun locution *gravior ieunius* evokes the struggle of a man against the cravings and desires of his body: Germanus' choice of restriction, as opposed to complete renunciation of food, points to a much higher degree of dedication and sacrifice than may be assumed. At the same time, it seems to only reiterate the fact nutrition is no longer used to take care of the body, as any man would do, but to control it instead and, as a consequence, symbolically transcend it. He fights against his own humanity by means of what humbles him and makes him human: his hunger. And he dominates it. The other two instances of the word in the text only strengthen this image. In chapter ten, Germanus "had spent an entire day fasting and getting tired, when he realized he had to stop somewhere for the night";<sup>93</sup> later in the same chapter, fasting is hinted at again, although the word *ieiunium* is not used – the adjective *abstinente*<sup>94</sup> being preferred to it – only to be used again a few lines later:

a small number of his companions settle, to whom a brief, meager dinner was offered, with the bishop entirely abstaining. Then, in the deep of night, when one of the brothers had taken up the duty of reading, Germanus, exhausted by fasting and conversation, is overcome by sleep.

Food, its intake and its deprivation are a metaphor used by Constantius to symbolically describe Germanus' renunciation of his humanity: if the last, clipped lines of chapter two had already presented some of the material act that such a step involved, it is with the attentive description of Germanus' relation with food that the author truly

<sup>92</sup> VG 3, 252: *Et cum hic cibus gravior ieuniis iudicetur, numquam nisi vespere, interdum tamen in ebdomada media, plerumque die septimo ponebatur.*

<sup>93</sup> VG 10, 257–8: *Quodam tempore, cum iter hieme ageret ac die totam in ieiunio ac fatigatione duxisset (...)*

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.: (...) *quibus brevis cenula esui fuit, episcopo penitus abstinate. Deinde, alta iam nocte, cum unus ex clericis legend suscepisset officium, ille, ieiunio et fatigatione confectus, sopore superatus est.*

emphasises the deep change the Auxerrois underwent. Food is not simply a way to control the body's needs and requirements, nor a manner to punish it: food is a human need, which has been turned into a symbol of beyond-human strength and goodness, it is, in other words, the symbol itself of the transformation of Germanus from man to saint.

### 3.5 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the second chapter of the VG, and its comparison with relevant passages in other *vitae*, showed the peculiarity of Germanus' spiritual calling. In striking contrast to the lives of Martin of Tours, Hilarion of Syria, and Amator of Auxerre, sanctity arrived not only relatively late in life, but also under forcible circumstances. This characteristic is used by Constantius to underline Germanus' humanity, which is portrayed with strength and emphasised by the use of powerful military metaphors and language. Chapter three of the VG presents a detailed description of Germanus' dietary habits, which appeared to be related to the moment of his spiritual epiphany, because it is through food and renunciation that the saint established, for the first time, complete control over his body and, therefore, over his own humanity, permitting the spiritual to take over. These chapters, I argued in the previous pages, should be read as the beginning of Germanus' journey to sanctity and represent the starting point of the narrative of his sanctification.

This has been largely shown by a close reading of the text and its comparison to other relevant works of literature and theology: the comparison of the use of military metaphors and language in the VG to other relevant texts has shown how Germanus, more than other saints, has been literarily defined by his martial attitude towards life and, indeed, his martial behaviour. It is with military determination he opposes his election to bishop; it is with warlike violence he reacts against it and, as it will be largely discussed in the next chapter, it will be with the power and charisma of a military leader Germanus will, in fact, produce adamant spiritual results. Military language is also used to describe, with the use of a powerful metaphor, the moment of his epiphany, when he

“abandons the army of Earth and joins that of Heaven.” If read in this light, military language and, indeed, Germanus’ martial attitude in some of the most crucial moments of his existence, can only be seen as an essential part of the text and of Germanus’ character, in particular when it comes to his description as a man— as demonstrated by the events of chapter two— but also in pivotal moments of his spiritual life, such as that of his epiphany, as I mentioned only a few lines above, and of two very striking, very defining miracles, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Food is the second relevant theme the previous pages introduced: chapter three is a full description of Germanus’ new approach to nutrition, an approach that places him close to the ideals and behaviours of early hermits, as described in the hagiographies of Martin and Hilarion, but also to the reality of early monastic communities such as Lérins and Tours, of which he must have been aware. It is not, though, the historical side of Germanus’ ascetic attitude towards food I looked at, but rather the reasons behind the weight given to such attitude by Constantius. Germanus’ refusal of food has been described by the author with words and expressions belonging to the semantic fields of violence and self punishment, a fact which seems to point at the author’s will to highlight the saint’s early renunciation of bodily pleasures— a fact already hinted at in the last lines of chapter two— not only as a way to embrace ascetic life, but also, and importantly, as a way to control and overcome the body itself. If read this way, chapter three and its detailed account of Germanus’ strict routine of frugal foods and fasting does not simply emphasize his super-human will power, but also represents his necessity to fight and victoriously overcome the needs of the body and, by extension, the needs of his human self.

It seems evident that Constantius’ interest in Germanus’ diet— an interest quite unparalleled in the other texts of the corpus, except the VH, which, though, belongs to a different context— should be read, especially when found so early in the text, as a symbol of the Auxerrois’ fight against his humanity, and a sign of his efforts to fully embrace spirituality. In other words, Constantius’ early description in the text of his

protagonist's diet is, just as military references were in chapter two, a way to, at once, underline Germanus' humanity and his choice to abandon it, to transcend it.

Chapter two and three of the VG appear to be, after the analysis of their narrative, lexicon and main themes, part of a formative hagiography, where their role is that of hinting at the protagonist's life before his spiritual epiphany and bear witness to the first moments after it. They also provide a first look into the new Germanus, and into his own manner to push the boundaries between human and spiritual, man and saint: they mirror, it can truly be said, the beginning of Germanus' journey to holiness.

**CHAPTER FOUR****HOLY ACTS AND HUMAN CHARACTER:  
CONSTRUCTING THE SAINT****4.1 INTRODUCTION**

As the previous pages have sketched out, the VG is not a mere recollection of miracles, nor it seems to stress only and exclusively Germanus life's events: the text describes in great detail the spiritual path of a man from its very humble and mundane beginning to its apogee, represented by his full beatification, shown in the text by the last, astonishing miracles performed both as a living and a dead person.<sup>1</sup>

“Deconstructing the Man” discussed how Constantius introduced the figure of Germanus in the narrative by focusing on the events of VG 2 and VG 3. The Auxerrois came across as a peculiar figure, very pragmatic and deeply rooted in his own humanity: this differentiates him greatly from other literary saints, whose hagiographies are roughly coeval to Constantius’ work, who are all, on the other hand, very aware of their own spirituality since an early age, and whose sanctity does not need to be discussed or proven in the narrative.

Germanus was truly different: chapter two showed the audience a man, rather than a saint, battling with the strength of a leader against his rise to a position he did not wish to take, not for that constructive sense of humility typical of saints’ biographies, and which characterised other writings, but rather for what seems a true, forceful reaction against an unwanted duty. Everything changes, though, after his epiphany: albeit not expressed openly, its power cannot be overlooked, as it is from that moment Germanus begins his journey to holiness. If strength, expressed linguistically with military language and metaphors, defined the “human” Germanus when fighting against episcopal election, it was, again, strength, that defined the first steps of his sanctification, when he used it to renounce to food and, by extension, to the carnal, physical pleasures of mundanity. The discussion elaborated in

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<sup>1</sup> “Germanus’ Holiness Revealed”



“Deconstructing the Man” identified Germanus’ renunciation of proper nutrition as a sign of willpower and of the epiphanic change he underwent. It also highlighted the importance of food as one of the recurring themes through which the holy journey of the Auxerrois becomes clear. Moreover, food, as a symbol of a very basic, human need, delineated at once Germanus’ humanity— still echoing in the audience’s mind after the events of chapter two— and his fight against it, embodied by his abstinence.

This chapter will focus on that moment in Germanus’ life Dante would aptly define *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, “in the middle of our life’s journey”: Germanus advances towards holiness and, albeit that spiritual progress has been made since his election to the see of Auxerre, there is still many a mile to walk before embracing true sainthood. In the next pages, I will argue the spiritual progress made by Germanus is revealed in the narrative by how miracles<sup>2</sup> are performed: their rituality will be analysed to show how strongly it resembles that of medical and, indeed, liturgical practices. This is the part of Germanus’ voyage to sainthood where holiness and humanity still cohabit, the moment in the saint’s life where a glimpse of material reality can still be witnessed in his actions, a reality represented both by the objects and the substances with which he chooses to perform miracles, and the rituality associated with the miraculous practice itself.

The themes of food and war will return as leading narrative and inter-textual

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<sup>2</sup> The topic of miracles and their presence in hagiographical texts is complex and profoundly touches both theological and social aspects of late antique life. For a discussion of the theological approach of the early Church Fathers to the idea of miracle and the figure of the “miracle worker,” see Cracco Ruggini, 173-181. The article also offers a comparison between pagan and Christian “miracle worker,” as well as a historical background to their presence in late antique society. Van Uyftanghe addresses the historicity of the miracle worker, as well as his/her theological position in “La Controverse biblique et patristique autour du miracle, et ses répercussions sur l’hagiographie dans l’Antiquité Tardive et le Haut Moyen Âge Latin,” in *Hagiographie, culture et société*. His piece completes excellently Cracco Ruggini’s, as it determines and discusses the link between biblical literature and the narrative of miracles in late antique and early medieval literature. See also William M. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1994), 78-104, for a discussion on the early medieval perception of biblical and coeval miracles. The discussion provided by Ward in “Miracles and History: A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede,” in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*,” Gerald Bonner, ed. (London: SPCK, 1976), 70-77. It is, again, Benedicta Ward who discusses in depth the theoretical and theological value of miracles in the Middle Ages in *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Records and Events 1000-1215* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1987). Although the author’s focus is on a later period, the general considerations about the nature of miracles and how they may have been perceived by those who recounted them is valid for earlier centuries, too. For theology centred interpretation of the miraculous, see Michael E. Goodlich, *Miracles and Wonders: The Development of the Concept of Miracle, 1150-1350* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), especially the introductory chapter, 8-28. The volume *Signs of Sanctity: Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great* (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1989) by McCready, is probably the most exhaustive compendium on the subject.

forces. Food, thanks to the use of bread and oil in the miracle of chapter twenty-nine, and the symbolism of cereals in chapter eleven; war in the episodes of chapters seventeen and eighteen, and twenty-eight, where Germanus appears strong, confident and at ease in the role of military leader and manages to obtain, through it, miraculous results.

The topic and practice of medicine<sup>3</sup> and liturgy will be recognised as the third, fundamental motif of the text, as they appear to be the inspiration behind the very rituals used by Germanus to perform the miracles analysed. Oil, a reliquary, bread and cereals will all be miraculous instruments for events strongly reminiscent of a doctor's—or priest's—actions and, as a consequence, will assert Germanus' ongoing spiritual transformation. His miracles, as Van Egmond pointed out,<sup>4</sup> are part of an evolution which is visible and tangible within the text, an evolution which is the core of the argument of this thesis, and to which this chapter is dedicated.

#### 4.2 THE INSTRUMENTS OF HOLINESS

After the epiphany experienced, and the embracing of an ascetic way of life, Germanus was ready to begin his adventure as a miracle worker.<sup>5</sup> This is well defined by Cracco Ruggini, who writes that “the real *θεῖνι ἄνδρες* were those who had freed their own soul from all carnal slavery, by breaking with their mundane way of living (often economically and social outstanding), embraced periods of long ascesis and lived in daily communion with the divine. By doing so, their own very nature had become holy.”<sup>6</sup> According to this definition, Germanus had, by the end of the first part of the VG, all the prerequisites to be a bona fide miracle worker. Truth

<sup>3</sup> Healings could have also a social value, as explained Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles*, 86-94. The healing performed by the saint did not only “cure” the soul and the body, but also reintroduced in the community a person who had been implicitly ostracized. As, in early Christianity, illness was often considered a sign of spiritual corruption, the healing of the body by the hand of a saint automatically delivered spiritual wellness and, as a consequence, social acceptance. The social power of healing in the early centuries of the Church is also tackled by Amanda Porterfield in the first and second chapters of *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), where she tackles the potential role in the growth of Christianity of healing.

<sup>4</sup> “Introduction,” footnote 17.

<sup>5</sup> For the figure of the miracle worker in a Gallic context, see the already cited article “Érmites et ascètes à la fin de l'Antiquité Tardive et leur fonction dans la société rurale. L'exemple de la Gaule,” by Christine Delaplace.

<sup>6</sup> Cracco Ruggini, 176: *autentici θεῖνι ἄνδρες vennero considerati coloro che, avendo liberato la propria anima da ogni servitù carnale attraverso la rottura con il loro ambiente (spesso economicamente e socialmente qualificato), la prolungata ascesi, e il contatto diuturno con il divino, erano riusciti ad acquistare una sorta di natura divina.*

is, however, that miracles were not always seen in a positive light, as explained by Cracco Ruggini herself, Van Uyftanghe,<sup>7</sup> and McCready in his magisterial work on miracles and their reception in Bede's hagiographical texts.<sup>8</sup> Some of McCready's considerations, in particular, seem to support the reading I suggest of Germanus' miraculous actions in the central part of the text: Bede "was prone to perceive the world through theological lenses, to see divine presence as much as, if not more, the natural process."<sup>9</sup> This was the result of a lack of temporal contextualisation of both his own time and that when the miracles narrated in the Bible should have taken place. Because biblical miracles were considered a reality and not necessarily as an allegorical representation, and no socio-cultural difference was perceived between the past and the present, Bede, as many others during his own time, would have considered preternatural events acceptable even without scientific explanation. Bede never engaged in any sort of ontological defence of miracles, but accepted them as facts.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, his view of miraculous actions was, McCready says, mostly spiritual: in other words, Bede believed miracles truly happened *within* the soul, rather than on a physical level. This particularity seems to leave ultimately open the debate on whether Bede –and hagiographers in general– truly believed in the physical aspect of miracles or not.<sup>11</sup> In any way, "miracle stories are not the prerequisite of the simple minded and uneducated; they are there in the writings of some of the most sophisticated men of the Middle Ages," as reiterated by Benedicta Ward<sup>12</sup> and discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation.<sup>13</sup> Although fascinating, this is not of primary interest in the development of my argument: whether Constantius believed the physical results of Germanus' miracles were supernatural is not essential to explain the narrative relevance of the episodes themselves; nor is it to support or impair their interpretation as milestones on Germanus' path to sainthood. What is, on the other hand, critical, is the idea that

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2.

<sup>8</sup> McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, 9-43.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-123.

<sup>12</sup> "Miracles and History," 70.

<sup>13</sup> 2.3.2 History and Miracles.

what is described narratively as a miracle is a sign of the spiritual superiority – and consequently closeness to God – of the saint.

In this light, the level of rituality<sup>14</sup> of each of a saint's miracle may be seen as mirror of his or her proximity to the divine.<sup>15</sup> In the case of Germanus, as I will explain in the next pages, rituality symbolises both awareness of his own holiness and, most relevantly, his gradual rising to spiritual perfection.<sup>16</sup> If extrapolated from the hagiographical context to which they belong, the miracles at the core of this chapter could be read as an act of medical or religious practice, an act carried out by men, no matter how close to their spirituality they may be. The next pages will propose an interpretation of those miracles that more closely resemble mundane actions: this is the case of chapters eight, fifteen and twenty-nine, where medicine becomes the leading narrative theme of the events, along with spiritual power and the use of objects and food to perform the miracles themselves. In chapter twenty-nine, a second, very strong source to Germanus' actions is found in the early sacramental liturgies of Baptism and Eucharist: human practices again, albeit tightly linked to religion.

Words, as well as themes, will help interpreting these miracles. Oil (*oleum*) will be essential in those of chapters eight and twenty-nine; bread (*panis*) will also be relevant for a liturgical reading of the same passage; wheat (*triticum*), so closely associated to bread, will be the protagonist of the rural healing of chapter eleven, whereas it will be an entirely different type of object, a *capsula*, a small reliquary, to help Germanus deliver the healing of chapter fifteen. The same can be said about chapters eighteen and nineteen, as well as twenty-eight, where military metaphors and language are used to represent a feisty, driven Germanus, who takes the lead of an army first (chapters eighteen and nineteen) and sets up a personal, verbal battle with Gochar, the *rex ferocissimus*<sup>17</sup> of the Alans (chapter twenty-eight). Both events could be extracted from the hagiographical narrative of the VG and inserted in a

<sup>14</sup> For examples of rituals and rituality in a late antique and medieval context see Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) and "Martyre et ritualité dans l'Antiquité Tardive: horizons de l'écriture médiévale des rituels," *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales* 52e Année, no. 1 (February 1997), 63–92.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 105-123.

<sup>16</sup> Eby and McCready, 124-130.

<sup>17</sup> VG 29, 272.

military text, creating very little doubts about their appropriateness. The overt spirituality of the results of his actions, though, seems to address the idea of transition, and the moment of passage from one state –the human– to another– the holy– that is typical of the other examples analysed in this chapter.

The study of the narrative and semantic aspects of these episodes will endorse an interpretation that strongly affirms the duality of Germanus' actions, miraculous because of what the text says, but closely linked to practical reality by what it implies. I will argue that, when it comes to their ritual aspect, all the episodes follow an adamantly medical imprint, – along with the liturgical, in chapter twenty-nine– used by Constantius to express the idea of Germanus' conversion from man to holy man taking place. It is, indeed, the *becoming* of Germanus that will be emphasised by the readings of the text I am about to propose, a *becoming* that represents the central moment in the tale of his sanctification.

#### 4.2.1 OIL AND THE HEALING OF THE *TUMEFACIA INFIRMITAS*

Oil appears three times in the VG, twice in association with healings and once with the acquiescence of the sea: the very diffusion of the term, when considering a late fourth- and fifth-century hagiographical context, is already notable: of the three Gallic hagiographical texts in the corpus, only the VA describes a miracle carried out with blessed oil as an adjuvant: “then finally, he blessed the oil he received and, once he invoked the name of the Lord, he anointed their bodies: immediately that spirit of wickedness is chased away (...).”<sup>18</sup> The episode is very reminiscent of that described in VG 29, but is the only one involving oil in the text. Neither the RC, nor the VM relate of miracles or liturgical practices involving the use of oil. The VG presents a far richer set of examples: the first episode involving oil occurs early in the text, in VG 8, where evil spirits, who unsuccessfully tried to trick Germanus into temptation, but found him protected by “an armour of faith,”<sup>19</sup> decide to attack his flock instead by making them sick. It is interesting to point out that, in early Gallic hagiography,

<sup>18</sup> VA 12, 144: *tunc demum accepto oleo benedixit, et invocato nomine Domini corpora eorum perunxit. Et continuo ab illo spiritus nequitiae est fugatus (...).*

<sup>19</sup> VG 8, 256.

both illness and madness were often associated with the work of the devil,<sup>20</sup> and treated as an exorcism.<sup>21</sup> Let us go back to Germanus and oil, though: the bishop is surrounded by the sick and the dying, so he takes some oil, blesses it and gives it as a holy medicament to a large amount of people suffering from the mysterious, deteriorating disease:

For first the children, then the adults died suddenly with the inside of their throats swollen, so that death arrived after the sickness had lasted scarcely three days. People were killed as if by a furious sword.<sup>22</sup>

When no remedy for the violent illness is found, people seek the help of their bishop, Germanus:

at once he blessed some oil, at whose touch the internal swelling sickness so dissolved that immediately the passageway was opened and furnished both the breath and the nourishment that had been lacking. And the cure helped with as much celestial speed as the inflicted curse would attack.”

*Qui protinus oleum benedixit, cuius tactu ita intrinsecus tumefacta tabescebat infirmitas, ut statis meatus pervius et anhelitum et cibum deficientibus ministraret, tantaque celeritate remedium caeleste succurrit, quanta inruerat inlata perniciēs (...).*<sup>23</sup>

The only direct, attributive reference to the accusative *oleum* is in the verb *benedico*: Germanus *blesses* the oil, which gains, thanks to his actions, its thaumaturgic significance both in practice and in a literary sense. The context helps to acquire more details about the narrative and the semantic characteristic of *oleum*: it is by describing how the blessed oil works – *tactu ita intrinsecus*– and the consequences of such “inner contact” – *tumefacta tabescebat infirmitas* – that Constantius informs the reader about its characteristics. The oil is *benedictum*, (blessed) and *infirmitas tabescit* (it melts away disease) by, as I said, *tactus intrinsecus*. Another quality, beside its blessedness, becomes palpable: the oil is

<sup>20</sup> Picard, “The Marvellous in Saints’ Lives,” 93-94.

<sup>21</sup> See, for instance, the episode of VG 22 where what seems an epileptic attack or a moment of madness is treated with straw upon which Germanus had slept. Nancy Caciola provides a complete discussion on demonic (and, in fact, divine) possession in the Middle Ages in *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> VG 8, 256: *Nam primum parvuli, deinde maiores natu repente, tumefactis intrinsecus faucibus, interibant, ut, inruente morte, aegritudinis spatium vix triduo traheretur. Ita more furentis gladii populus debebatur.*

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

curative, it is a medicine. This twofold value of *oleum* and, consequently, of the whole miracle, is emphasised by the choice of the term *infirmitas*: while, in its broader sense, it refers to physical weakness or an actual sickness, the word also mirrors, since the earliest times of Classical literature, the idea of moral weakness. The multi layered meaning of the term *infirmitas* fits perfectly the context of this episode: by choosing a term which at once refers to moral and physical illness, Constantius immediately makes clear that the deadly disease Germanus is called to cure is both physical *and* spiritual. It is, indeed, both the souls and the bodies of his brethren he heals, a fact that brings about strongly the duality of Germanus, who is able to cure as a doctor *and* as a holy man: the spiritual danger imposed by the *infirmitas* goes hand in hand with the physical illness, because the pain experienced in the body could very easily be a synonym of spiritual unrest.

A look at the exorcisms<sup>24</sup> carried out by Germanus will elucidate this point: the three individuals Germanus exorcizes in the text could be described, on the basis of their characteristics, as being suffering from a disease. The possessed is usually unable to control himself physically, an aspect rendered by the act of screaming wildly: in all three cases of demonic possession successfully cured by Germanus' intercession, screaming is a major feature of the spiritually ill:

(...) the church (is) filled with his screams (...) and, almost surrounded by flames, *he loudly speaks the name* of the bishop.<sup>25</sup>

She (Nectariola) offered the (previously) hidden straw, with which the raging man is covered and restrained. For an entire night Agrestius, almost as if surrounded by close fire, *called the name* of the prelate.<sup>26</sup>

(...) a prisoner of the enemy (*possessed*), *proclaims in an immoderately loud voice*. (...) <sup>27</sup>

Pain, distress, sorrow, as well as sentiments ranking on the opposite side of

<sup>24</sup> Although mostly focusing on later centuries, Nancy Caciola's work *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003) provides an in depth study of the phenomenon of demonic and divine possessions, contextualized in their social and historical background.

<sup>25</sup> VG 7, 255-6: (...) *ecclesia eius clamore completur*, (...) *et quasi flammis circumdatus, cum voce maxima nomen sacerdotis invocat*.

<sup>26</sup> VG 22, 267: *Stramen conditum profert, quo furiosus circumdatus colligatur. Qui spatium noctis unius quasi adposito vallatus incendio, inclamato semper nomine sacerdotis*.

<sup>27</sup> VG 32, 274-5: (...) *captivus inimici, cum ingenti vociferatione* (...).

human emotional scale – happiness or joy – are naturally and humanly expressed by a cry or a rising in the tone of voice: in the three exorcism rituals described by Constantius, the possessed cries. Such cries, I believe, are to be associated with the moral and spiritual pain caused by the demonic threat within the soul of a Christian. Moral danger is somatised and becomes physical pain expressed by the act of screaming. This link between moral pain and physical disease seems to justify the use of the term *infirmetas*, which becomes synonymous, in the text, with physical illness and moral inadequacy at once.

It seems clear the physical and the spiritual run side by side in the interpretation of this miracle, just as they do in the narrative of the way it is performed, a factor highlighted particularly by the use of a substance, oil, which is not only “holy”, but also very practical: it is taken internally by the sick, an action that quite naturally brings to mind the idea of medicine. While in *De Medicina* Celsus does not recount of any curative instance where oil is used internally, there are examples of this kind the anonymous *Medicina Plinii*, where oil is used to protect the teeth and cure sore throats.<sup>28</sup> In this latter example, reproduced almost verbatim by Marcellus Empiricus in *De Medicamentis*,<sup>29</sup> oil was boiled with other substances and used to gargle. This late antique text proposes other examples where oil is ingested, especially to cure ailments of the digestive system.<sup>30</sup> Gargyl Martial also suggests to use oil infused with roots to kill intestinal worms.<sup>31</sup>

It appears obvious not only that the *application* of ointments made up chiefly with olive and other essential medical oils, but also the ingestion of oil, were paramount medical practices.<sup>32</sup> It is by an *internal application* of the oil he had previously blessed that Germanus delivers the miracle: the expression *tactu*

<sup>28</sup> See for instance book 1, chapter 5, 16: *habere debet in ore oleum is qui curabitur donec siccescat ovum, ne ei dentes denigrescant*; book 1, chapter 16, 30: *lini semen et anethum in oleo et aqua decoctum imponitur et acetum gargarizatur*; book 2, chapter 8, 50: *in olei cyathis sex ruta decoquitur id que oleum bibitur*;

<sup>29</sup> Marcellus Empiricus, *De Medicamentis*, chapter 15 (page 114): *lini semen et anethum, cum sale et oleo et aceto decoctum bene contra faucium dolores gargarizabitur*.

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, chapter 20, 165: *ad stomachi dolorem arcendum cymas senapis viridis ex aqua diligenter coques in illa nova eas que conditas oleo et liquamine manducabis*. Chapter 23, 183: *herbam urceolarem in aqua decoctam da lienoso cum oleo et liquamine manducandam*.

<sup>31</sup> *Medicinae ex Oleribus et Pomis*, chapter 3, 137: *ad lumbricos necandos utile est oleum bibisse cui ruta incocta est*.

<sup>32</sup> See also Celsus, Book 1-3, 29-144.



*intrinsecus* reverberates with the image of a factual, manual application of the holy oil within the body, just like a medical oil is manually applied, one may say, by *tactu externus*, to the wounded part; so, the description of the disease, with its demonic origin, and the direct mention to Germanus, who “protinus *oleum benedixit*,” both belong, conceptually and lexically, to the realm of Christianity and spirituality, but the use of oil as a means of medication, is Roman and practical in its essence. The spiritual and the practical are clearly represented in the miracle, and they perfectly embody the dual position of Germanus in this part of the narrative.

#### 4.2.2 THE *TRITICUM* AND THE SINGING COCKERELS

Another example of the duality between human and holy is represented by the miracle described in VG 11 where Germanus returns the faculty of singing to muted cockerels; *triticum* is given to them as feed, in an episode which appears to be yet another example of Germanus’ duplicity in nature. The miracle is, in factual means, a type of healing aided by the use of a cereal –a natural, material substance– characterised by blessing – human as an action, spiritual in its meaning. It also seems that the rituality associated with the act of blessing (usually the sign of the cross, or the uttering of a prayer) is more representative of Germanus as a priest than a saint: Germanus blesses because his pastoral role allows, almost requires, him to do so, and the act of blessing only emphasises his position of instrument of communication between Man and the Holy: this is indeed, for those who believe, the very essence of a priest’s position in the community.

The events of VG 11 are very simple: Germanus finds himself in a village where all cockerels had stopped singing. When informed about it, he (...) *acceptum enim triticum benedictione condivit*,<sup>33</sup> “(...) after taking grain, he bestowed a blessing on it and fed it to them.”<sup>34</sup> The miracle presents interesting theological reverberations: the lack of voice of the animals can be compared to Mankind’s potential lack of knowledge of the Word of God, emblematically represented by the faculty of singing. The grain, literally, is “seasoned with a blessing” by the saint, and

<sup>33</sup> VG 11, 258-9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

gains the power of delivering voice back to the cockerels: in his translation of the Hebrew Psalms, as read in the *Vulgata*, Jerome says *et pluit super eos mannam ut comederent et triticum caeli dedit eis*,<sup>35</sup> where *triticum* becomes symbol of the *verbum Dei*. This is given to those who do not know it – hence *cannot speak* or make a sound, just like Germanus’ cockerels– so that they may become participants to the Word of God.

Albeit interesting, a theological reading of the passage is not the most significant within the context of this dissertation; it is, on the other hand, the very wording of the passage one must focus on, to understand how Germanus’ actions are both human and holy nature. The grain is “seasoned with a blessing” by the saint, and gains the power of delivering voices back to the cockerels: the very idea of “seasoning” refers so strongly to that of food and cooking one could almost use the verb itself as a symbol of humanity. Constantius’ choice of the verb, in association with the act of blessing, which is, as I mentioned above, very factual as an action, but profoundly spiritual in its essence, could be almost seen as a semantic duality, used to symbolize Germanus’ own duality in the text. Moreover, it seems the animals are “cured” of whichever disease they suffered; cured by *triticum*, wheat, blessed by Germanus. A parallel could be drawn between the “healing” of the cockerels’ throat and the use of cereals–barley– to cure human sore throats in Celsus,<sup>36</sup> but the similarity between the miracle and, if not a direct healing procedure, at least a medical context, is even clearer when considering the medical use of cereals when used as food and the special relevance given to *triticum* as the more nutritious, hence perfect for the convalescent.<sup>37</sup> Again, Germanus seems to be as much as a healer as he is a saint.

<sup>35</sup> Liber Psalmorum Iuxta Hebraicum, Ps 77:24: “and manna rains on them, so that they can eat. He gave them the wheat of Heaven.

<sup>36</sup> Celsus, book 4, 9.3 (161): *Cibi vero esse debent neque nimium acres neque asperi, mel, lenticula, tragum, lac, tisana, pinguis caro, praeciqueque porrum et quicquid cum hoc mixtum est.* “Foods, also, should be neither very bitter, nor coarse: honey, lentils, wheat porridge, milk, pearl barley gruel, fat meat and especially a leek decoction and anything mixed with it.” The presence of the word in a medical context is absent from the anonymous *Medicina Plinii* (including Gargyl Martial’s appendix), and appears only four times, and always in association with *farina* or *pollenis* –flour or powder– in Marcellus Empiricus. (See *De Medicamentis*, chapter 14, 108; chapter 30, 239; chapter 31, 248; chapter 36, 278).

<sup>37</sup> Celsus, book 4, 9.3, 161.

### 4.2.3 THE DOCTOR, THE PRIEST AND HOLY OIL

Chronologically, the last healing miracle performed with the help of an object is carried out by Germanus on his way to Ravenna, and described in VG 29. Bread and oil appear within the same narrative, and refer to a miracle with both medical and liturgical connotations. Germanus cures a mute girl by means of a blessing with oil, the imposition of his hands and, later, the consumption of blessed food the girl is asked to ingest. The first half of the miracle is thus described: *a quo illi annorum XX circiter muta offertur puella, cuius os, frontem vultumque totum cum olei adtrectatione benedixit*.<sup>38</sup> This instance is strictly linked to the first episode where holy oil is presented: just as in VG 8, the clearly Christian choice of oil as a holy instrument for the delivery of a miraculous deed binds unequivocally with its medical and curative side. It seems obvious that *oleum* as a signifier represents two distinct metonymic signified, (beside the literal value of oil as a substance), one miraculous, the other practical. If the first is indicated by a context, which is strongly reminiscent of baptismal practices, as well as by the main verb *benedico*, the second is embodied by the ablative *adtrectatione*, by touch, and synonym of that *tactu* used in the healing of VG 8. The practice followed by Germanus himself to deliver the blessing also mirrors closely baptismal rituals. Even though baptism, as the sacrament cleansing a Christian of his or her original sin, is powerfully spiritual in his essence, the *act* in itself, is very mundane, carried out by a priest: a man of God, certainly, but not necessarily a saint. Liturgy is as practical as medicine is: it just cares for different aspects of an individual's needs. Medicine cures a sick body through substances, liturgy, as the series of rules and actions to be followed to bring and confirm the individual within the Christian spiritual community, does the same—to a believer—for the soul. This means, then, that Germanus relies on practical means twice as much in the miracle of chapter twenty-nine, a fact which stresses even more Constantius' will to present the saint's dual nature of man and holy man, a dual nature still visible in this particular moment of his life.

By associating the miraculous actions of Germanus to human practices, Constantius reiterates how the saint has been progressing towards holiness, but also

<sup>38</sup> VG 29, 272-3: And he is shown by him a mute girl of about twenty years, whose mouth, forehead, and entire face he blessed by touching with oil.

glances inside a time in Germanus' life when the human still defined him. Let us take a step back, then, to understand how medicine and liturgy have been used in the text to draw attention to Germanus' duality, first by taking a glimpse into the world of early liturgy, and delineate where and how its practices may have influenced Constantius' writing, then by comparing the healing described in chapter twenty-nine. Then, by relying again on Roman medical treatises to compare the same episode to relevant practices still in use during Constantius and Germanus' times.

Interestingly, parallels are not only clearly visible between the VG and both medical and liturgical examples, but also between medical and liturgical texts.

Ambrose's works on the sacraments, namely *De Sacramentis* and *De Mysteriis*<sup>39</sup> are the most relevant liturgical texts to which to compare the episodes of VG 29.<sup>40</sup> Many references in Ambrose tie back to the earlier Hyppolitus' *Tradition*; a parallel reading of the description of the baptismal rite in both texts and the first part

<sup>39</sup> *Explicatio Symboli, De Sacramentis, De Mysteriis, De Paenitentia, De Excessu Fratris Satyri, De Obitu Valentiniani, De Obitu Theodosii*, O. Faller ed., CSEL 73 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1955).

<sup>40</sup> For more on liturgical History, see: Thomas J. Heffernan, Ann E. Thomas J., Matter, E. Ann, ed. *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2001); L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution. A Study of the Latin Liturgy up to the Time of Charlemagne*, M.L. McClure, trans. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1910); D.D. Shrawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy* (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1913); F.E. Warren, *The Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1897); G.G. Willis, *A History of Early Roman Liturgy* (London: Boydell Press for the Henry Bradshaw Society, 1994). Liturgy in the fifth century was not a simple and unified matter: the Roman rite which was to become a coalesced, official liturgical form during the Carolingian reform of the eighth and ninth century was only one of several different practices. The Roman, Ambrosian, Gallican and Mozarabic were respectively associated with central Italy, the north, modern day France and northern Spain, although none of them was homogeneously used by all dioceses or geographical areas and mutual points of practical agreement were present. To complicate further the process of analysis, the earliest examples of extant Gallican Liturgy –to which, at least for geographical reasons, one should refer when discussing matters pertaining the diocese of Auxerre– belongs to the seventh and eighth century, dramatically later than Germanus and Constantius' lifetime. To approach the rites with which both author and protagonist may have been more familiar, two separate analytic patterns could be followed: one strictly geographical; one historico-temporal. The first would involve the study of the later text of the liturgy associated with Gaul; the second, that of forms of liturgy dating back to the fourth and fifth century, hence roughly contemporary with Germanus and his biographer. I chose the second pattern, as for practices as quickly evolving as the liturgical, two hundred years of changes, albeit small, could falsify the comparison between liturgy in the narrative and liturgy in history; consequently, I sought texts composed during the late fourth and the fifth century, that possibly came to life in a rather circumscribed area around modern France. The search was a success, as it encountered the charisma and dogmatic weight of St Ambrose of Milan, father of the Ambrosian rite. Moreover, it appears that Gallican and Ambrosian rites may have originated one from the other (See Duchesne for this theory, 86-106) and the geographical proximity of Milan to Gaul, along with the propelling power of a figure like Ambrose (on the similarities between Gallic and Italian churches in Late Antiquity see also Bartlett, 201-216) makes it plausible for Germanus and Constantius to have been, if not practicing the same rituals as those described by Ambrose, at least to have been acquainted with them –see Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship* (London: SPCK, 1992), 161-84.

of the miracle in VG 29 will show the similarities among them:

*Senator annorum xx muta offertur puella, cuius os, frontem vultumque aquo illi totum cum olei adtrectatione [Germanus] benedixit.*<sup>41</sup>

(...) And, laying his hand upon them, [the priest] shall exorcise all evil spirits to flee away and never to return; when he has done this he shall breathe in their faces, seal their foreheads, ears and noses and then rise them up.<sup>42</sup>

*Accipis (autem) myrum, hoc est, unguentum supra caput.*<sup>43</sup>

Even more interestingly, all passages are mirrors to medical practices, as described by Celsus, Marcellus Empiricus and the anonymous author of the *Medicina Plinii*:

*(...) aut prius fovere, deinde radere, et iterum fovere; ac novissime rosa caput naresque implere.*<sup>44</sup>

*Ad capitis dolorem folia lauri vel bacas vel florem tenere oportet cum aceto et irinum oleum illic admiscere atque ita caput nares que perungere.*<sup>45</sup>

*(...) aiunt oculos infantium caesiorum ad colorem nigrum posse revocari, si adustae cum oleo conterantur et ex eo cerebrum adsidue perungatur.*<sup>46</sup>

The word *oleum* is implied by Celsus in relation to *rosa*: this can be easily demonstrated by the large use of rose oil throughout *De Medicina* as a curative ailment. *Oleum* is clearly defined in the examples presented by Marcellus Empiricus and Gargyl Martial. But what is of higher relevance is the striking similarity between the actions described especially by Celsus and Marcellus Empiricus (*caput naresque implere* and *caput nares que perungere*) and the description of baptismal

<sup>41</sup> VG 29, 272-3.

<sup>42</sup> Gregory Dix and Henry Chadwick, ed. *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St Hyppolitus Bishop and Martyr* (New York: Routledge, 1992), part 2, 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> Ambrose, "De Sacramentis," III.1 (37): on the other hand, you receive *myrum*, which is oil, onto the head.

<sup>44</sup> Celsus, Book 3, 18.8 (123-4): (...) first to foment, then to shave, and to foment once again; and lastly to pour rose oil over the head and into the nostrils.

<sup>45</sup> Marcellus Empiricus, chapter 1, 30: it is necessary to mix laurel leaves, berries or flower with vinegar and iris oil, then keep (the concoction) onto the painful part of the head, so that both head and nostrils can be covered with it.

<sup>46</sup> Gargyl Martial, chapter 54, 202: It is said the grey eyes of children can be turned to a darker color if the top of the head is continuously anointed with coals ground in oil.

practices in Liturgy. Both Hyppolitus and Ambrose stress how the anointment has to be done on the forehead and, in Hyppolitus' case, also on the ears and nose. Germanus' anointing of the mouth, forehead and face, fictionally synthesises both medical and liturgical uses of *oleum*. At least in the instances described by Constantius, medicine and spirit are both part of the broader idea of healing. The example proposed by Constantius in chapter twenty-nine<sup>47</sup> seems to be a representation of it. Oil is used to cure, it is an ailment, applied manually to the body, a practice repeatedly referred to in *De Medicina*,<sup>48</sup> and possibly very much common and in use. Keeping the literary sources and their comparison to one another in mind, the similarity between Germanus' actions in the first half of the miracle and practical rituals –either medical or liturgical– seems even more clear. It is through a specular process of literary comparison that the same will become evident for the second half of the miracle, where bread is presented as another adjuvant in the healing ritual.

#### 4.2.4 MIRACULOUS EUCHARIST

The literary value of the second half of the healing in VG 29 is varied: again, medical and especially liturgical parallels are identifiable. Both relate to the figure of Germanus and his pastoral role, accented by medical nuances; in spite of these human connotations, the outcome of his actions will be again of a miraculous nature. A close reading of the passage discloses an interesting, possible association with the Eucharistic rite:

(...) Then he ordered that a seasoned drink be brought, in which he dipped three morsels of bread broken by his own hands. He himself placed one in the girl's mouth, ordering that before she took it, she ask for a blessing. And she immediately asked for one in a clear voice before she took the bread.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> The same can be said about the healing of VG 8, discussed above, where the thaumaturgic power of oil is protagonist.

<sup>48</sup> See, for instance: Book 1, 3.10, 54, where oil is poured over the head of a person suffering from sunstroke; Book 3, 6.16 (114), where it is applied to the body to induce sweating and in Book 3, 10.1 (117) where bread infused with poppy decoction and rose oil is used as a cure for fevers.

<sup>49</sup> VG 29, 272-3: *deinde conditum poculum praecepit adferri, in quo tres particulas panis manibus propriis comminutas infundit, unamque in os puellae ipse inseruit, imperans, ut, priusquam acciperet, petitionem benedictionis ediceret.*

Germanus asks for *conditum poculum*, a seasoned or mixed drink, and dips three small morsels of bread into it, *tres particulas panis manibus propriis comminutas infundit*: the Auxerrois makes two, strongly evocative actions, the first is the breaking into three pieces of a loaf of bread. The second is the dipping of one of them into a drink. The imagery associated with the first is as straight forwards as it is striking, as it parallels perfectly Jesus' own action of breaking the bread during the Last Supper: Dix, in his detailed deconstruction of the Eucharistic rite, has named the breaking of the bread as one of the four, essential moments of the Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>50</sup>

The second action may seem more mysterious: Germanus takes one of the morsels and dips it into the drink, then places it into the young girl's mouth; if, at first glance, such action does not appear to refer to any liturgical sequence, a closer reading of early eastern and, indeed, Gallican Eucharistic rites reserves quite a surprise. In the early eastern liturgy of the Eucharist, one of the more common methods to offer both bread and wine to the faithful was to *dip the bread into the chalice* and then place the imbued morsel into the faithful's mouth or hand, sometimes with the help of a spoon. This type of delivery, *per intinctionem*, was particularly common in the Eastern Church, where it is still practiced today. The method is also allowed by the Roman Eucharistic ritual, although exclusively for the clergy and only in specific circumstances for the lay.<sup>51</sup>

In the Third Council of Braga in 675, the Eucharist *per intinctionem* was, in

<sup>50</sup> Dix, 78-83.

<sup>51</sup> The Roman rite currently use in the Catholic Church approves of the Eucharist by intinction for the clergy and, albeit in limited, designated cases, also for lay people: [103.] *Normae Missalis Romani admittunt principium quo, in casibus ubi Communio sub utraque specie ministretur, «sanguis Domini sumi potest vel ex ipso calice directe bibendo, vel per intinctionem, vel cum calamo, vel cum cochleari» Quoad Communionis christifidelibus laicis ministrationem, Episcopi Communionem cum calamo vel cum cochleari excludi possunt, ubi usus loci non sit, manente tamen semper optione Communionis per intinctionem ministrandae. Si autem hic modus usurpetur, adhibeantur hostiae, quae ne nimis tenues neque nimis parvae sint, et communicandus a Sacerdote Sacramentum tantummodo ore recipiat.* (The norms of the Roman Missal admit the principle that in cases where Communion is administered under both kinds, "the Blood of the Lord may be received either by drinking from the chalice directly, or by intinction, or by means of a tube or a spoon". As regards the administering of Communion to lay members of Christ's faithful, the Bishops may exclude Communion with the tube or the spoon where this is not the local custom, though the option of administering Communion by intinction always remains. If this modality is employed, however, hosts should be used which are neither too thin nor too small, and the communicant should receive the Sacrament from the Priest only on the tongue). In *Missale Romanum*, "Redemptionis Sacramentum: De Quibusdam Observandis et Vitandis Circa Sanctissimam Eucharistiam," caput iv.ii: De Distributione Sacrae Communionis.

fact banned: <sup>52</sup> this happened roughly two hundred years after the composition of the VG. Let us take a step back, though, and focus for a moment, again, on Gallican Liturgy: Duchesne<sup>53</sup> believes Gallican rites are originally eastern in their form, and that they originated from Syrian rites of the fourth century. These rites would have spread through Milan, which had become their propulsive center due to the strong ties the archdiocese had with the East.<sup>54</sup> If Gallican rites, which started spreading around the end of the fourth century,<sup>55</sup> were rooted in Eastern practices<sup>56</sup> rather than Roman, it is plausible to believe that Eucharist *per intinctionem* was as common in the areas of the West where Gallican rites were used, as it were in the East; this areas, as it is known, include also the bishopric of Auxerre, see of Germanus. Although it is hard to find fifth century, literary descriptions of Eucharist *per intinctionem* to which compare the actions of Germanus, I still believe in the possibility Constantius willingly used its description in his text: if it is, indeed, so, the VG would be a unique, written piece of evidence for its practice in Gaul in the fifth century, which, as of now, can only be— although quite verisimilarly — postulated.

What really counts in the development of my argument, though, is not the historicity of the Eucharist *per intinctionem*'s diffusion, but the fact its description, the description of a liturgical action —therefore practice by a man— appears in the context of Germanus' healings, proposing again the association of a practical action to spiritual, otherworldly results. Such association, just as it happened for the first half of the miracle, finds confirmation in a medical context, because the administration of bread, dipped in a *conditum poculum* can be viewed as a curative method. It seems, however, that, at least in this case, the parallel with the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist, given *per intinctionem* or not, is too strong to be overtaken by a medical interpretation of the passage. One could say Germanus medically cured the young girl from her muteness, reestablishing her capability of

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<sup>52</sup> PL 84 [col. 0587C-0588D].

<sup>53</sup> 90-6.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> In his chapter on Eastern Early Liturgy Duchesne mention only very briefly the presence, in fifth and sixth century, of the habit to mix the consecrated wine with the consecrated bread (80).



speaking and that, by using the sacrament of the Eucharist, he also reestablished her capability of communicating with God, hence highlighting his own position as intermediary between the Divine and the Human. It does not seem too far fetched, so, to believe the healing of the young, unfortunate girl has been delivered with the use of a Eucharistic, as well as a baptismal rite, both resembling closely a simple act of thaumaturgy. What are sacraments, Constantius may have wished to say to his audience, but a manner to cure the soul of who believes? In this context, the rituals exposed in the narrative become true symbols of Germanus' dual nature of Man and Holy Man. A miracle has been performed, but its literary connotations still mirror the action of a human Germanus, healer and priest.

The analysis VG 29's miracle clearly identifies Germanus' actions as miraculous, yet very practical and related to everyday life, a fact highlighted by the inter-textual framing of the substances used to perform them, oil and bread. Germanus' divine connotations are emphasised by the fact he does something clearly miraculous– the healings– and transforms organic substances into vessels of holiness. Such “vessels,” oil and bread, transmit Germanus' power to whomever needs it. At the same time his actions are so incredibly pragmatic, it is hard to think Germanus the saint did not act also as a simple, human healer and priest.<sup>57</sup> As I will discuss in the next chapter, Germanus' humanity seems to be already a thing of the past when he is identified by demons in Milan,<sup>58</sup> and it is, clearly fully abandoned at the moment of his physical death, but this act of humility and fraternal love towards Placidia, the entity and significance of his gift, only reiterates how Germanus is finally ready to be saint.

#### 4.2.5 THE *CAPSULA*

*Capsula* appears for the first time in VG 4, within the description of Germanus as a person, with particular attention given to his –rather frugal–clothing: *Noctibus numquam vestitum, raro cingulum, raro calciamenta detraxit, redimitus*

<sup>57</sup> A discussion of the saint as a healer is proposed by Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity*, especially in the first three chapters, which focus on the figure of Christ as a healer and the thaumaturgic power of saints in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Also interesting the study on medicine in the Middle Ages edited by Biller and Zigler, where medical practices are contextualized with an eye of attention for their relation to the rise and diffusion of Christianity.

<sup>58</sup> “Germanus' Holiness Revealed,” 5.2.2 Recognition.

*loro semper et capsula sanctorum reliquias continente.*<sup>59</sup> The passage describes two decisive characteristics of the *capsula*: the fact Germanus never separates from it and the holiness of its content. The object appears again in the context of clothing in VG 43 when, after Germanus' death, Empress Placidia and the six bishops who accompanied the saint to Ravenna share his belongings: here, the small reliquary is only mentioned superficially as one of the objects taken by the Empress. In all instances where the term is found, the text is unambiguous about the literal meaning and the factual use, in everyday life, of the object that Constantius calls *capsula*: it is a container of some sort, which can be carried easily enough under one's clothing and contains holy remains. Germanus carries his around the neck, which proves the object cannot be too heavy, lest to be uncomfortably worn.<sup>60</sup>

It is the miracle in VG 15, however, that represents the most interesting example of the *capsula*'s use in the narrative, as it is employed to cure a young girl plagued by blindness: "then Germanus, filled with the Holy Spirit, invokes the Trinity and immediately takes into his hands the small box [*capsula*] with relics of the saints that he kept close to his body; he removes it from his neck and, in front of

<sup>59</sup> VG 4, 253: (...) He was never dressed during the night and seldom removed his shoes and belt, and always wore around his neck a small container (*capsula*) attached to a leather string containing relics of saints.

<sup>60</sup> The matter of the shape, size and constitutive material of Germanus' *capsula* is of interest: Constantius does not mention any of them. This means the text lacks any kind of physical description of the *capsula*, beside what can be implied by the fact, as I mentioned, that the saint wears it as a neck talisman. It seems clear, as a consequence, that all it can be said about the object-*capsula* Germanus used to wear, can only be deduced by turning towards history of art and what it can say about small, portable reliquaries in the fifth and early sixth centuries. For more about relics and the way their containers see Brown, *The Cult of Saints*; Lawrence Nees, *Early Medieval Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, Pelican History of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Erik Thuno, *Image and Relic: Mediating the Sacred in Early Medieval Rome*, *Annalecta Romana Instituti Danici*, suppl. xxiii (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2002); Holger A. Klein, "Eastern Objects and Western Desires: relics and reliquaries between Byzantium and the West" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 58 (Cambridge: Dumbarton Oaks, 2004), 283-314; and especially Joseph Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung: Mit 602 Abb.* (Freiburg i.Br: Herder, 1940), 286-295. On the more general subject of relics see Hippolyte Delehaye, "Les reliques des saints," in *Cinq leçons sur la méthode hagiographique*, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 21 (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1934), 75-116 and the more recent approaches offered by Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: how Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011); Caroline Walker Bynum, "Body Part Reliquaries and Body Parts in the Middle Ages," *Gesta*, xxxvi, no. 1; Patricia Cox Miller, "The Little Blue Flower is Red: Relics and the Poetizing of the Body," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2000), 213-236, and "Relics, Rhetoric and Mental Spectacles in Late Ancient Christianity," in G. de Nie, K.F. Morrison and M. Mostert eds., *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 25-52; Wilfrid Bonser, "The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages," *Folklore* 73, no. 4 (Winter 1962), 234-256; Daniel Caner, "Towards a Miraculous Economy: Christian Gifts and Material 'Blessings' in Late Antiquity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14, no. 3 (2006), 329-377; Cynthia Hahn, "The Voices of Saints: Speaking Reliquaries," *Gesta* 36, no. 1 (1997), 20-31.

everyone, places it on the eyes of the little girl.”<sup>61</sup> After the application, the child miraculously sees again. The power of the *capsula* is twofold because it both belongs to a holy figure and it is filled *cum sanctorum reliquiis*. Germanus’ actions, too, appear to have a role in the healing of the unfortunate young girl, as they are reminiscent of the acts of a healer: it is plausible to think Germanus’ *capsula* was a small, compact object, possibly even a leather satchel, as it was worn with ease by the saint around the neck. Small, possibly soft, containing a “healing” –both spiritually and physically –substance, the remains of a holy person. If viewed this way, Germanus’ *capsula* seems to be not only a holy object, containing holy relics, but also a metaphor for a simple, humble piece of medical equipment.

It is not only common sense and some knowledge of old fashioned medicine that supports such an idea, but literature: books six and seven of *De Medicina*,<sup>62</sup> are in large part dedicated to the ailments of the eye and the ear. The content of these two chapters points at how placing an object containing ointments or herbs on a diseased part was reflective of simple, everyday medical practices in Germanus and Constantius’ times. Some examples are particularly striking: in the case of *ophthalmia*, or infection of the eye, Celsus suggests, beside fasting and rest, wool or linen compresses imbued in active substances, such saffron, poppy seeds, myrrh or rose leaves, applied to the forehead, as well as directly on the diseased eye, as a poultice:

From the first day saffron, as well as the finest white flour should be made up with egg white to the consistency of honey, then spread on lint and applied to the forehead, so that, by compressing the veins, the quantity of mucus may be kept under control. If saffron is not available, frankincense will do. It does not matter whether it is spread on linen, or wool. Indeed, eyes should be smeared in as much saffron as it can be taken in three fingers, of myrrh in amount the size of a bean, of poppy-

<sup>61</sup> VG 15, 261-2: *Ad deinde Germanus plenus Spiritu sancto invocat Trinitatem et protinus adhaerentem lateri suo capsulam cum sanctorum reliquiis collo avulsam manibus comprehendit eamque in conspectu omnium puellae oculis adplicavit.*

<sup>62</sup> Celsus, 256-362.

tears the size of a lentil: these are pounded up in raisin wine, and applied on a probe to the eyeball.<sup>63</sup>

Other instances of poultice applications to the eye with the aid of fabric, such as wool, are to be found at several times in the text: “(...) when well mixed, soft well-combed wool is soaked in it (a mixture of herbs, honey and egg) and applied over the eyes.”<sup>64</sup> Lint (and wool again), is also common carrier for medical mixtures, “for the same reason, then, lint (soaked) in honey is to be put on (the eye), and over that a small piece of linen, and either a sponge or soft wool”.<sup>65</sup> The author of *Medicina Plinii* advises to use soft wool to apply a mixture of egg yolks, rose oil and honeyed wine to a diseased eye: “wool should be imbued with yolks mixed with rose oil and honeyed wine and placed on the eyes.”<sup>66</sup> Marcellus Empiricus’ *De Medicamentis* also reports an example of poultice applied to the eyes with cloth: “against the defluction of infected humors, smear a warm poultice made of beans on a small cloth and place it on the eyes for the night.”<sup>67</sup>

It is clear from these examples that the application of poultices to the eye in case of infection was common practice; Celsus suggests linen or wool could be used to place curative poultice on the forehead and ointments applied directly to the eye bulb. Both Marcellus Empiricus and the anonymous compiler of the *Medicina Plinii*, who had used *De Medicina* as a source, considered these types of remedies valid enough to be reported more than two centuries after Celsus’ composed his work. A parallel between the above mentioned examples and the miracle performed by Germanus with the *capsula* is easy to draw: the applying of a “cure” on the eye is

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 6.1.H (260): *Protinus autem primo die croci, et farinae candidae quantum tenuissimae, excipere oportet ovi albo, donec mellis crassitudinem habeat, idque in linteolum inlinere, et fronti adglutinare, ut compressis venis pituitae impetum cohibeat. Si crocum non est, tus idem facit. Linteolo an lana excipiat, nihil interest. Superinungi vero oculi debent, sic ut croci quantum tribus digitis comprehendi potest, sumatur; murræ ad fabae, papaveris lacrimae ad lenticulae magnitudinem; eaque cum passo conterantur, et specillo super oculum inducantur.*

<sup>64</sup> Celsus, 6.1.K (261): *ubi facta unitas est, demitti debet lana mollis bene carpta, quae id excipiat, superque oculos inponi.*

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 7.4.D (313-14): *Eodem inde ex melle linamentum superdandum est supraque linteolum, et aut spongia aut lana sucida.*

<sup>66</sup> Book 1, chapter 8, 17: (lit. yolks, mixed with rose oil and honeyed wine, should be placed in wool and on the eyes): *lutea ovorum ex rosaceo et mulso in lana super oculos imponuntur.* The word *lanae*, in all inflections, appears 16 times in total in the text; in 7 instances, it is used to apply a medical poultice or mixture on the body.

presented in all descriptions and, even though in Celsus' example it is directly spread on the patient's eye, rather than applied or placed by using an object, the fact the same curative concoction can be applied with a piece of cloth on the *frons* of the ill, could be the inspiration of Constantius' extended metaphor in VG 15. The examples proposed by Marcellus Empiricus the anonymous author of the *Medicina Plinii* parallel even more closely the acts of Germanus, as healing mixtures are used within a piece of cloth or wool. These are far from being the only examples offered,<sup>68</sup> a factor pointing to the common origin and use of such a remedy.

In Constantius' narrative, Germanus applies the *capsula* to the girl's eyes, ridding her of her blindness; Celsus, Marcellus Empiricus and the anonymous author of the *Medicina Plinii* describe a practice where a medicament is applied, very much in the same manner, both directly to the eye, or by means of material vessel. Germanus' application of the *capsula* is metaphorically related to the medical applications described in the medical texts of the corpus: the object-*capsula* is a symbol of the medical instrument (in this case, gauze or wool) thanks to which the curative, holy relics (the medicament itself) are applied to the diseased body. Just as a healer would apply a curative ointment on a diseased eye, Germanus "applies" a holy substance (the relics contained in the *capsula*) on the girl's blind eyes and by doing so he, the blessed man, heals with a symbol of faith, just as a doctor heals with medicaments.

By creating this strong, contextual bond between the actions of the saint and those of a medical healer, Constantius reinforces at once Germanus' super-human powers, but also his ties with the transient world, where practices such as those described by Celsus, and later authors are needed. If read in this context, the miracle described in VG 15 appears to be symbolic of those divinely induced episodes where Germanus is, at once, performing a miracle and a very human and basic act of healing. This places the episode of VG 15 firmly within those events symbolically portraying man and saint, holy and prosaic.

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<sup>68</sup> There are, indeed, many more instances of medical applications to the eye by means of poultice-or liquid- and a fabric; chapters 6 and 7 of *De Medicina*, as well as Chapter 1 of the *De Medicamentis* offer a plethora of very clear, well described examples, which could be closely associated to the application of the *capsula* to the eyes of the blind girl in the VG.

### 4.3 WAR AND ITS LEADERS

The association of Germanus with the world and language of war and, by extension, of military leadership has been already discussed in relation to Germanus' opposition to taking up the role of bishop, rendered in the text by vivid military metaphors.<sup>69</sup> The theme of war reappears later in the text, its role profoundly different from that it held at the beginning of the narration. In VG 17 and 18, as well as VG 28, Germanus' military approach to life is protagonist again, but, if such an attitude was presented in VG 2 as a sign of his fallacy, it now becomes a means to deliver unexpected, divine results. Germanus' martial ways are turned from a sign of error in interpreting the advent of spiritual life, to a sign of his approach to holiness. This will be shown and discussed in the next pages, not only through intra-textual, but also inter-textual comparison, with a strong focus given to the other hagiographies of the corpus, and the presence of military language in their narrative.

#### 4.3.1 SOLDIERS OF CHRIST: AMATOR, MARTIN, HILARION, GERMANUS

Of the three Gallic texts in the corpus and the VH, the only one with a recurring military theme is the VM.<sup>70</sup> The RC does not present any, whereas the VA only offers two significant examples of military imagery, one in VA 13 and another in VA 18, whereas the VH only offers one strong military metaphor within the whole of its narrative.

In VA 13, the nouns *princeps* and *miles (militibus)* are used in relation with Satan, who is the *princeps*, whose *milites* live on the island mentioned in the text:<sup>71</sup> there is, very clearly, a military resonance to the whole passage, reiterated by the final sentence, where Amator *triumphabat*, triumphed, over the demons and their satanic deeds by means of his faith, symbolised in the passage by the Sign of the Cross. Chapter fourteen presents another reference to the military world: here,

<sup>69</sup> "Deconstructing the Man," 3.2 First Encounter with Faith.

<sup>70</sup> For an interesting discussion on the military career of Martin and its role within Sulpicius Severus' VM, see Bequette, 65-75 and also Jacques Fontaine, "Hagiographie et politique: de Sulpice Sévère à Venance Fortunat," *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 62, no. 168 (1976), 113-140.

<sup>71</sup> VA 13, 144-45: *ad insulam quae Gallinaria nuncupatur commigravit: in qua Belzebub princeps daemoniorum, exclusis habitatoribus, cum militibus suis conregnabat. Sed statim ut vir Dei pedem illum attulit, praesentiam ejus sufferre non valens, locum a se possessum deseruit. (...). Quo viso frequens populus civitatis glomeratim se portis proripiebat, signum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi fronti infigens, per quod beatissimus triumphabat Amator (...).*

Amator talks to the demons, the *milites*, and to their *princeps*, to finally chase them away from the island of Gallinaria. To do so, he repeatedly utters the verb *imperare*,<sup>72</sup> which is self-explanatory: it may not be used in a strictly military context, but it does deliver a sense of order, command, supremacy steeped with martial overtones. Although the passages' pace, as well as their vivid descriptions, have a military resonance, neither of them possesses the same textual relevance of the VG's war-related sections. Moreover, they are not as defining of the saint's character.

The military context of the VM is, on the other hand, rich: as it is described in the first four chapters of the text, Martin belonged to a pagan family of military tradition. His father was a soldier first, a military consul later and it was by law that Martin had to join the army. It is, then, not surprising to find so many references to war in Sulpicius Severus' text, as this was very much the life background of its protagonist. The same can be said about nouns and verbs belonging to the semantic field of the military, which recur often in the context of the first four chapter of the text. Beside this, there is very little to indicate any further textual association of Martin to the iconography and the habits of a military leader: truly, the very root *milit\**, which appears twenty times, is mostly distributed in the four chapters describing his life as a soldier, and only twice in the rest of the text: this seems to indicate the use of military language is conspicuously related to Martin's biographical details, rather than his role as a defender of faith. Only one episode can be associated in style with those presented by Constantius. Its tone, however, is very different:

*Hactenus, inquit ad Caesarem, militavi tibi: patere ut nunc militem Deo: donativum tuum pugnaturus accipiat, Christi ego miles sum: pugnare mihi non licet.*<sup>73</sup>

The day before a battle against the Barbarians, Martin refuses the donative set up for each soldier; he does so because, he says, he is “a soldier of Christ and

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 14, 145: (...) *Increpans autem eos beatissimus Amator dixit: Maturate fugam, et obsessa a vobis corpora illaesa abscedentes relinquit. Non ego vos impero, sed Jesus Christus, qui servienti pelago imperavit, et elatio fluctuum in semetipsam resedit; qui pigris nubibus imperat (...).*

<sup>73</sup> VM 4, 114: Thus far, he said to his chief, I fought for you: now let me be a soldier to God. Let the man who is to fight for you to receive this donative: I am a soldier of Christ, allow me now to become a soldier to God. Let the man who is to serve you receive your donative: I am the soldier of Christ, fighting is not permitted to me.

fighting is not permitted to me.” He then asks to face the enemy without weapons, to prove how he is truly protected by the will and the word of Christ. The episode ends with the unconditional surrender of the Barbarians before the battle, a fact Sulpicius Severus attributes to Martin's request: Christ did indeed protect His soldier, by creating the very premises to avoid battle, the surrender of the enemy. This is the only example where Martin is a textual soldier of God, the only passage where the use of a military metaphor evolves into an event decided by divine intervention. Martin's ties with the world of war are of a mundane nature, not divine, and even this last event, in which he is defined “a soldier of God” and supernatural intervention seems to have played an important role, happens still well within the – textual– limits of his military career. The military context is entirely mundane for Martin, but both mundane and divine for Germanus: this is why I believe the language and the imagery of war represents well the transition of the Germanus from man to saint. Human acts, divine result. Sulpicius Severus' description of the saint of Tours seems to stand in interesting opposition to the iconography of Germanus in Constantius' text, where, albeit never called a *Miles Christi*,<sup>74</sup> the saint quite literally behave like a soldier of faith in a couple of occasions, the above mentioned episodes of chapters seventeen and eighteen, and twenty-eight. In spite of the fact that the “historical” Martin was a military man, Sulpicius Severus decided not to embrace the military metaphor with more transport. However, this is not the place to discuss Sulpicius Severus' creative and stylistic choices: what is more relevant is that, even though Constantius may have been inspired by the figure of Martin in creating such a rich substratum of military references to Germanus, he did decide to develop his literary persona differently, in an almost opposite way. Martin's military ties are related to his acts as a human being, his very position as a soldier is, in the end, imposed by laws and family; Germanus' martial attitude towards certain events of his life, on the other hand, only accentuates their spiritual outcome and the Auxerrois' increasing spiritual power.

Hilarion's approach to spirituality mirrors that of Martin and Amator, with an early initiation and his sanctification well into the making since a young age; the

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<sup>74</sup> Eph. 6:14-17; Noble, xiii onward.



presence of military metaphors in the text begins as early as the third chapter, when Hilarion leaves saint Antony's abode because "Antony is reaping the reward of victory like a hero who has proved his bravery. I have not yet entered a soldier's career."<sup>75</sup> Here, Antony's strength and determination in pursuing an hermit's life, in spite of the amount of faithful surrounding him at his desert's dwelling, inspires Hilarion not only to compare the saint to a hero, but also to embrace the same type of lifestyle; but whereas Antony manages to maintain his way of living uncontaminated, Hilarion realises he still needs to "enter a soldier's career", that is, to learn the real basics of asceticism. In chapter six, Jerome narrates Hilarion's fearful encounter with diabolic temptation: the entire passage is permeated with martial and war-like imagery:

One night he began to hear the crying of children, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of oxen, the lament of what seemed to be women, the roaring of lions, the noise of an army, and moreover various portentous cries, which made him shrink from the sound in fear. He understood the mocking of the demons and, falling onto his knees, he made the sign of the cross on his forehead. Thus armed, as he lay he fought the more bravely, half longing to see those whom he shuddered to hear, and anxiously looking in every direction. Meanwhile, all of a sudden, while the moonlight shone, he saw a chariot with dashing horses rushing upon him. He called upon Jesus, and suddenly before his eyes, the earth was opened and the whole array was swallowed up. Then he said, "He threw the horse and his rider into the sea." And "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; we will triumph in the name of the Lord our God."<sup>76</sup>

Both passages have military inspiration, but differ greatly from Constantius' military narrative in the VG: Germanus is, more often than not, the one acting as a warrior, the one to whom the language of war refers. In Jerome's narrative, on the other hand, Hilarion is treated differently. The Syrian hermit passively receives

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<sup>75</sup> VH 3, [Col.0030B-0030C]: *illum quasi virum fortem victoriae praemia accipere: se necdum militare coepisse.*

<sup>76</sup> VH 5-6. [col. 0031C-0032A]: *Quadam nocte, infantum cepit audire vagitus, balatus pecorum, mugitus boum, planctum quasi muliercularum [Al. mulierum], leonum rugitus, murmur exercitus, et rursus variarum portenta vocum, ut ante sonitu quam aspectu territus cederet. Intellexit daemonum ludibria; et provolutus genibus, Christi crucem signavit in fronte: talique armatus, jacens fortius praeliabatur; quodammodo videre desiderans, quos horrebat audire, et sollicitis oculis huc illucque circumspiciens. Cum interim ex improvise, splendente luna, cernit rhedam ferventibus equis super se irruere: cumque inclamasset Jesum, ante oculos ejus repentino terrae hiatus, pompa omnis absorpta est. Tunc ille ait: Equum et ascensorem projecit in mare. Et, Hi in curribus, et hi in equis: nos autem in nomine Dei nostri magnificabimur.*

upon himself the narrative results of Jerome's use of military language: he is not a soldier, yet, in chapter three and he is defending himself from an army of demons in chapter six, where, moreover, the flamboyant, warrior-like entrance on the scene of the fiery chariot of Faith is imposed upon him from above. The language of war, albeit present, is used in an entirely different manner: whereas Constantius actively uses it to define Germanus as a character, Jerome imposes it to a passive Hilarion.

#### 4.3.2 GERMANUS THE WARRIOR<sup>77</sup>

To Martin, being a soldier of God implies not being allowed to fight, but Germanus appears to take up, quite literally in chapter seventeen and eighteen, weapons to lead an army against another: this shows, again, the temperament of the Auxerrois, a fearless leader,<sup>78</sup> even when it comes to physical, violent fighting. The text offers two evocative examples where Germanus' human acts mirror those of a military chief and a warrior; in both instances, his martial attitude and forceful manners –very human, very prosaic– are accompanied by an entirely spiritual result. This allows for an interpretation of the events as miraculous, because the victory is, indeed, obtained in rather celestial circumstances, because of the presence and help of Germanus. It is, in fact, yet another example of how Constantius wants to create and emphasize the duality of the Auxerrois in this particular section of the narrative to clearly point at his own progression on the path to full sanctification.

The first example comes from the events in VG 17 and 18, where Germanus and his bishops are called to help the army of the Britons against the joined forces of the Saxons and the Picts;<sup>79</sup> the presence of the holy men did so much for the morale that it truly seemed "Christ was a soldier in that very camp." With Easter approaching, soldiers opted for a baptism en masse, before entering the battle:

(...) The venerable days of Lent arrived; the presence of the bishops made the soldiers so much holier that, educated by daily sermons, they eagerly

<sup>77</sup> On the historical possibility of Germanus being an actual military leader, see textual and linguistic based arguments proposed by Gaudemet, (114-116).

<sup>78</sup> He is not only fearless, but also always victorious, as mentioned by Chadwick, *Poetry and Letters*, 266 and Miele, 183.

<sup>79</sup> On the historicity of the event, see 1.6 Germanus of Auxerre and relevant bibliography, and also Barrett, 197-218.

ran together towards the grace of baptism; the greatest group of this devout army longed for the water of such healthful bath.<sup>80</sup>

Cleansed of their Original Sin, protected by Christ and, more relevantly to us, led by a feisty Germanus:

Once the solemnity of Easter is over, when the largest part of the army returns from the baptismal fountain to take up arms again, and gets ready for war, Germanus declares himself chief of the battle. He selects the infantry, marches through the surrounding areas and observes the valley surrounded by high mountains, from where the arrival of the enemies may be expected. In this place he sets another battalion, of which he himself becomes the head.<sup>81</sup>

The parallel between Germanus the holy man and Germanus the military chief hardly needs any explanation: what a prowess, what a personality the Auxerrois demonstrates when faced with danger and peril. His role as a leader is never questioned, not even by himself who, far from being humble in this particular circumstance, does not hesitate to take the lead of an army. He is a military leader at all effects, but not in name of a country or an empire, but in the name of Christ. Germanus' leadership is justified by the fact the entire army has been baptised and became, at least from the point of view of the narrative, representative of Christ on the battlefield. The events of the battle, as described in VG 18, have nothing short of the extraordinary:

Germanus, their leader, immediately incites everybody to action and orders them to respond to his voice in unison; while the enemies, who believed themselves to be unexpected, felt safe, the bishops call out a three-time repeated Alleluia. Everybody's voice joins in as one, increasing their almost savage cry by means of the air resounding within the mountains.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> VG 17, 263-4: *Aderant etiam quadragesimae venerabiles dies, quos relegiosiores reddebat praesentia sacerdotum, in tantum, ut, cotidianis praedicationibus instituti, certatim ad gratiam baptismatis convolarent; nam maxima devoti exercitus multitudo undam lavacri salutari expetiit.*

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.: *Cumque, emensa sollemnitate paschali, recens de lavacro pars maior exercitus arma capere et bellum parare temptaret, Germanus ducem se proelii profitetur. Elegit expeditos, circumiecta percurrit et e regione, qua hostium sperabatur adventus, vallem circumdatam editis montibus intuetur. Quo in loco novum conponit exercitum ipse dux agminis.*

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 18, 264: *(...) cum subito Germanus signifer universos admonet et praedicat, ut voci suae uno clamore respondeant, securisque hostibus, qui se insperatos adesse confiderent, Alleluia tertio repetitam sacerdotes exclamant. Sequitur una vox omnium, et elatum clamorem, percusso aere, montium conclusa multiplicant.*

The enemy is overwhelmed and terrified by those soldiers and their leader, and even nature appears to turn against Germanus' enemies, who fled in fear, abandoning their weapons, without engaging in battle. By leading an army as a military chief, Germanus wins a miraculous battle: just as it happens in the healings performed in VG 8, 15 and 29, the mundane and the spiritual converge within the actions of Germanus, who is man and divine at once. A very human action related to the world of war, that of leading an army to battle, results in something divine, a bloodless victory, under the sign of Christ.

The same can be said about the last episode I wish to discuss,<sup>83</sup> a moment where Germanus' power and presence of spirit win over the haughtiness of Gochar, the Alans' *rex ferocissimus*:

And so the old man alone is opposed to a most bellicose people and a king who is the servant of idols. Yet he is still greater and stronger than all with the assistance of Christ. Without delay he hurries on his way, because preparations for war were threatening. Already the people (gens) had marched forward and the entire road had been filled with armoured cavalry. Yet still our priest marched up to meet them, until he reached the king himself, who was following close after. He meets them in the road and stands opposite as the armed leader is marching, surrounded by a troop of his men. First, through an interpreter, he pours forth a prayer of entreaty, then he rebukes the superior man, and finally he seizes the reins of the bridle with his outstretched hands and, in that very place, he brings the entire army to a halt. At this, the most ferocious king, at God's order, felt wonder rather than rage; he is stupefied by such perseverance and bows in deference to Germanus, deeply moved by the constancy of his power.<sup>84</sup>

Germanus, now an elderly man, literally stops an army with the power of his actions: he stands opposite the barbarian leader, prays, then orders him and his

<sup>83</sup> The episode is particularly interesting as it seems to fulfil all requirements to be a "type-scene" typical of Late Antique and early Medieval Literature, as discussed by Martínez Pizarro in "The King Says No: Type-Scenes in Late Antique and Early Medieval Narrative," in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe*, 181-192 (182).

<sup>84</sup> VG 28, 271-2: *bellicosissimae regique idolorum ministro obicitur senex unus, sed tamen omnibus Christi praesidio maior et fortior. Nec mora, festinus egreditur, quia imminet bellicus apparatus. Iam progressa gens fuerat totumque iter eques ferratus impleverat, et tamen sacerdos noster obvius ferebatur, donec ad regem ipsum qui subsequebatur accederet. Occurrit in itinere iam progresso, et armato duci inter suorum catervas opponitur medioque interprete primum precem supplicem fundit, deinde increpat differentem, ad extremum, manu iniecta, freni habenas invadit atque in eo universum sistit exercitum. Ad haec rex ferocissimus admirationem pro iracundia, Deo imperante, concepit; stupet constantiam, veneratur reverentiam, auctoritatis pertinacia permovetur.*

whole army to stop in the name of God. The miracle happens: the pagan chief is taken aback by the saint's courage and powerful demeanour, and peace is established again. It is another example where a physical, military-like action delivers an entirely spiritual result. Germanus shows the same fortitude and audacity of a military chief: he is strong, resolute, even bold in his actions, the results of which are, in opposition to the mundanity of his behaviour, entirely spiritual.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

This thesis argues that Germanus' literary persona is in continuous evolution throughout the text, following a path which will lead him from human to holy, from being a man to being a saint. The previous chapter discussed the very beginning of the voyage. Germanus begins as a very pragmatic character, involved, as many aristocrats of his time, in the practice of law; he embraces priesthood as an unwelcome duty, then slowly starts to move closer to his spiritual vocation.

This chapter has given particular attention to that part of Germanus' voyage where the boundaries between man and saint are blurred and the miraculous could still be worldly. Constantius offers the opportunity to read the text on a dual level, by providing the right hints, hidden within layers of inter-textual references which, just as a treasure map, lead the audience to a fuller vision of the main character, Germanus: a multi-dimensional protagonist, a healer, a priest, a soldier, a saint. The miracles treated in this chapter all presented two characteristics: they were all performed through the use of an object or a substance, and they could be very clearly associated to a human act— of medical, liturgical or military origin. The *capsula* could be a piece of lint filled with ointment; *oleum* is used as healer would do, or applied to the forehead, just as a priest would, while baptising a faithful. *Panis*, and its use in VG 29 is immediately associable to the rite of the Eucharist and cereals, the *triticum* of VG 11, not only possesses a vivid medical connotation, but helps the development of a strong theological metaphor used to portray Germanus in his pastoral role.

The study of the text seems to demonstrate the presence of a pattern that combines, in the miracles where an object or a substance is used, the supernatural

with the practical, the divine with the human. This duality of action within a miracle only mirrors the duality of Germanus himself, who starts his journey as a man and will end it as a saint, but who is, in many instances in between, a man as much as he is a holy man. The objects or substances used to perform the miracles discussed are both a metaphor for a practical action—in which very often are directly involved— and a symbol of Germanus' humanity and divinity, as they are at once worldly, and blessed.

A parallel conclusion can be drawn about Germanus' martial attitude and power: just as, at the beginning of the narrative, the language of war stood to represent the strength of his human fallibility, it is later on transformed into a symbol of spiritual victory, as the episodes of VG 17-18 and VG 28 have shown. At this point in the narrative, Germanus' path is fully open to holiness: it is only a matter of time, now, before he finally ascends to spiritual perfection and sainthood.

**CHAPTER FIVE****THE HOLY MAN:  
GERMANUS' HOLINESS REVEALED****5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The structure outlined in the previous pages finds its conclusion in the last ten sections of the text, which are the subject of this chapter. Germanus was a man of strong will and decisively human character, whose determination is matched in the text by the use of a vocabulary imprinted on the military world; acquainted with holding a powerful, socio-political position, he appeared nevertheless contrary to his episcopal election, which was accepted with a reluctance that had more to do with dislike than sense of humility. The details of his spiritual awakening are left out of the narrative, but by the beginning of VG 3, Germanus fully embraced his newly found position as a Christian leader, a fact emphatically described through the attention given to the Auxerrois' relationship with food.

The events of VG 2 and 3, and the vocabulary associated to them, helped to draw the outline of a person embarking on an epiphanic journey he began as a man, and was to end as a saint. In between is the life of an individual striving to serve God and mankind, an individual stepping, day after day, closer to spiritual perfection. The miracles he performed became a clear sign of his relation to the divine, but the way they were performed seemed to keep him and his actions somewhat tied into the mundanity of this world and its practices: this has been the main topic of "Constructing the Saint," where I have focused on the most relevant miraculous events of the central part of the narrative, and discussed how their ritual aspect is profoundly imbued in medical and liturgical practices still intrinsically tying Germanus to the mundane.

The next pages will concentrate on the climactic conclusion of the VG, where the audience witnesses the last moments of Germanus' life, from his trip to Ravenna and the

close, intimate relationship with the Empress, Galla Placidia,— an important signifier of his achieved status— to his death and final journey back to Auxerre.<sup>1</sup> The miracles performed in the last fifteen chapters and his relationship with the Roman Empress are at the core of this section. If the miracles described in “Constructing the Saint” were characterised, in their rituality, by actions and patterns peculiarly mundane, those at the centre of this chapter have no longer any resemblance with human practices: the miracles of VG 34 and 38, a healing and a resurrection, are simply delivered by Germanus’ intercession and his prayers. His role in both episodes is divine, a fact stressed in the narrative by his tears, which, I will discuss, bring his literary figure closer to that of Christ.<sup>2</sup> The parallel with Christ<sup>2</sup> is manifest in the last pages of the text: albeit other examples are presented earlier, such as the acquiescing of a stormy sea in VG 13 (clearly a mirror of Jesus’ miracle in Mark 4, 35-39),<sup>3</sup> and the relevance of

<sup>1</sup> See J.-Ch. Picard, “Éspace urbain et sépultures épiscopales à Auxerre,” *Revue d’histoire de l’église de France* 62, no. 168 (1976): 205–222 (especially 205–211) for a discussion of the manner of burial of Germanus and the first church built to honour his resting place. Picard used especially the *Miracula Sancti Germani Episcopi* as a source for the details related to the saints’ burial. Heiric’s text will be discussed in the final chapter, “Afterlives of the Saint.”

<sup>2</sup> A common hagiographical *topos*: see Michel Lauwers, “La mort et le corps des saints. la scène de la mort dans les ‘Vitae’ du haut Moyen Âge,” *Le Moyen Âge: revue d’histoire et de philologie* 94, vol.1 (1988), 21–55.

<sup>3</sup> VG 13, 259–60: As it happened, the commander himself and the bishop, weakened in body, were just then overtaken by weariness and sleep. Then, with the adversary almost abandoning the fight, the violent storm grew stronger and the boat was submerged by waves flowing over it. Then blessed Lupus and all the others, thrown into a panic, roused the old man to oppose the furious elements. And, understanding the the imminence of the danger, he invokes Christ more steadfastly, shouts at the ocean, and opposes the truth of religion to the raving storm. And immediately after taking up oil he immediately overpowered the fierce waves in the name of the Trinity with a light sprinkling. [*Germanus*] *periculi inmanitate constantior Christum invocat, increpat oceanum et procellis saevientibus causam relegionis obponit, statimque, adsumpto oleo, in nomine Trinitatis levi aspergine fluctus saevientes obpressit*). Confront it with Mk 4, 35–39. For a detailed account of the miracle and its interpretation see J. Rougé, 197–202.



commensality described in chapter five,<sup>4</sup> it is the miracles associated with Germanus' tears that reflect the figure of Christ more powerfully. They create dangers, stir up storms, hide the sky and its light under a night of clouds, and they redouble the gloomy darkness of sea and sky with horror. The sails cannot bear the fury of the winds and the fragile bark scarcely endures the mass of the ocean. The vain efforts of the sailors are abandoned and the ship is no longer led by men, but by prayer. The physical death of the man Germanus of Auxerre openly introduces into the narrative Germanus the Saint as a fully developed character, a fact setting forth, once and for all, his divine nature. This is achieved by the description of a post mortem miracle<sup>5</sup>.

His peculiarly close and friendly relations with Galla Placidia will provide further demonstration of the acquisition of a higher status, to which temporal power openly submits: Placidia, fervent Christian, yet symbol of the highest form of political rule, accepts to play a subordinate role to Germanus, an attitude which stands in stark opposition to those of other representatives of temporal power in the text, namely the "people" electing Germanus to the see of Auxerre in VG 2 and Gochar in VG 28. The saint's dealings with the world of politics and with society are affected, just as his miracles, by the awareness and level his achieved holiness.

The next pages aim at portraying and analysing the last, essential moments of Germanus' mundane life, when he had already become more than a man. The final part of his transition from man to saint will be extrapolated from the narrative of miracles

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<sup>4</sup> VG 5, 253: Germanus' acts create and strengthen the parallel between him and Christ; the idea of commensality present in both the Old and the New Testament has its best Christian literary representation in the Last Supper and the breaking and sharing of the bread between Christ and the Apostles. Even more strikingly, Germanus washes his guests' feet, in an evident reference to Christ during the Last Supper, as described in John, 13:4–9. The act of washing one's feet was common within the Jewish community, and it is not found only in John, but also in Gen. 18:4, 24:32 and 43:24, Ex. 30:19, Tb. 6:2 among others. Germanus' act mirrors that of Christ during the Last Supper, as he proceeds to wash people's feet in close conjunction with a meal, just as Jesus did. In Jewish tradition the washing of the feet was a small ritual of welcoming inside one's house and family. In speculative manner, Jesus officially marks his disciples as members of the new covenant by breaking the bread with them and washing their feet, and consecrates them for life to Christian Faith: in the humility of Jesus' act, his Apostles had to find an example to follow day after day, for the sake of their Christian brothers; it is only through a profound gesture of humbleness and modesty that they could represent and spread His word. For more on the fifth chapter of the text, see "The Structure of the *Vita Germani*," 53–4.

<sup>5</sup> Germanus' post mortem miracle is the healing of a paralytic, as it shall be seen, and it belongs to those evangelical miracles discussed by Picard ("The Marvellous in Saints' Lives," 92–93).

whose rituality is no longer related to human practices and actions. The final, conclusive apotheosis of Saint Germanus is not expressed by a sentence, or in a chapter, but by a series of actions and events, whose inter-textual connections and literary nature are the colors chosen by the artist to paint the final ascension to Heaven of Germanus, the Holy Man from Auxerre.

## **5.2 THE SAINT IS REVEALED**

Germanus' arrival in Italy is characterised by two episodes presented in sequence in VG 31 and 32. Although apparently inconsequential to the text's larger narrative picture, they allegorically symbolise, in my opinion, the crucial moment of Germanus' transition from Man to Saint.

### **5.2.1 THE CROSSING**

In VG 31, Germanus and his companions are about to cross the Franco-Italian Alps, when they come across a group of local artisans travelling back home after a day of work. One of them, old and weighed down by his implements, receives the help of the elderly bishop who, with humility, takes the burden upon his own shoulders and carries it across a mountain stream:

After he travelled through the cities (civitates) of Gaul, while he was ascending the Alps and about to enter Italy, by chance he fell into conversation with artisans on their return journey home from paid labour. And while these, weighted down by excessive baggage, climb the peaks piercing the clouds, they are halted by a river in their way, that, in those rugged precipices, offered a safe path neither to animals nor to men. Among these travellers there was one man who was old and lame, whose bundle the most blessed man carried on his own shoulders among the wide streams and, after repeating the crossing, he carried the man, now free of the burden, in his arms. And although he concealed his identity with great humility, in

Milan he could no longer hide who and what he was.<sup>6</sup>

It is an episode pregnant with meaning, which shows in touching details Germanus' humbleness. It is also an exceptional allegory of his own final passage from humanity to sainthood. Germanus decides to carry on his own shoulders the heavy burden of another man, a symbolic act reminiscent of Christ's sacrifice for mankind. The emphasis is placed upon the fact that *huius fascem vir beatissimus humeris suis inter vastos gurgites deportavit, eumque exoneratum, iterato transitu, subiecta cervice transposuit*,<sup>7</sup> "whose bundle the most blessed man carried on his own shoulders among the wide streams and, after repeating the crossing, he carried the man, now free of the burden, in his arms." The elderly man, tired and limping, embodies mankind in its fearful position of wanderer upon this Earth; his heavy burden, depiction of human sin, weighs upon his shoulders, making the voyage hard. Germanus intervenes and consciously, willingly takes first the bundle, then the man upon his own shoulders: he, who is sinless, accepts to carry Mankind's sins upon himself, in what is, in fact, an uncompromising allegory of Christ's own sacrifice.

There is more to it: Germanus, we are told, carries the man on his shoulders through a perilous stream. The symbolism of water and its role in hagiography is well explained by Eby, when he describes the role of the river Tyne in Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*: "this river is much more than a physical barrier. It stands more significantly as the metaphorical boundary between the secular and spiritual worlds which Cuthbert must cross before he can begin to lead a holy life."<sup>8</sup>

The spiritual symbolism associated with the action of crossing or being nearby a water basin comes from a long tradition: starting from the Bible and the role of the River

<sup>6</sup> VG 31, 274: *Decursis itaque Gallicanis, dum Alpes Italiam ingressurus exsuperat, casu artificibus ex opere mercenario domum redeuntibus itineris conlatione sociatur. Qui dum, gravati iniustis fascibus, iuga nubibus inserta conscendunt, torrente obvio tenebantur, qui in illis praeruptis praecipitiis neque animalium neque hominum vestigia fideliter haerere patituntur. Erat ex his viatoribus unus et claudus et senior; huius fascem vir beatissimus humeris suis inter vastos gurgites deportavit eumque exoneratum, iterato transitu, subiecta cervice transposuit. Et cum studiosissime sui agnitionem abiectio velaret, Mediolani, quis aut quantus esset, celare non potuit.*

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., literally, "beneath his neck."

<sup>8</sup> Eby, 321.

Jordan in the New Testament, through classical times, and well into the Middle Ages, water has been associated with the liminality of this world with the other. The legend of Orpheus,<sup>9</sup> in both its classical and medieval renditions,<sup>10</sup> as well as the Middle English poem “Pearl”<sup>11</sup> propose, for instance, examples of such symbolism, where water becomes the threshold between the physical and the metaphysical world. Even more pregnant with meaning are the five rivers of the Greek underworld,<sup>12</sup> the rivers of the Dead, symbol of the passage itself between life and death, physical state and spiritual state, an idea revived with a Christian twist by Dante in the third Canto of the *Inferno* and the centrality of the Acheron.<sup>13</sup>

It is especially the role of the Jordan in the New Testament, however, to be relevant in the context of Germanus’ sainthood: the Jordan, along which John the Baptist operated, and where Jesus was baptised, is ultimate embodiment of the transitional and spiritual power of water. It represents the archetypal moment of transition in

<sup>9</sup> Ovid: *Metamorphoses in Two Volumes*, George Patrick Goold and Frank Justus Miller ed., Vol. 3–4, The Loeb Classical Library 43 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977): vol.2, book x; Virgil, *Georgica*, R.A.B. Mynors, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); *Sir Orfeo*, Alan Joseph Bliss, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954).

<sup>10</sup> For criticism of the myth see: W.S. Anderson, “The Orpheus of Virgil and Ovid: *fleBILE nescio quid*” in *Orpheus, the metamorphoses of a myth*, John Warden ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982): 39–48; John Block Friedman, *The figure of Orpheus in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: a thesis* (Ann Arbor: Michigan State University Microfilms, 1965); Louis Gros, R.R. Kenneth, “Robert Henryson’s Orpheus and Eurydice and the Orpheus traditions in the Middle Ages” *Speculum* 41, no. 4 (1966); for a Christian interpretation of the myth, see Eleanor Irwin, “The song of Orpheus and the New Song of Christ” *Orpheus*, John Warden ed., 51–62; Emmet Robbins, “Famous Orpheus,” *ibid.*, 3–21; Patricia Vicari “Orpheus among the Christians,” *ibid.*, 63–83.

<sup>11</sup> The Gawain-poet, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanliness, Patience* (London: Everyman, 1976); for some interesting notions on the symbolism of the *Pearl*, including much about the role of the garden and the stream in the allegorical interpretation of the poem, see Carleton F. Brown, “The Author of the *Pearl* in the Light of his Theological Opinion,” *PMLA* 19, no. 1 (1904), 115–53; Ann Chalmers Watts, “Pearl: Inexpressibility and Poem of Human Loss,” *PMLA* 99, no.1 (1984), 26–40; E.V. Gordon, *Pearl* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966); Stanton De Voren Hoffman, “Pearl: Notes for an Interpretation” *Modern Philology* 58, no. 2 (November 1960), 73–80; A.C. Spearing, “Symbolic and Dramatic Development in the *Pearl*” *Modern Philology* 6, no. 1 (1960), 26–40.

<sup>12</sup> The Styx, the Acheron, the Lethe, the Phlegeton, the Cocytus.

<sup>13</sup> Dante Alighieri, “Inferno” Canto iii, in *Divina Commedia*, P. Cataldi, R. Luperini, eds. (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1989). Criticism on Dante’s magnificent work is plentiful and it would be almost detrimental trying to give a satisfying overview of it here. Some basic, yet interesting pieces of seminal Dantean criticism can be found in *Dante nella Critica*, Tommaso Di Salvo ed. (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1965), Erich Auerbach, *Studi su Dante*, Maria Luisa De Pieri Bonino and Dante Della Terza, trans. (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1963); Francesco De Sanctis, *Lezioni e saggi su Dante, Corsi Torinesi, Zurighesi e Saggi Critici*, S. Romagnoli ed. (Torino: Einaudi, 1955); Benedetto Croce, *La Poesia di Dante* (Bari: Laterza, 1921).

Christianity, that of Jesus' baptism,<sup>14</sup> in other words, that of the official appearance of Christianity as a spiritual entity separated from Judaism; because of this, it also symbolises the full *becoming* of Jesus as the Old Testament Messiah, as His baptism in the Jordan fulfils the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2, as described in Matthew 4:15.

In the VG, then, water is perception of a passage which is, per se, not sensibly perceivable, that between life and death, the physical and the spiritual. Germanus crosses the liminal space represented by the alpine stream of VG 31 and emerges from those impetuous waters changed in his essence: he becomes, finally, a saint and he cleanses, through his own metamorphosis, the sins—symbolically represented by the heavy burden placed on his shoulders—of those who believed in him. It is also important to note how this crucial moment is placed geographically between two places, Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, France and Italy, respectively the places of Germanus' human birth and that of his human death, which is also the moment of his final and complete sanctification.

### 5.2.2 RECOGNITION

The transformation described in the symbolic events of chapter thirty-one is reiterated in the narrative of VG 32, which focuses on a particular episode taking place in Milan, the first stop of Germanus' Italian journey. In occasion of an important local feast, the bishop and his entourage stop in a city church, where an exorcism has been taking place. It is not, though, the spiritual healing in itself that symbolises more powerfully the achieved sanctification of the Auxerrois, but rather the description of the moments surrounding it:

It was the venerable day of the Mass for saints, which had brought together many priests in one place. And while the mass is celebrated with the sacred mysteries at the altar, he walked in unexpected and unrecognised. Immediately a member of the congregation, a captive of the Enemy, cries out in an immoderately loud voice: "Why do you follow us into Italy, Germanus? It should be enough for you to have removed us from Gaul;

<sup>14</sup> Mt 3:13; Mk 1:9; Lk 3:21 and 4:1.

enough that you have overcome us and the ocean sea with prayer. Why do you wander all over? Rest, so that we ourselves can have rest.”<sup>15</sup>

Nobody in the church recognises him, neither does, in fact, the possessed man: it is the demons possessing him to disclose Germanus’ identity to the public, it is the evil he had already defeated in Gaul to utter his name. An otherworldly evil recognises the holy in the man, *not* the physical man himself. This passage is a crucial introduction to the final, complete sanctification of Germanus, which will engage the narrative of the last chapters of the text. Constantius sets in words the fact that Germanus is no longer perceived as a good shepherd, a holy human leader: his very essence is sensed by the spiritual enemy of humankind and the ultimate adversary of God, the Devil.

From a textual point of view, this passage ideally opens up the doors of sainthood to Germanus: from now on, his figure is undoubtedly that of a saint, a divine being. His physicality is strongly denied in VG 35 by his refusal of food –again central to the development of the character– and can be read as a metaphor of the saint’s final abandonment of his mortal body, which happens in VG 42 at the moment of his death.

### 5.2.3 TEARS OF GOD: THE BIBLE, EARLY PATRISTIC AND HAGIOGRAPHY

Germanus cries, and does so in a key moment of the narrative, crucially placed within the last ten chapters of the text. The fact needs to be highlighted because tears are powerfully connected to the final metamorphosis of Germanus from man to saint: now close to full sanctification and, indeed, death, Germanus’ miracles become simpler, their rituality more straight forward, as pointed out also by Van Egmond.<sup>16</sup> Tears are not an external adjuvant to the saint’s powers, but rather a sign of it: they do not belong, physically or metaphorically, to the material world, but fully to the person of Germanus

<sup>15</sup> VG 32, 274: *Erat autem dies sanctorum sollemnitate venerabilis, qui in unum plurimus collegerat sacerdotes. Et dum missa sacris misteriis celebratur ad altare, incognitus et improvisus ingreditur, statimque unus e populo, captivus inimici, com ingenti vociferatione proclamat: “ Cur nos in Italia, Germane, persequeris? Sufficiat tibi, quod nos de Galliis exclusisti; sufficiat, quod nos et oceanum mare oratione superasti. Quid universa perlustras? Quiesce, ut nos quieti esse possimus.”*

<sup>16</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 54–6; “Introduction,” 1.1 The Sanctification of Germanus of Auxerre.

and symbolically to the act of communicating with God. Tears are a sign of divine communication, as well as, it will be explained, a strong recall to the figure of Christ.

“The Bible has truly been the cornerstone of Christian and high medieval civilizations in all their manifestations,” says Van Uytfanghe:<sup>17</sup> the presence of tears in the VG it is not an exception to that idea of bond and continuity between Bible and hagiography described by the Belgian historian.<sup>18</sup> In a Christian context, tears root their narrative origin in the imagery and words of the Old Testament. The use of tears as a means of emotional or spiritual emphasis, especially in relation to prayer, can be traced back, at least in a monotheistic context, to it. The Old Testament presents several examples where tears are associated with the act of praying, especially in texts such as Tobit and Judith:

*Tunc Tobias ingemuit et coepit orare cum lacrimis*<sup>19</sup>

*Sed in oratione persistens lacrimis deprecabatur Dominum  
ab isto improprio liberaret eam*<sup>20</sup>

*...quando orabas cum lacrimis*<sup>21</sup>

*Stetit que Iudith ante lectum orans cum lacrimis et  
laborium notu in silentio*<sup>22</sup>

In the first example, the complement of union *cum lacrimis* directly refers to the main verb, which implies the action of praying. *Cum lacrimis* becomes actively an attribute to prayer, both grammatically and narratively: the complement adds a characteristic to the verb it depends upon, the tears add a layer of intensity to the invocation to God. The same can be said for all the passages, where the verb *oro* is defined by the same syntactical complement and by the word *lacrima*. Tears as

<sup>17</sup> Van Uytfanghe, “La Bible,” 104. For the use of biblical references and commentaries in hagiography see also Benedicta Ward, “Cuthbert’s Spirituality,” 65–76.

<sup>18</sup> Van Uytfanghe, “La Bible,” 103–111.

<sup>19</sup> Tb 3:1.

<sup>20</sup> Tb 3:11.

<sup>21</sup> Tb 12:12.

<sup>22</sup> Jdt 13:6.

presented in the Old Testament are, chiefly, tears of mourning and strong emotions,<sup>23</sup> both associated with the act of crying since the beginning of times; but their veritably undeniable association with prayer is, if not new, certainly typical of a Judeo-Christian context. In association with prayer, tears are used to communicate with the divine, as well as express strong feelings of sorrow. These two facets of their symbolic value are kept in all early Christian texts prior to the fourth century, such as the works of John Cassian, where tears appear with regularity in conjunction with the act or the idea of praying:

And we would demand— with flowing tears— a  
sermon of spiritual edification from that very abbot ...<sup>24</sup>

...mixing his prayer with tears ...<sup>25</sup>

But also as an expression of distress:

(once) my lament rose, with the extreme anguish  
of my heart, I exploded in open sobs and tears. <sup>26</sup>

In the first two examples, prayers are emphasised by the presence of tears, whereas the last example mirrors perfectly the emotional build up distinctively associated with sudden weeping. Although the relation between tears, prayers and the divine is well established by the time Constantius writes, it is not yet infused with the nuances that it is to acquire with the approaching of the end of the sixth century, when the doctrine of the *gratia lacrymarum* comes into being.<sup>27</sup> Whereas the teaching of the Desert Fathers brought forward the idea of tears as a way to purge one's sins,<sup>28</sup> it was

<sup>23</sup> Piroska Nagy, *Le don des larmes au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Bibliothèque Albin Michel Histoire, 2000), 41–6.

<sup>24</sup> John Cassian, *Collationes*, I.1, 7: *pariterque ab eodem abbate aedificationis sermonem fusis lacrimis posceremus*.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Collatio II.13, 55: *...orationem cum lacrimis fundens*.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Collatio II.11, 50: *gemitus excitatus, dein cordis mei conpunctione crescente, in apertos singultus lacrimasque prorumpens*.

<sup>27</sup> Sandra McEntire, *The Doctrine of Compunction in Medieval England* (Lampeter: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 1–80.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. and especially *The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian Monks*, Benedicta Ward, ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).



Ambrose, and primarily Augustine, who applied the idea of tears as a type of divine gift to early western Christian theology; in the *Confessiones*,<sup>29</sup> they are described as the bread of the spirit and a manner of *communicating* with the divine, a concept with which Constantius appears to be well familiar. In spite of the fact that the theological weight of tears was obviously starting to develop in the late fourth and fifth century, a true doctrine was not to appear, as mentioned above, for at least another one hundred years. Nevertheless, the biblical and early theological meaning of *lacrimae* influenced early hagiography, and its use in the *Vitae* of the corpus mirrors both: the VA and the RC depict several images where weeping is central, although it is not usually the saint's tears the author describes, but those of whom recur to his help. In the RC the word *lacryma* occurs in three instances, twice in chapter nineteen and once in chapter thirty.<sup>30</sup> Among them, only the instance in chapter thirty can be likened to those presented in the VG. The *lacrymae* are shed during prayer by Mamertus, protagonist and, so it is believed,<sup>31</sup> author of the text. Curiously enough, the episode is tied to the figure of Germanus, whom Mamertus desires to meet:

Then, crying mournful laments, I lay down on the grave, as it were, the Lord's altar, which I watered with tears as I spoke my prayer and said...: "grant that I might contemplate the face of your servant holy Germanus, to whom You led me by this straight path."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Confessiones* 4:7, CCLS 27, 46: *Non in amoenis nemoribus, non in ludis atque cantibus nec in suave olentibus locis nec in conviviis apparatis neque in voluptate cubilis et lecti, non denique in libris atque carminibus adquiescebat. Horrebant omnia et ipsa lux et quidquid non erat quod ille erat, improbum et odiosum erat praeter gemitum et lacrimas: nam in eis solis aliquantula requies;* 5:2, 57–58: *Convertantur ergo et quaerant te, quia non, sicut ipsi deseruerunt creatorem suum, ita et tu deseruisti creaturam tuam. Ipsi convertantur, et ecce ibi es in corde eorum, in corde confitentium tibi, et proicientium se in te et plorantium in sinu tuo post vias suas difficiles: et tu facilis terges lacrimas eorum, et magis plorant et gaudent in fletibus, quoniam tu, domine, non aliquis homo, caro et sanguis, sed tu, domine, qui fecisti, reficis et consolaris eos.* "Enarrationes in Psalmos," 41, 6, in CCLS xxxvii, 463: *...panis mihi factae sunt lacrimae meae, dum differor. Et utique manducando lacrimas suas, sine dubio plus sitit ad fontes. Die quippe ac nocte factae sunt mihi lacrimae meae panis. Cibus istum qui panis dicitur, die comedunt homines, nocte dormiunt; panis autem lacrimarum et die et nocte comeditur; sive totum tempus accipias diem et noctem; sive diem intellegas pro huius saeculi prosperitate, noctem vero pro huius saeculi adversitate.*

<sup>30</sup> RC: 19, 57 (*lacrymosus*); 19, 58 (*lacrymo*); 30, 62 (*lacryma*). The term is not recorded in the VM.

<sup>31</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 137.

<sup>32</sup> RC 30, 62: *...Tunc ego plangentium ejulatum emittens, supra sepulturam, tanquam super aram dominicam, procubui: quam irrigans lacrymis precem fandebar et dixi: ...concede mihi, ut celerius famuli tui sancti Germani contemplare aspectum, cui me recto itinere perduxisti. Cf. Pv 14.2: ambulans recto itinere et timens Deum despicitur ab eo qui infami graditur via.*

Although weeping while in prayer, Mamertus does not perform any miracle. *Lacrima* and many variations of its adjectival form are common in the VA where they, similarly to the episodes in the RC, never occur in conjunction with a miracle, but are rather a corollary to prayer and a sign of faith.<sup>33</sup> In the VE, Eutropius is described as shedding tears in expiation of his previous sins, but there is no association of tears and miracles in the same manner described in the VG.<sup>34</sup>

It becomes clear, then, the diffusion of the term *lacrima* in the texts of the corpus closely reflects the meaning endorsed by biblical and theological literature, but does not positively compare to its use in the VG. The analysis of the VA and the RC in relation to the presence and the value of *lacrima* in their narrative seems to point toward the conclusion that weeping and tears were certainly, during Constantius' time, strongly connected to the act of prayer and the emphasis of powerful emotions, but that their active involvement in miraculous events is not always explicit as it is in the VG.

#### 5.2.4 TEARS IN THE *VITA GERMANI*

The presence of the term *lacrima* in the VG sets the text apart from the other hagiographies of the corpus, a quantitative separation that becomes all the more astonishing when contextualised: the tears shed by Germanus, I will argue, are not the same as the tears shed by any other saint. Constantius, once again, stands out from the rest, this time for a simple, almost unnoticeable quirk in his narrative: Germanus' tears, as opposed to those shed by others in the text or, indeed, in any other early Gallic hagiography of the corpus, always accompany a miracle. Germanus has fully embraced his sainthood, his spiritual powers no longer in need to be helped by medical or liturgical practices. Germanus' tears are no longer simply emphatic, they strengthen the saint's communicative tie with the divine and, ultimately, help with the delivery of miracles. This characteristic is unseen both in the Old Testament *and* in the hagiographical and literary texts of Constantius' time.

<sup>33</sup> VA 8, 142; 9, 142; 19, 148 and 20, 149; 27, 153; 30, 156; 31, 156; (*lacryma*); 12, 144; 14, 146 (*lacrymosus*); 26, 153 (*lacrymabilis*).

<sup>34</sup> VE, 7.

The word *lacrima* in relation to miracles does not recur often in the VG: it only appears twice, at the end of the text, when the saint is already on Italian soil and towards the end of his life. The reader encounters miraculous tears in VG 34, when Germanus prays to deliver an entire household from a deadly fever, and in VG 38 in the most striking of all miracles performed by Germanus, the resurrection of a young boy. In VG 34 he abandons his path to Ravenna to bring words of comfort and prayers to a household plagued by disease: “while lying prostrate he prays to Christ and purchases joys for others with his tears.<sup>35</sup> Germanus lies down on the ground and weeps while imploring Christ to bring relief to the needful family; literally, Germanus *buys* his hosts’ healing with his own tears, *suisque lacrimis gaudia mercatur aliorum*.

In VG 38, a bereaved father, Volusianus, and, in fact, many of the people of Ravenna, implore Germanus to pray for the soul of his son, who had recently died. The bishop lies down beside the body, that was “lifeless and deprived of life’s warmth, already cold with the stiffness of death”<sup>36</sup> and:

Brandishing the weapons of faith, he threw out the crowd and joined himself to the dead man, prostrate in prayer. He waters the earth with tears, the deep groans are offered into the sky, he calls Christ with his cries. During this there is movement in the dead man and, little by little, the vital function of his lifeless limbs is restored. The eyes seek light, the fingers tremble, then the tongue makes sounds. Both rise up: one from prayer, the other from death.<sup>37</sup>

Germanus, again, prostrates himself on the ground, in an act of prayer as well as humility, and invokes the presence and help of Christ. The saint’s tears moisten the ground, and finally the youth returns to life. From a textual point of view, the two episodes are similar: both involve prayer and miracle, both see the bishop lying on the ground in an act of worship and humility. Both, relevantly, climax with the image of Germanus shedding tears as integrant to his prayer: crying appears to be both symbol of

<sup>35</sup> VG 34, 275–6: (...) *Christum prostratus exorat suisque lacrimis gaudia mercatur aliorum*.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 38, 278–9: ...*exanime, et vitae calore depulso, mortis rigoris iam frigidus*.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: *Rigat lacrimis terram, in caelum alti gemitus porriguntur, vocat planctibus Christum*.

empathy and a bridge between mankind and the divine. Tears create a moment of connection with the ideal of the Divinity, of which *lacrima* is the lexical representation: Germanus' tears are an essential symbol of what Van Egmond calls *non-verbal communication* in the text:<sup>38</sup> as such, the term enhances the narrative pathos, but also its development, as it represents an active adjuvant in miraculous events. The language itself of the two passages is very similar: the main verbs are *exoro* in chapter thirty-four and *voco* in chapter thirty eight, both of them implying emphatic oral communication; the posture of Germanus is defined directly by the attribute *prostratus*, prostrated, in both chapters. Although the actual act of praying is more dramatic in VG 38 where Germanus "he waters the earth with tears, the deep groans are offered into the sky, he calls Christ with his cries", both sections present weeping as an essential part of Germanus' ritual of prayer and, indeed, of his own form of communication with God.

The association of tears with the idea of directly communicating to God is applicable to the faithful in general<sup>39</sup> and not only and exclusively with the figure of the saint: in this context, the literary use of *lacrimae* can be traced back to the Old Testament and, with the features presented in its pages, the word comes back strongly both in hagiographies contemporary to Constantius, and in other forms of literature of the same time: the VA and the works of John Cassian both represent extremely prolific examples of it,<sup>40</sup> as I had already discussed above. It seems more relevant to the argument of this chapter, though, to focus on the parallels between Germanus' tears and those episodes in the New Testament where Christ weeps. By doing so, the focus will be brought again upon the "holy man" and his connections and parallels to the divine.

In the case of the most impressive of tear-associated miracles performed by Germanus, the resurrection of VG 38, Constantius seems to have been inspired by an extremely short verse in the Gospel of John, delivered just before the acts that were to

<sup>38</sup> Van Egmond, *Conversing with Saints*, 53–7.

<sup>39</sup> Piroška Nagi, "Religious Weeping as Ritual in the Medieval West" in *Social Analysis* 48, no.2 (Summer 2004), 120–128.

<sup>40</sup> See *ibid.* for an excellent literary and theological overview of the value of tears in the Middle Ages, 119–137.

bring to the resurrection of Lazarus: *Et lacrimatus est Iesus*, Jesus wept.<sup>41</sup> Jesus is called to the household of Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, who were his acquaintances; when Jesus arrives in Bethany, Lazarus is, sadly, already dead. When Mary meets him, followed by many others, all in tears, overwhelmed by pain, Jesus himself cries. He asks to be brought to Lazarus' grave, where He proceeds to invoke His Father and Lazarus is finally brought back to life. The similarities between the two episodes are striking. Not only Germanus and Jesus weep during—or just before—performing a miracle, but it is indeed the same miracle they deliver: they bring back a person from death. The meeting between Germanus and the family and friends of the dead youth is analogous to that of Jesus and Lazarus' sisters and friends: they both happen outside the city walls (Ravenna for Germanus, Bethany for Jesus); Germanus is surrounded by his bishops, just like Jesus is surrounded by the Apostles; sorrow is openly expressed, in both instances, not only by the family of the deceased, but also by numerous other loyal members of the community. When it comes to hagiography, in none of the texts contemporary or earlier than the VG are tears so directly and strongly associated with a miracle as it happens in Constantius' text. It seems evident, then, the true inspiration for the tearful resurrection of the young boy in VG 38 is the resurrection of Lazarus,<sup>42</sup> and that Constantius' idea of *lacrimae* was already pointing towards their divine origin, a factor which is embodied in the text with the powerful parallel just described.

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<sup>41</sup> Jn, 11:35. The full passage narrating the resurrection of Lazarus is in 11:1–45.

<sup>42</sup> In the episode of Lazarus' resurrection Jesus' crying is defined by a derivative of *lacrima*, the attribute *lacrimatus*. He weeps two more times in the New Testament Luke, 19:41–42: As he drew closer, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If today you only knew what makes for peace – but it is hidden from your eyes now. (*Et ut appropinquavit, videns civitatem flevit super illam dicens: "Si cognovisses et tu in hac die, quae ad pacem tibi! Nunc autem abscondita sunt ab oculis tuis*); Letter to the Hebrews, 5:7: When he was flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence (*Qui in diebus carnis suae, preces supplicationesque ad eum, qui possit salvum illum a morte facere, cum clamore valido et lacrimis offerens et exauditus pro sua reverentia*). The first example has clear reference to the fact Jerusalem's religious leaders have refused to accept Christ, Son of God and symbol of peace, (Brown, Fitzmyer, Murphy *New Jerome Bible's Commentary*, 1990) whereas the passage from Hebrews shows Jesus, again, as a human being, who can be overwhelmed by sorrow, as in the case of Lazarus' death, or fear, as in this instance.

### 5.2.5 GERMANUS AND PLACIDIA

The relationship between the Auxerrois and the Empress Galla Placidia<sup>43</sup> characterizes the last chapters of the VG: her presence is stressed and her person described as pious, respectful and humble. She is, in fact, beside Germanus himself, the character Constantius described in most detail, recurring in four chapters of the last section of the VG. In each of them, she performs highly symbolical actions which, in context, act as enhancement and corollary to Germanus' fully obtained holiness. In a hagiographical context, the very relationship between Placidia and Germanus is peculiar. The kind, friendly bond with the Empress and her entourage strikes the reader, especially when compared with the often negative accounts of temporal power in other hagiographies; of particular interest is the analysis of Martinian literature proposed by Fontaine,<sup>44</sup> who stressed the utterly negative light in which imperial power has been constantly depicted in hagiographical works in both late antique and early medieval periods. The relationship between Placidia and Germanus, on the other hand, is pleasant and respectful, from both parts. If Placidia honours Germanus with gifts and vegetarian delicacies (interesting to note that she appears to be well aware of the ascetic habits of her illustrious guest),<sup>45</sup> Constantius is also quick to describe her and her young son as fervent Christians, who embraced the Church wholly and “obeyed the servants of God with sublime humility.”<sup>46</sup>

It is certainly with humility and love, that Placidia nurses a dying Germanus,<sup>47</sup> and it is a dignified humbleness and sense of loss which brings her to dress the body of the saint after his death.<sup>48</sup> Placidia rises above other characters in the narrative for her

<sup>43</sup> For Galla Placidia, see S.I. Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: A Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) and V.A. Sirago, *Galla Placidia e la trasformazione dell'Occidente*, Recueil de Travaux d'Histoire et de Philologie, 4<sup>e</sup> série, fasc. 25 (Louvain, 1961). For a still readable account, see T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders: The Visigothic Invasion*, 1.2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892), 817–888.

<sup>44</sup> “Hagiographie et Politique,” 113–140.

<sup>45</sup> VG 35, 276.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., *Dei famulis sublimi humilitate servient*.

<sup>47</sup> VG 42, 281: *Regina, deposito imperii supercilio, occurrit pauperi, requirit infirmum, tribuens, quicquid ab ea beneficii postulat*. (The queen, putting aside the arrogance of empire, runs to the poor man, looks after the sick man, giving whatever he asks of her as a favour).

<sup>48</sup> VG 44, 281–282; “The Structure of the *Vita Germani*,” note 135.

overwhelming tenderness and her acts of humble respect towards Germanus. On a strictly literal level, their relationship could be read simply as that of a man of faith and a fervent believer, but the symbolic implications derived from the narrative cannot be overlooked, especially in a context where, as mentioned above, the relationship between Church and Empire was not usually portrayed favourably. The relevance of the episodes where Placidia is present, as well as the symbolic value of her gestures, seem to lead to a more complex interpretation, an interpretation which fully fits within the structural analysis of the text I proposed in this work.

In order to understand it, it is necessary to turn to two moments central to the VG and to the spiritual growth of Germanus; both narrations have at their core an encounter of Germanus with temporal power. The first event is the already discussed election of Germanus to the see of Auxerre: it takes place in VG 2<sup>49</sup> and it is one of the pivotal events of the first structural section of the text, analysed in “Deconstructing the Man.” In it, Germanus reacts violently to the episcopacy, which had been bestowed upon him from above by temporal and religious (but bureaucratic) power; Germanus’ authority is overridden, his voice goes metaphorically unheard. Fast forward 26 chapters and Germanus finds himself again face to face with a powerful representative of temporal authority: Gochar. The episode, one of the most relevant in the second structural section of the text, and discussed largely in “Constructing the Saint,”<sup>50</sup> sees the Auxerrois confronting with bravery the king of the Alans, a *rex ferocissimus*, whom he conquers with his powerful poise and pristine faith. Germanus no longer passively accepts temporal power’s supremacy, he literally takes matters into his own hands and, by means of charisma and holiness, transforms Gochar, a king, into a faithful follower of his word. We are now back to Placidia: she enters the narrative with all the grace and *savoir faire* expected from a Roman matron, showing the strength of character typical of an Empress. Politically, she is one of the most powerful individuals in the known world at the time, yet she bows humbly before Germanus and his holiness.

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<sup>49</sup> VG 2, 252; “Deconstructing the Man,” 3.2 First Encounter with Faith.

<sup>50</sup> VG 28, 271; “Constructing the Saint,” 4.3 Germanus the Warrior.

Each of these encounters is symbol of a precise moment in Germanus' path towards sainthood; each has been discussed previously in this work, its particular role within the narrative explained. However, there is more to say: each of these three encounters with temporal power is placed within each of the structural sections I have identified in the text. In each, the dynamics of Germanus' relationship with such a power change dramatically: he is overwhelmed by it in the first instance (VG 2), he conquers it in the second (VG 28) and he is worshipped by it in the third (VG 35 and VG 42-44). I believe this is not casual: it is, in fact, another allegory of Germanus' place on his own spiritual voyage. When he is still profoundly human, he remains at the mercy of temporal power and its representatives (VG 2), but the more he establishes himself as a holy man, the more his superiority is ascertained (VG 28). He reaches his final victory over it when fully sanctified, a moment epitomised by Placidia's respect and ultimate servility. His influence upon temporal power is inversely proportional to the level of rituality of his miracles, and directly proportional to the political status of the person he encounters: the more humanity is abandoned, the more Germanus' influence upon it strengthens, a clear sign of his proceeding sanctification. The holier Germanus becomes, the higher is the socio-political status of his interlocutors. His apotheosis, symbolised chiefly by the resurrection of VG 38 and the events, discussed below, of VG 45, is empowered by the submissive role the Empress embraces willingly in their relationship: even the highest mundane powers recognise the holy man's supremacy, and by doing so, ultimately confirm his becoming.

### 5.2.6 THE *FERETRUM*

As Lauwers says, “the scene of a saint's death ends the narrative of his or her life. It is its successful conclusion. It draws to a close the presentation of a holy life, where the attitude of the dying proves the authenticity of his or her virtues.”<sup>51</sup> The description of Germanus' death does not differ from a hagiographical *topos* which was

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<sup>51</sup> Lauwers, 22: *la scène de la mort termine les récits qui nous racontent la vie d'un saint. Elle est son aboutissement. Elle conclut la présentation d'une vie sainte: l'attitude du mourant 'prouve' la réalité des vertus qui lui ont été attribuées.*



to become well established in the high Middle Ages.<sup>52</sup> The *feretrum*<sup>53</sup> *corporis* highly defines Constantius' narrative, if not linguistically, most certainly culturally. It represents, ink on vellum, the moment of cultural and social change that the growth of the cult of saints brought about in late antique society, and it creates the premises for one of the more striking passages in the text. The true relevance of the miracle certainly lives in its astonishingly clear references to common Christian practices of the time regarding burial, rituals of death and worship of a holy body and, in particular, to an entirely new attitude society did develop towards the dead, which was diametrically opposed to that

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<sup>52</sup> See *ibid.*, for a discussion on the hagiographical representation of the saint's death and its symbolism and, for a broader take on the topic of death in Christian Late Antiquity see Éric Rebillard, *Religion et sépulture: l'église, les vivants et les morts dans L'Antiquité Tardive* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales, 2003). For burial practices and the care of the dead, Bonnie Effros' work *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* is of particular importance. For the idea of saints and post mortem patronage, see Thomas Head, "The Posthumous Patronage of the Saints," in *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, 135–201. For a wider discourse on the rituals and prayers surrounding the dead, see Megan McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayers for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

<sup>53</sup> The distribution of the word *feretrum* is constant throughout the centuries, as no sensible variation of its distribution is registered. The same can be stated for its lexical value, which remained virtually unchanged. (Brepolis database, accessed on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2010; the entry selected was the unflucted stem *feretr\**, applied to *Antiquitas*, *Aetas Patrum i*, *Aetas Patrum ii*. The search showed an homogeneous distribution of the term (34, 29, 36), with no peculiar changes in the meaning of the word. The same search was conducted, on the same date, in the PL online).

of the Roman, Hellenic and Judaic traditions.<sup>54</sup> It is, however, to the symbolic value of the miracle itself in the context of Germanus' sanctification the next pages will be dedicated.

The *feretrum corporis*, that is, the mortal remains of Germanus, placed upon a bier, are the last physical vestiges of the living holy man; they are also steeped in holiness, to the point that their own presence can perform miracles.<sup>55</sup> This peculiarity, which calls upon two seminal concepts of saints' cult, those of *presentia* and *potentia*, is the ultimate sign of Germanus' achieved sanctity: now free from the worldly bond of a physical body, his spirit acts *through* the body itself. Germanus' physical vestige, no longer sign of his own humanity, no longer tied to human necessities, turns into the symbol of his own spiritual power and ultimate blessedness. The *feretrum* is not an

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<sup>54</sup> The Christian habit to pray and ask for grace near a saint's tomb originated our western Christian cult of the dead, which had started right around the second century AD and deeply changed not only people's customary behaviour towards the departed, but also strongly influenced the Mediterranean city landscape, which started to develop outside its walls and around cemeteries, to create proper worship establishments that were to facilitate pilgrims and local faithful alike, in their own search for spiritual awakening or miracles requests (A very fulfilling and interesting view on the matter of the changes in civic landscape during the first two centuries of Christianity can be found in Peter Brown *The cult of Saints*, especially in its first three chapters).

The development and history of Christian faith during the final centuries of the Roman Empire and the early growth of post-roman Europe created the cultural premises for a deep social change within the layers of society; whereas, in earlier years, death had been treated as an enemy of the living and the dead, although loved and remembered, had been relegated to the very outskirts of both cities and social care. But Christianity in general and, in particular, the rise of the cult of saints, changed the state of things deeply: just as the saint's body could not only be approached but also touched, prayed at, in acts of faith and in desire of holy protection, so the attitude of the faithful towards those of their own dead varied greatly: the same respect and worship dedicated to the saint's remains were to become customary for all the dead. The burial *ad sanctos* (See Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints*; John Crook, *The architectural Settings of the Cult of Saints*; Catherine M. Chin 'The Bishop's two bodies: Ambrose and the Basilicas of Milan', in *Church History*, 79–3) became sought after, consequently increasing the number of graves within city limits, inside Churches or monasteries: Christians longed for the possibility to have their beloved buried in proximity of a holy person in order to, in a sort of after-death miracle, help them in their path towards salvation. But the phenomenon was not entirely accepted or even supported by the doctrinal fathers of the Church of Late Antiquity: Augustine heavily criticized it from a theological point of view (Augustinus Hipponensis, *De Cura Mortuis Gerenda*) although his opinion did change by the time he wrote *De Civitate Dei*, where part of the last book is, in fact, dedicated to the positive implications of such cult and to its Christian justification. In any case, it is clear how the burial *ad sanctos* was important for the living: beside the possibility of honouring saints and family in the same place, and the conceivable celestial advantages their own dead may have gained, being buried beside or in proximity of a saint must have denoted a clear status signifier to society.

<sup>55</sup> Germanus' post mortem miracles are the core of the "Miracula Sancti Germani Episcopi Autissiodorensis" by Heiricus of Auxerre, PL vol. 124, as well as of the "Vita Genovefae Virginis Parisiensis," in Bruno Krusch, ed., MGH SS. Rer. Merov.3 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1896), 204–238 and Venantius Fortunatus' "De Vita Sancta Radegundis," *ibid.* 2 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1888), 364–95.

intermediary to the performance of a miracle in the way, for instance, the *capsula* or food may have been, because its value is entirely symbolic: it is the ultimate symbol of Germanus' *potentia* and *presentia*. Moreover, the healing of a paralytic brings about, once again, the parallel between Germanus and Jesus, a parallel, it has been discussed, which becomes particularly strong in the powerful act of weeping and its consequences, as discussed in the previous section. The audience, then, is presented with a miracle strongly reminiscent of Christ's own miracles, in what truly appears to be the apotheosis of Germanus as a holy figure, embodied in the text also by his own physical death, the ultimate moment of liberation from the constraints and instincts of bodily needs.

The text itself does not present linguistic peculiarities, and the *feretrum* is not defined by any specific attribution or narrative description; the miracle in VG 45 is very simple and the meaning of the word itself is naturally deducted from the context. The position of the woman is clearly described by the construction of the verb *subdo*, by which it is implied the *feretrum* Constantius intended was more a bier than a coffin. Beside this characteristic, nothing more is given up by the text. The episode of the matron's healing is only few lines long:

When the body was on its journey, it reached Piacenza during the dark of night. The body is placed in the church and, while it is honoured by vigils of holy devotion, a certain woman of the place, so consumed by paralysis that none of her limbs functioned, begged to be placed under the body's bier, and there she lay until light shone. Early in the day, the body is taken away; she stands up: both matron and woman brought to life by the dead, to the amazement of the people, pays her debt by following the procession on her feet.<sup>56</sup>

Germanus' thaumaturgic power emanates from his corpse: the fact is clear

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<sup>56</sup> VG 45, 282: *Placentiam corpus, dum praeterit, caeca iam nocte pervenit. Quod in ecclesia conlocatum dum vigiliis sanctae devotionis excolitur, matron quaedam loci eius paralisi dissoluta, ita ut nullum membrorum suo fungeretur officio, precaria depoposcit, ut feretro corporis subderetur, ibique usque ad lucem extent decubuit. Mature corpus adtollitur, surgit et mulier et, vivificata per mortuum, mirantibus populis, propriis pedibus debitum reddit obsequium.*

representation of the late antique Christian concept of a saint's *potentia*,<sup>57</sup> that is, of his or her capability to deliver miracles through objects and without being physically present. It is also another Christian, late antique idea of sainthood that appears with strength in this passage, that of *presentia*.<sup>58</sup> presence of the eternal holy in relation with its immanent incarnation. The concepts of saintly *potentia* and *presentia* are complementary, as *presentia* is postulate to *potentia*: quite literally, the idea of *presentia* means the holiness of the blessed man or woman *is present*, even after death, in proximity of their bodies or relics. Being close to a holy man, physically close to him, could help the faithful to grow spiritually and, possibly, to gain improvements or healings. Proof of this behaviour is to be found in the VG itself in more than one

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<sup>57</sup> Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, chapter 5, presents the essentials about these concepts. See also, for an interesting application of *potentia* and *presentia* to the hagiographical context, Mark S. Burrows, "On the Visibility of God in the Holy Man: a Reconsideration of the Rol of the Apa in the Pachomian" *Vigiliae Christianae* 41, no. 1 (March 1987), 11–33 where not only their nature, but also their potential social value, are discussed.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, chapter 5.

occasion,<sup>59</sup> when the faithful gather around him, run towards him, seek his touch or his word. An interesting case of how proximity with a holy man could develop one's perception and ultimately save a person or bring on one's conversion to Christianity is found in RC 23, when Mamertus seeks refuge from a storm in a funerary chapel in the outskirts of Auxerre and falls asleep on the very grave within, without knowing the body resting there was that of the blessed Corcodemus. In this case, the nearness to a holy dead does not heal physically, but ultimately, heals the pagan Mamertus spiritually who eventually returns from Auxerre a Christian (also with the help of Germanus).<sup>60</sup> Gallic hagiography offers another example of miracle in which the *potentia* and *presentia* of the saint, emanated by his mortal remains, act in direction of a miraculous deed: in a passage of chapter thirty-two, Stephanus, biographer of Saint Amator, predecessor of Germanus himself on the see of Auxerre, describes an episode which brings more than one resemblance to the miracle of the *feretrum corporis*:

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<sup>59</sup> See VG 10, when the apparition of a ghost forces a young brother to seek help in the physical presence of the saint; VG 13 where, similarly, his crew seeks his help and wisdom to beat the demons who created a raging sea tempest, while the saint was travelling for the first time to Britain. Interestingly, in both VG 10 and 13, Germanus is asleep and his brothers need to wake him to get his help, a fact that brings strongly forward, I believe, the metaphor of sleep as surrogate absence of the saint, hence of physical distance between him and his brothers; VG 14 and 15, where Constantius delivers the strong image of the people of Britain witnessing his victory against the pelagians and implicitly crowding around him, so much so that, the family protagonist of the miraculous episode of chapter fifteen needs to make its way *through* the crowd (*in medium*); VG 15 again, where the crowd runs to the burning house where Germanus lies injured; VG 23, where the arrival of Germanus in Lyons; VG 26 and 27, when Germanus travels again to Britain and people gather around him while he debates again with the Pelagians, as well as healing a young boy; VG 30, where people of all ages get to know about his presence and bring themselves towards his group; VG 32 when he exorcises a man in Milan and the entire congregation witnesses it; VG 35, when he enters Ravenna; VG 36, in occasion of the miracle of the gaol; VG 37, where Constantius describes briefly how the Ravennates felt towards Germanus; VG 38 during the miracle on the young son of Volusianus, and finally in VG 45 and 46 when Constantius describes the pilgrimage following Germanus' body to Auxerre, and the welcome his city gave to him. Different the episode narrated in John 5, 1–9, in which the miracle happens in Jerusalem, rather than Cafarnaus:<sup>1</sup>*Post haec erat dies festus Iudaeorum et ascendit Iesus Hierosolymam.* <sup>2</sup>*Erat autem Hierosolymis, super Probatica, piscina, quae cognominatur Hebraice Bethsatha, quinque porticus habens.* <sup>3</sup>*In his iacebat multitudo languentium, caecorum, claudorum, aridorum.* <sup>5</sup>*Erat autem quidam homo ibi triginta et octo annos, habens in infirmitate sua.* <sup>6</sup>*Hunc cum vidisset Iesus iacentem, et cognovisset quia multum iam tempus habet, dicit ei: 'vis sanus fieri?'* <sup>7</sup>*Respondit ei languidus: 'Domine, hominem non habeo, ut, cum turbata fuerit aqua, mittat me in piscinam; dum autem venio ego, alius ante me descendit'.* <sup>8</sup>*Dicit ei Iesus: 'Surge, tolle grabatum tuum et ambula'.* <sup>9</sup>*Et statim sanus factus est homo et sustulit grabatum suum et ambulabat'.*

<sup>60</sup> RC 23, 63.

Indeed, on the way through which the body (of the saint) had to be transported, there was a terrifying prison, where many prisoners were kept because of their crimes. And when the bier where the body was transported passed in front of that jail, the locks of all gates broke immediately open, chains burst off the bodies of the prisoners and the *genera* of all ties were loosened.<sup>61</sup>

The miracle closely mirrors one performed by a living Germanus in VG 34, when the saint frees the inmates of a Ravenna prison by means of prayer. Those liberated by Germanus and Amator march towards the church and fervently pray to thank the saint for the miracle just performed. The importance of Amator's miracle, however, resides in the fact it did not come into being through a conscious and wilful act of Amator himself, but, just as in the case of the piacentinian woman's healing, the mere *presentia* of the saint represented by his corpse—his *potentia* delivered through the dead body—made the miracle possible. Germanus' healing in Piacenza and Amator's liberation of the prison's inmates, both performed by the supernatural presence and power of a dead holy man, are literary representations of a newly born attitude towards the dead that Christianity carried within its teachings, but also a sign both Germanus and Amator reached a full state of holiness. In the case of Germanus, though, such state of holiness, of fully achieved spirituality comes after a process of "becoming" not discernible in Amator's life. As explained and analysed in "Deconstructing the Man," Amator is literarily presented to the audience as an already formed holy figure, whereas Germanus' humanity is incredibly important in Constantius' text and characterises its protagonist in many a pivotal moment of his life. The saint embodies, in his or her perfect way of living, religious fervour and holiness, the ideal of the true Christian, modelled on the very life and image of Jesus Christ;<sup>62</sup> in the particular case of Germanus and the healing of the paralytic woman, the idea of the *imitatio Christi* is also

<sup>61</sup> VA 32, 157–8: ...*Erat autem in itinere, per quod corpus fuerat transiturum, teterrimus carcer, ubi vincti non pauci pro suo admissio scelere tenebantur. Ante quod ergastulum quum feretrum, in quo corpus bajulabatur, veniret, illico arctamenta claustrorum franguntur, catenae a corporibus obnoxiorum dissiliunt, et vinculorum omnium genera relaxantur.*

<sup>62</sup> Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity Author(s), *Representations*, University of California Press, No. 2 (Spring, 1983), 1–25.

powerfully brought forward by the form of the miracle itself. The healing of paralysis is presented in the synoptic Gospels in the episode of the ‘Paralytic of Cafarnaus’ and in the Gospel of John in that of healing by the Betzaeta’s pool,<sup>63</sup> in Jerusalem. Albeit different in narrative – Jesus is, in fact, alive and well when performing these healings – it is still important to underline the relevance of such a parallel, especially in the context of a hagiography.

Germanus’ *feretrum corporis*, though, more than anything else, becomes at once the symbol of Germanus’ freedom from the world of shadows, to use a platonic expression, and of his full beatification, which finally transformed what made him human, his body, into an instrument of sanctity.

### 5.3 CONCLUSION

The previous pages analysed Germanus’ last miracles and discussed how their rituality appears to be different from those studied in the previous chapters. This difference, I argued, was based on the diminished importance of intermediary objects – such as the *capsula*, oil and bread in the miracles discussed in “Constructing the Saint” – in miracles’ deliverance, a fact whose origins were to be sought into the ever-evolving sanctifying process of Germanus, which reaches, in the last ten chapters of the narrative, its climax. The essential core of this section was to demonstrate, through a in depth, clear reading of the episodes in VG 34, 38 and 45 how the literary Germanus had finally achieved full sanctification, and how such a focal moment can be identified clearly by how he performed miracles. In order to do so, attention has been brought not only upon how each miraculous event has taken place, but also upon the similitude between Germanus and Christ, symbolically embodying the ultimate ascension to sainthood. Although such parallel is certainly visible in other passages and events of the VG, it is especially, I discussed, in the resurrection in VG 38, delivered by a weeping Germanus, that the figure of Jesus seems to be recalled with more strength. Moreover, the weeping of Germanus and Jesus takes places in relation to the same type of miracle, a

<sup>63</sup> Mt 9: 1–8; Mk 2, 1–12; Lk 5: 17–26.

resurrection: the ultimate sign of holiness, especially in the case of Germanus, whose path to blessedness started, it has been explained in “Deconstructing the Man”, within an entirely human and mundane background.

The resurrection of the youth in VG 38 becomes even more relevant to the argument of this thesis when considering its simple chronological placement in the text: it is one of the last miracles performed by Germanus, certainly the most inexplicable from a practical point of view. It is, I mentioned, the very sign of Germanus' final embrace with sanctity, a final embrace symbolised by his tears, means of communication with God and proof of similarities with Christ. This last miracle takes on its full significance when compared to the episodes of other Gallic hagiographical texts: in the VM, for instance, resurrections take place very early in the text, in VM 7 and 8,<sup>64</sup> but this is not surprising. As mentioned in “Deconstructing the Man,” Martin and Amator, the closest saintly and hagiographical figures to Germanus, are defined as holy since the narrative inception, their faith and sainthood never discussed.

Both enter the pages of their literary lives as fully spiritualised figures, the sanctification of whom is not necessary. It is not, therefore, surprising a miracle of the proportion and symbolic value of a resurrection is carried out so early in the VM: if full identification of the protagonist with Christ and full acceptance of Christian creed and dogma are the causal necessities for the miracle to take place, Sulpicius Severus' Martin certainly matched the criteria from a very early age. The same, though, cannot be said for Germanus, as discussed in the previous three chapters: as a consequence, the simple fact that resurrections happens in such different moments in the hagiographies of the two saints, seems only to strengthen the argument behind this dissertation, that is, that the VG is not simply the story of a saint, but of a man *becoming* a saint, where “becoming” has to be considered with its fully ontological meaning. Tears are, therefore, the narrative motor of Germanus' climatic moment of full association with Christ, as well as the symbol of a new way of performing miracles, which no longer involves the use of any mundane intermediary.

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<sup>64</sup> VM 7, 8.



Germanus dies in VG 42, but his last miracle happens in VG 45 and it is carried out *post mortem*, the ultimate sign of holiness: finally free from bodily bonds, Germanus is fully sanctified, a fact symbolically represented by how the holy Germanus uses the physical Germanus –all that symbolises, in life, a man’s impossibility to fully embrace the divine and transcend the mundane– to perform a miracle. The miracle of chapter forty-two is also fully representative of the concepts of *potentia* and *presentia*, which are intimately and powerfully associated to the figure of the saint.

The miraculous events of the last ten chapters of the VG represent the conclusion of Germanus’ voyage towards sainthood, a climax anticipated in the events of chapters thirty-two, thirty-four and thirty-eight, reached and underlined by his death in chapter forty-two and his last astonishing miracle in chapter forty-five. Germanus’ voyage to holiness ends, symbolically, with another trip, that towards Gaul, his home, as well as that of his final ascension to Heaven.

**CHAPTER SIX****CONCLUSION:  
THE AFTERLIVES OF THE SAINT**

Each of the previous chapters has explored a particular moment in the narrative life of Germanus of Auxerre, identified and defined by the lexicon and the stylistic approach chosen by the author. His first steps into the episcopacy of Auxerre were taken to the accompaniment of military metaphors. His acceptance of faith was characterised by the embrace of asceticism. He passes through a series of medically and liturgically oriented miracles in the middle section of the *vita*. Finally, Germanus reached full sanctity toward the end of the text, a moment signified by events in which rituality is replaced by Christological similitudes and prayer. This final chapter will shift point of view from the text itself to its diffusion and its influence on other contemporary and later *vitae*, emphasising the possible historical and political reasons behind such choices, with particular reference to the insular context. This *Nachleben*, as well as the interesting relationship between Germanus and Placidia and its possible significance, represent relevant avenues for further research, the genesis of which can be found within the pages of this work.

**6.1 AFTERLIVES OF THE SAINT**

In the years spent researching the body of this thesis, many possible avenues of research had to be neglected, because not directly involved in the development of its specific argument, or because they proved to be too large a topic to insert within an already lengthy work. Some could be, nevertheless, not only of interest, but of great relevance to the development of contemporary scholarship on the figure of Germanus, his time and the dissemination of Constantius' work.

The case of Adomnán's use of the narrative of VG 13 in the *Vita Columbae*, for instance, opens a series of questions investing the historical and social, as well as the literary, weight of the VG in the early Middle Ages. In VG 13, Germanus fights

off evil spirits attempting to keep him away from Britain by causing a sea storm;<sup>1</sup> In the *Vita Columbae* ii.34, Adomnán mentions this episode directly, as well as describing a parallel miracle carried out by Columba himself.<sup>2</sup>

VG 13 is, therefore, both quoted and intertwined within the narrative of one of Columba's miracles. As pointed out by Sharpe in the notes to his translation to the *Vita Columbae*, Adomnán not only "retained some of the phrases" of Constantius' prose, but was also clearly influenced by the Lyonnaise in his choice of vocabulary.<sup>3</sup> This particularity is of great relevance, as it seems to underline the potential linguistic influence of the VG on such a powerful text as the *Vita Columbae*.

The choice of the passage itself, and the blatant reproduction of it, seems to be even more enthralling. As mentioned many a time in this very work, Germanus' best known claim to fame, at least historically, was his missions to Britain to fight the Pelagian heresy: Germanus is symbol and representative of orthodoxy against heresy and, ultimately, embodies the victory of the former over the latter. Adomnán's choice of comparing Columba to Germanus may potentially be read as a will on his behalf to associate Columba and, by extension, his community at Iona, to Christian righteousness and orthodoxy. This parallel is made even stronger by the fact the VG is not considered to be among the most important sources used by Adomnán.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the question of how and why the VG has influenced Adomnán's composition of the *Vita Columbae* seems to extend further than a strictly literary and stylistic field, and could encompass the historical and political role of Iona and its abbot.

The same episode is reprised by Bede in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* 1.17. More than being inspired by Constantius, Bede lifted the episode from the VG and made it, along with the entire narrative of Germanus' first trip to Britain, active part

<sup>1</sup> VG 13, 259–260; "Apotheosis of the Saint," 5.1 Introduction, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita Columbae* ii.34, 144–146, VG 13, 260. See footnote 16 for quotes.

<sup>3</sup> Adomnán of Iona, *Life of Saint Columba*, Richard Sharpe trans., Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1995), 336.

<sup>4</sup> Sharpe, *Ibid.*, 53–65, Picard, "Structural Patterns," 67–82, where the main written sources for the *Vita Columbae* are identified as Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* and Athanasius' *Vita Antoni*. To note, however, the point made by Charles-Edwards in his review of Anderson and Anderson's *Adomnán's Life of Columba* (*Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 26 (1993), 65–73), also cited and discussed by Stansbury (155) that, at least from a structural point of view, the similarities between these hagiographies and the *Vita Columbae* do not appear to be as clear cut as some previous scholarship has stated.

of his work.<sup>5</sup> In fighting the Pelagian heresy, Germanus became a symbol of Christian orthodoxy, a matter, in fact, close to Bede's heart: Bede was supporter and paramour of the Roman form of Catholicism and its practices, which had been embraced by the English church during the Synod of Whitby, in 664.<sup>6</sup> Roman practices and reckoning of Easter were chosen over insular tradition and became a sign of that universal church Bede proposed and exalted in his works. The unity and supremacy of the Roman Church was to be embodied by the English people and their worship, an English people that Bede considered one and united, and upon which he bestowed the characteristics of the *gentes* of Israel.<sup>7</sup> With such premises, it is easy to see why Bede may have placed so much importance on the figure of Germanus, for both historical and allegorical reasons.

Germanus appears in both Adomnán and Bede's works in the same context (that of his visit to Britain); his figure may have been used by the authors as a symbol of orthodoxy to be associated to their own religious communities. This is of enormous interest when read in the light of the ongoing doctrinal feud between the Insular and the Roman Church at the time of Adomnán and Bede. Bede, as exhaustively explained by Gunn,<sup>8</sup> was clearly unhappy with Iona's resistance to accept and embrace Roman Catholicism as its own. Columba, the very founder and symbol of the community, is described coldly at best in the *Historia*, and is very much considered by Bede as a righteous abbot, but not as a holy man;<sup>9</sup> the appropriation of Germanus' figure, and his hagiography, as a symbol of orthodoxy (and, in the case of Adomnán, as an illustrious parallel to enhance the holiness of Columba) by two authors standing at diametrically opposed positions on the issue of orthodoxy itself, could have the potential for further, interesting research. The presence and relevance in both texts of the acquiescence of the storm's miracle, seems to

<sup>5</sup> VG 12–18, 259–265; Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 1.17–1.21, 54–65.

<sup>6</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, Introduction, xvii–xxv; Vicky Gunn, *Bede's Historiae: Genre, Rhetoric, and the Construction of Anglo-Saxon Church History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 37–55, and especially Robert Van de Weyer, ed., *Bede: Celtic and Roman Christianity in Britain* (Berkhamsted: A. James, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> George Hardin Brown, *A Companion to Bede*, Anglo-Saxon Studies (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 101–116.

<sup>8</sup> Gunn, 68–93.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 70–72, where Gunn addresses the interesting topic of how Bede failed to use the standard lexicon associated to holy figures to Columba.

be particular dense with meaning, too, not only for its evident Christological references and historical background, but also for the presence of water and its allegorical value,<sup>10</sup> as well as the symbolism associated with the perils of the sea and their demonic origin, which could be read as the struggle between orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy itself.

Germanus' presence in Italy also provides interesting cues for research. The relationship between the saint and the Empress Galla Placidia is heavy with political, as well as literary symbolism, as it seems to portray the submission of imperial to religious power, as well as representing the culminating point of a literary pattern within the VG which could be explored in more depth.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

The previous chapters have argued for the presence of a particular pattern in the VG, a pattern made all the more noticeable when considering narrative themes and lexicon. This pattern, it emerged, described a human/spiritual duality, which characterized the beginnings of Germanus' episcopal mission, but was also weaved into the description and development of his own career as a miracle worker. Page after page, episode after episode, Germanus' actions have been read and interpreted, analyzed in their linguistic and narrative aspects: the figure Constantius presented to his audience stood out from other examples of literary saints for his intrinsic humanity, revealed with pathos in the narratives of VG 2, where the first leading, lexical theme of the text, war and the military, made its entrance in relation to Germanus' episcopal election.

This thesis ultimately wanted to present a structural reading of the VG based on this textual peculiarity and focusing on the presence, within the narrative life of the saint, of depictions of his own humanity, and how they were to leave more and more space to his growing "holiness:" human connotations appeared first as the chief characterizing elements of the literary Germanus, as discussed in "Deconstructing the Saint," and have been of the greatest importance to the interpretation of the miraculous corpus occupying the central body of the text itself.

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<sup>10</sup> As discussed in "Germanus' Holiness Revealed," 5.2.1 The Crossing.

After his epiphany, that very same humanity became the first sign of Germanus' effort to fulfil his spiritual destiny, a step sketched with the vivid language of asceticism and food renunciation (VG 3). Throughout the best part of the narrative, Germanus' duality is mirrored and confirmed by the performance of his miracles, heavily influenced, in lexicon and method of delivery, by medical –and at times liturgical– practices, symbols of the Auxerrois' ties with human nature. (VG 8, VG 11, VG 15 and VG 29). These practical acts, however, always produced miraculous results. The same, it has been discussed, is true for Germanus' military attitude and sense of leadership, which is transformed from a sign of mundane strength (VG 2) to one of divine power (VG 17–18, VG 28).

This sense of constructive struggle between human and holy lasts up to the events of VG 31, where the narrative focuses, on a merely literal level, on Germanus' alpine crossing into Italy and his charitable offer of help to an elderly worker, but, on the allegorical, portrays the very moment of his full ascension to sainthood (VG 31). The fact Germanus is thus recognised not by people, but demons (fully spiritual entities) in the following section (VG 32) proves human nature has been fully abandoned and blessedness fully embraced.

The last ten chapters of the text, as a consequence, have been created to portray Germanus in his purest sanctity: in spite of still inhabiting a physical body, the Auxerrois is wholly sanctified and, once again, his status is described through the type of miracles he performs. In the final pages of the VG, he is protagonist of healings and extraordinary events that no longer have any connection to the mundane, but rely entirely on his holiness to be successful. His ultimate sanctity is achieved after death, as demonstrated by a post-mortem miracle. Ultimately, Constantius' work has not only shown Germanus' path to holiness by emphasising specific events (those at the centre of each chapter's discussion), but also creating a narrative that supported and highlighted those very episodes. As “The Structure of the *Vita Germani*” has shown, the events upon which I have focused my research stood out for both narrative and lexical reasons: they are, in a way, the stylistic jewels of this literary piece, the rest of the narrative acting as a gilded mounting supporting them and holding, emphasising and supporting them.

This study, I like to believe, shone a new light on Constantius' creative process and how it was not only influenced by the standards and *topoi* typical of early western hagiography, but also by a will to create a more complex, yet subtle approach to the figure of the saint and his literary rendition.

**THE LIFE OF GERMANUS, BISHOP OF AUXERRE, WRITTEN BY CONSTANTIUS**

*Constantius the sinner to the most blessed Patient, apostolic lord and to the bishop serving as my patron for eternity.*

Obedience, which leads many to attempt what they are not able to achieve, lays claim to pride of place among all the virtues on account of its merit. And for that reason those who obey orders without taking their own abilities into account should be considered worthy of praise for their devotion. And so, as you, venerable bishop, wish to make a holy man well known for his divine power and grant permission to collect examples of all his miracles, you have very frequently ordered me to relate for the people of today and those to come, in whatever style, the life of the holy bishop Germanus, which until now has been concealed by silence. While I audaciously undertake such duty, I feel I am guilty of presumption. Forgive me, though. It is almost as though your judgment were also stained with some responsibility, you who ought rather to have chosen a narrator worthy of such material. But because both of us have sinned out of affection—you by considering me capable of what I am not, and I by willingly submitting to your authority—pray that my labour<sup>1</sup> may earn, by your intercession, the favour it cannot obtain by its own merit. May you long prosper and always remember me.

*Constantius the sinner to Censurius the bishop, most blessed lord and venerable to me by apostolic honour.*

My first care is to preserve the modesty of a humble conscience. If, by chance, I somehow trespass its boundaries, it is more the fault of the one who ordered than it is mine. And so the authority of your brother and holy bishop Patiens made it possible for me to narrate, although only in part, the life and the deeds of the most blessed bishop

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<sup>1</sup> *Ministerium* has both pagan and Christian significance. It appears here, at the end of the preface, and five times in the *vita*.



Germanus. I have obeyed his instructions not as I ought, but as I could.

And since my obedience had reached the notice of your holiness, you commanded me to rush once more into such an audacious act by ordering that this little page, which up to now had been kept in a place of hiding, might be diffused more widely with me as an author, and that I might be made both the accuser and the betrayer of my own guilt. For, clearly the shame will undoubtedly remain with me forever if the lowliness of my words reaches the ears of the learned.

And so, after putting aside the veil of modesty and submitting to your will, I sent you the homage of my immoderate devotion and I dare request, as assurance of your affection, that you protect me by means of a double favour: first that my work may escape the judgment of the reader, then, that it may be brought, by your intercession, to the knowledge of my holy lord, the blessed Germanus.

*The preface begins*

Many are induced to write by the appeal of a rich material, as talent is thought to be made richer by the presence of plenty of ideas. But trepidation strikes me now, as I am about to tell, at least in part, about the life and the deeds of the most illustrious man and bishop Germanus, because of the great number of his miracles. And just as the splendour of the sun is carried in by human sight, thus dulling the keenness of the eyes, light pours out from light, so the feebleness of my spirit is terrified and feels unable to recount the wealth of miracles it is offered. But conflicting thoughts clash with each other within the depths of my heart. On one hand, the consciousness of my inability stops me; on the other, the sight of such holiness, and the examples of so many miracles, compels me to remember and recount some of them. If covered by silence, they would be impiously withdrawn from the knowledge and the edification of all.

Because of this I preferred to put aside my shame rather than let every occasion for divine miracles grow old in oblivion. The subject excuses the speaker, and those offended by the baseness of my words will be pleased by the beauty of the meaning. Nor

do I fear being accused of ruining this sort of work [*ministerium*]: such a long time has passed since the events that they are hardly known nowadays, and their knowledge can barely be acquired, so veiled are they in silence. Truly, I would have preferred that others rather than I had been narrators of such good things, because, whoever they were, they would have been more worthy than I. Because this did not happen, I prefer it to be me rather than no one.

*The preface ends.*

### GERMANUS, ASCETICISM AND THE BEGINNING OF THE PATH TO HOLINESS

*The life of Saint Germanus begins.*

1. Thus Germanus was a native of the town (*oppidum*) of Auxerre. He was born of most noble (*splendidissimi*) parents and trained by them in the rudiments of liberal studies from his infancy. Here, the union of teaching with the fertility of his mind brought about notable results and made him well educated, thanks to the double gift of his own ability and industry. And so, for a full perfection of letters to come together in him, after the Gallic lecture halls he added knowledge of the law with full perfection in the city of Rome. Then, he honoured the tribunals of the prefecture with his presence as a lawyer. While in such a position, he shines by light of many a compliment and chooses a wife of eminent family, wealth, and morals. Indeed, the state [*res publica*] had at once trusted him, the excellent by praise, with the honour of the toga and then promoted him, conferring on him prestigious leadership over provinces. He was formed further by the hidden will of God, in order that he who was soon to be a bishop would not lack any perfection. His eloquence prepared him for sermons; his knowledge of law for justice; the company of a wife for a witness to chastity.

2. When suddenly divine authority springs forth, accompanied by the agreement of all. For all the clergy and the entire nobility, the people of the city and of the countryside, all came to a single opinion: one voice demanded that Germanus be bishop of all. War is declared on a power whose subjugation was easy, because it was achieved

by those qualities that he had prepared for himself. He embraced priesthood reluctant, forced, unwilling. But he suddenly turns away from everything. The army of this world is abandoned, that of heaven is taken up; the vanity of this world is forsaken, humility is chosen as a way of life. His wife is transformed from a spouse to a sister; his riches are given to the poor; poverty is embraced.

3. Now it is indeed impossible to tell with what strength of enmity he did violence to himself, which torments and sufferings of the body he inflicted upon himself: he became his own persecutor. I will summarize briefly everything as faithfully as possible. From the very day he was introduced to the priesthood up to the end of his life, he fed his soul while he starved his body with such determination that he never accepted wheaten bread, nor wine, nor vinegar, nor oil, nor vegetables—he never even used salt as seasoning for his food.

In fact, on Easter and Christmas, only single drinks were accepted, in which the flavor of the wine was weakened by large amounts of water, just as the sourness of vinegar is usually tempered in a diluted mixture. During his meals, first he would take a taste of ashes, then he ate spelt bread, which he had threshed and ground himself. And even though this food is considered more burdensome than hunger (*ieiuniis*), it was never served until evening, sometimes in the middle of the week, more often on the seventh day.

4. In all seasons he wore a tunic and a cowl, for he added no garment in winter nor took any away in summer. Both were used for so long, unless new clothing was given to him by chance, until they were consumed by excessive use. On the inside, a hair shirt was always close to his body. His very narrow bed was made of small wooden beams put together simply, and held up to its edge scattered ashes: these, compacted by daily pressure, offered the hardness of unworked soil.

All his bedding consisted in a hair shirt underneath, on top of that a cloak. He did not add anything to the nape of his neck to lift his head from the shoulders. With such a posture, he had condemned his limbs to be prostrated just as if they were on naked soil. He was never dressed during the night and seldom removed his shoes and belt, and

always wore around his neck a small container (*capsula*) attached to a leather string containing relics of saints. There was continuous sighing, steadfast prayer, for he was not able to sleep for long periods with such torments. Let anyone say what he thinks, but for the rest I declare without a doubt that blessed Germanus endured a long martyrdom among so many miseries. One can say whatever he thinks, but I, without a doubt, believe the blessed Germanus has endured a long sufferance because of so much anguish.

How noble are the goodness and the love of Our Lord, who compensated his servant, faithfully advancing on the path of truth with a double reward, so that his past mistakes, if there had been any, would be erased, and his piousness would quickly be cleansed. And the one who, perhaps, was guilty of past sins, began to be the one dispensing all virtues.

**5.** He observed hospitality with extraordinary attention. Indeed, he offered his home to all regardless of status, without any exception, and the fasting shepherd, offered them a feast. The guardian and servant of the Lord's teaching washed the feet of all with his hands.

**6.** And so, the most blessed man did something most difficult: he kept a life of solitude among multitudes of people and a hermitage in intercourse with the world. He who taught a twofold path to advance toward Christ for the increase of religion founded a monastery on the far bank of the river Yonne within sight of the town. He did this so that people would be carried off to the Catholic faith, both by congregations of monks and by ecclesiastical grace—especially because, with such a bishop and teacher (his miracles well known by all) faith burned ardently. And so that the miraculous powers (whose worth was increasing) might be experienced, the foundation was not in pride, but mercy.

**HOLY ACTS AND HUMAN CHARACTER**

7. At that time there was a man of good morals, Ianuarius by name. And since he served as chief of the gubernatorial office, he had the duty of delivering the money exacted from the people of the province to the ruler of the province. When this man detoured from his route to see the bishop, he lost the purse he carried. Although none of those near him noticed, by chance a man who was often troubled with evil affliction, found it. Then, when he returned home, the traveler discovered his loss: he filled the city (*civitas*) with complaints and sought the money from none other than the most blessed bishop, as though he had entrusted it to him. Just as if he were the real debtor, Germanus promised, in the name of God, that the money would be restored. And then when it was Saturday, Ianuarius ran through the entire city (*urbs*) investigating in distress. And because no sign of it was found, the next day the man who needed the money embraced the knees of the prelate crying, saying he would be executed if the public money was not found.

The bishop makes a sign for patience; he promises safety. Shortly thereafter, before going to Mass, he asked to have one of those who habitually suffered from possession secretly brought to him. As chance would have it, the perpetrator of the theft was the one presented. And when he submits him to a stern interrogation, saying that it cannot be that he hides a criminal deed, and orders that the enemy, through whom depravities would regularly happen, to confess the entire truth quickly. From malice, the evil spirit denied the crime it committed. Then indeed the prelate was taken by genuine, pious irritation and ordered the denying criminal be brought among the people. Without delay, then, he leaves to celebrate Mass and, after giving his solemn salutation to the congregation, he lies down on the ground in prayer. And immediately the unfortunate man, both servant and prisoner of The Enemy, is lifted up in the air, the church filled with his screams. The whole congregation is thrown into confusion and, surrounded by what looked like flames, with a great voice the man calls the name of the priest, confesses the crime he committed. At last the most blessed man rises from prayer and goes to the end of the chancel near the congregation. He calls forth the trembling man,

discusses everything, learns all. The solidi are brought forth from their hiding place, the clamour of the people rises, with one voice the merit of Germanus and the power divinity are proclaimed, and through one and the same miracle the cheated man received his money and the possessed man his deliverance. Indeed, Germanus had cured many previously, but had always hidden the fact under the shadow of secrecy. This deed was thus truly memorable because it was public.

8. At one time certain demons, in a frightful conspiracy, declared war on the blessed man. When they found him unconquerable, dressed in the armor of faith, even if tempted by many a demonic manifestation, they created an ingenious trick for the destruction of his people. For first the children, then the adults died suddenly with the inside of their throats swollen, so that death arrived after the sickness had lasted scarcely three days. People were killed as if by a furious sword. No human precaution was of help, and people ran anxious –but almost [too late]– to the holy residence of the bishop. And at once he blessed some oil, at whose touch the internal swelling sickness so dissolved that immediately the passageway was opened and furnished both the breath and the nourishment that had been lacking. And the cure helped with as much celestial speed as the inflicted curse would attack. And all of this came about by the fault of evil spirits, as one of the possessed confessed when he was cleansed by the holy man: he vomited and all [the evil spirits] were driven out by [Germanus's] prayer.

9. It was usual for the most blessed man to visit alternately now the church and now the monastery like a leader [*dux*] of heavenly soldiers in order to incite them with eager affection to strive for the glory of perfection. He had been kept away by business when he was invited to the monastery. He apologized for not being able to come, but not long afterwards, freed from the obligations causing the delay, brought his presence to his brothers unexpected. It so happened that at the same time in the monastery one of them, who was habitually possessed, was experiencing violent fits. The brother proclaims with a loud voice: “Germanus is at the river, but he cannot cross it without a boat.” For a long time, the abbot gave no credence to such words, while he thought a worthless spirit is prone to mistakes and that Germanus could not be there, because he had excused

himself. And when the monk persisted with the same cry, one of the brothers was sent and announced that the demon was right. A boat is sent, the priest crosses the river, and he is received with the usual joy. Without delay he devotes himself to prayer. The entire congregation is prostrated when suddenly the enemy is suspended in the empty air as if tied by invisible strings and this lasted while he is raised up from prayer, and the demon pleaded that he would depart only when the body had been harmed.<sup>2</sup> When this was denied, he left, leaving behind foul signs and with a strong stench worthy of him.

**10.** At a certain time while he travelled during the winter and had spent the entire day in fasting and labour, Germanus is reminded that, as night approached, he had to stop somewhere. Not far away there was a small house with a half-destroyed roof, which had been uninhabited for a long time, and which also, through common neglect, was covered weeds, so that it seemed almost better to endure a night under the rigours of the open air than to enter into that danger and horror—especially because two elderly people living near had warned that the very house was uninhabitable because of a frightful infestation. And when the most blessed man found this out, he sought out the fearsome ruins as though they were delights, and there, among what had once been several rooms, he found with difficulty one that could have the appearance of a small dwelling. There, he places his light bundle, and a small number of his companions settle, to whom a brief, meager dinner was offered, with the bishop entirely abstaining. Then, in the deep of night, when one of the brothers had taken up the duty of reading, Germanus, exhausted by fasting and conversation, is overcome by sleep. When suddenly a terrible shade stood in front of the reading monk and little by little rose under his wondering eyes, the walls are battered with a shower of stones. Then the thoroughly frightened reader implores the assistance of the priest. And immediately springing forward, he sees the likeness of the terrifying image and, after invoking in supplication the name of Christ, orders it to say who it is and what it is doing there. And quickly it put aside its terrifying appearance, speaks with a humble, begging voice saying that he

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<sup>2</sup> The passage is cryptic, but Krusch explains it by citing a similar episode in Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 22.8, in which the demon demands that limbs be amputated before it leaves. Krusch also cites similarities with two passages from Sulpicius Severus: *Dial.* 3.6.2 and *VM* 17.

and his companion had been the authors of many crimes and that they lay unburied, and for this reason they trouble men, since they themselves cannot find rest. He asked that he pray to the Lord so that they can be worthy of obtaining rest. The holy man was saddened at this and orders him to show the place where they lay. Then indeed, going forward with a candle, the shadow sets out as leader and, among the great dangers of the ruins, in the middle of the night, he showed the place in which they were thrown.

As day is finally returned to the world, [Germanus] calls together the inhabitants living nearby, encourages them, himself assisting to hasten the work. The ruins brought hurriedly together, scattered upon the bodies and torn away by the rake of time are removed: the bodies, cast away together without arrangement, are discovered, their bones still tied together by iron chains. A pit is arranged to be used for burial, the limbs are freed from their restraints and wrapped in linen, soil is gathered onto them, a prayer of intercession is said. The deceased obtain their eternal sleep and the living such tranquility that, after that day, the house could be joyously inhabited without any sign of terror.

**11.** And it seems that this should also not be omitted, that on the same journey, after a few days, forced by the darkness of the night, he sought the hospitality of a modest family for, as he shunned ostentation, this was what he sought the most. After he had dedicated the night to the divine office, as he was accustomed to do, daylight came, but it was not announced by the singing of cockerels, even though those very birds were abundant among the houses. He looked for the cause of such strangeness and discovers for a long time now this unnatural silence had cursed the cockerels' natural crowing. Persuaded by all, he pays the fee for his stay, for after taking grain, he bestowed a blessing on it and fed it to them. The birds, thanks to the feed, tired the inhabitants' ears to the point of annoyance with the frequency of their songs. Thus was divine power preeminent to the greatest extent in the least things.

**12.** At the same time, an embassy sent from the Britons to the bishops of Gaul announced that the Pelagian heresy had seized the people in their country far and wide, and that they ought to help the Catholic faith as soon as possible. For this reason a large



synod was called and the two brightest lights of religion, Germanus and Lupus, apostolic priests, are chosen by the prayers of all, possessing as they did bodies on earth, but merits in heaven. And the more onerous the need appeared, the more readily these most devoted heroes undertook it, their eagerness for the task quickened by the goad of faith.

**13.** And so they went down to the ocean sea with Christ as cause and leader, who returned his servants safe from all dangers and trials. And at first the ship is led out onto the deep from the Gallic bay by light winds until it had come to the middle of the ocean, where only sky and sea were visible. Not long after, though, demons enemy of religion appeared on the sea and tried to prevent, with their malicious wickedness, such great men from trying to restore the spiritual health of the Britons. They create dangers, stir up storms, hide the sky and its light under a night of clouds, and they redouble the gloomy darkness of sea and sky with horror. The sails cannot bear the fury of the winds and the fragile bark scarcely endures the mass of the ocean. The vain efforts of the sailors are abandoned and the ship is no longer led by men, but by prayer.

As it happened, the commander himself and the bishop, weakened in body, were just then overtaken by weariness and sleep. Then, with the adversary almost abandoning the fight, the violent storm grew stronger and the boat was submerged by waves flowing over it. Then blessed Lupus and all the others, thrown into a panic, roused the old man to oppose the furious elements. And, understanding the the imminence of the danger, he invokes Christ more steadfastly, shouts at the ocean, and opposes the truth of religion to the raving storm. And immediately after taking up oil he immediately overpowered the fierce waves in the name of the Trinity with a light sprinkling. He reprimands his companion, encourages everybody, and a prayer is poured forth as if from one mouth, with one sound. Divinity is present, the enemies are routed, a serene tranquility follows, the winds are turned from opposing to favouring, the handmaid wave follows the ship, and after traveling an immense distance they quietly and in a short time reach the desired shore. There, a great crowd from diverse regions received the clerics, whose arrival had been predicted by an adverse soothsaying; for the the evil spirits announced

what they feared. While they were chased from the bodies of the possessed by the power of the bishops, they said that they organized the storm and the dangers it had provoked, and did not deny that they were defeated by the bishops' merit and authority.

14. Meanwhile, the apostolic priests speedily filled the island of the Britons, which among all islands is both the first and the greatest, with their belief, their preaching, and their miracles. And because they were always surrounded by an eager crowd, their divine word was uttered not only in churches, but also in the crossroads, in the countryside, and in isolated places, so that faithful Catholics everywhere could be fortified, and the corrupted would know the way to improvement. The likeness and glory of the apostles was in them: authority through knowledge, doctrine through writing, miracles through merit.

Henceforth, the proclamation of truth came about by such leaders, and so all of the region came over quickly to their opinion. The hidden leaders of the sinister persuasion<sup>3</sup> concealed themselves and moaned like an evil spirit that they were losing the people escaping them. Finally, they have the effrontery to initiate a conflict conceived in long planning. They go forth conspicuous by their riches and their glistening clothes, surrounded by the approval of many. They prefer to run the risk of discovery rather than incur the shame of silence among those people they had subverted, lest they seem to condemn themselves by their own silence.

In addition, an enormous, excited crowd of people had come together there with wives and children: people were there with the hope of being both spectator and judge. The two opposing parties had very different positions: here divine authority, there human presumption; here faith, there wickedness; there the leader Pelagius, here Christ. The first line of most blessed priests offered their adversaries the opportunity to begin the dispute. The emptiness of their words filled both ears and time at length. The venerable prelates then poured out upon the enemy the impetuous wave of their eloquence, with apostolic and evangelic thunders; their own words are mixed with the

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<sup>3</sup> Krusch points out the identical wording in an edict by the praetorian prefect against Pelagius and Celestinus in 418.

divine and the testimonies of the Scriptures followed the most vehement statements. Deception is overcome; wickedness is refuted in such a way they could no longer answer to any objections and finally confess their guilt. The judging people can hardly restrain their hands, yet the judgment is witnessed by a shout.

**15.** When suddenly, a man of tribunician power walks to the middle of the crowd with his wife, pushing his blind, ten-year-old daughter forward to place her onto the knees of the priests, who advised presenting her to their adversaries. The Pelagians, though, frightened by the knowledge they could be punished, join in prayer with the parents and entrust the child's care to the bishops who, understanding the expectation of the people, and the submission of their adversaries, utter a short prayer. Then Germanus, filled with the Holy Spirit, invokes the Trinity and immediately takes into his hands the small box [*capsula*] with relics of the saints that he kept close to his body; he removes it from his neck and, in front of everyone, places it on the eyes of the little girl. Germanus filled the eyes with the light of truth; immediately they were freed from darkness. The parents rejoice at the miracle; people tremble. After that day, the hostile belief is so completely erased from the souls of men, they now follow the teaching of the priests like thirsty men.

**16.** And so after suppressing the abominable perversity and confounding its leaders, and calming the spirits of all with the purity of faith, the priests went to the holy martyr Alban to give thanks to God through him.

While returning from that place, the enemy lying in ambush, thanks to a fortuitous trap he had prepared, broke Germanus's foot during a fall, taking no notice of the increasing merits with affliction of the body, just as with most blessed Job. And while Germanus is kept in the same place for some days because of his infirmity, a fire erupted unexpectedly near where he was staying. And after the fire had consumed the houses that were roofed with reeds there, it was carried to the little house in which Germanus lay by the wind. A group of all the people flew together to the bishop so that he could escape the danger that threatened by being lifted with their hands. Germanus reprimanded them all and, trusting his own faith, he did not accept being moved. The

entire crowd, frightened, runs up towards the fire in desperation, but, whatever the crowd had attempted to save, is consumed by it, so that the power of God could appear all the more evident. But everything that Germanus had protected, even though lying ill and bed-ridden, was preserved. The flame feared the chamber of the holy man and leapt over it, raging furiously everywhere else: the room, which protected its guest within its walls, shone untouched among fiery globes of flames.

The crowd cheers at the miracle and is happy that it was defeated by divine power. Innumerable people stayed by the hut day and night, some in desire to cure their souls, others their bodies. They are not able to recount all the things Christ did through the servant who, though ill, still performed miracles. One night Germanus, who allowed no treatment to be applied to his fracture, saw a person gleaming in snowy white robes near him. With his arms outstretched, he seemed to lift up the lying man and ordered him to stand up on steady feet. After that moment, all the pain disappeared and he so regained his previous health that on the following day he undertook the labour of travel without fear.

**17.** Meanwhile, the Saxons and the Picts joined forces and declared war on the Britons, whom a common necessity had brought together in a camp. And because the Britons judged that their side was quite unequally matched, they were frightened and sought the help of the holy bishops. Making haste, their expected arrival carried such a sense of safety and security one could have believed a mighty army had arrived. And thus Christ fought in the camp through the apostolic commanders. The venerable days of Lent had also arrived and the presence of the bishops made the soldiers even more religious, to such a degree that, instructed by daily sermons, they eagerly and together hastened to the grace of baptism. For the greatest number of the devout army longed for the water of the healthful bath.

On the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, a church is put together with intertwined branches and its rural arrangement prepared in the likeness of a city church. Still damp from baptism, the army marches: faith is fervent among the people, contempt for safety among the soldiers, divine help is hoped for.

Meanwhile, the arrangement and the appearance of the camp is revealed to the enemy, who, confident in victory as though fighting an unarmed army, make haste with a new urgency. But their arrival is discovered by reconnaissance.

After the solemnity of Easter is over, when the largest part of the army returns from the baptismal font to take up arms again and prepare for war, Germanus declares himself the leader of the battle: he selects the infantry, he marches through the surrounding areas and he observes the valley, enclosed by high mountains, the direction from which the enemy's arrival may be expected. In this place he arranges the new army, with himself as leader of the troop.

**18.** And now the ferocious multitude of the enemy was there: those posted and waiting in ambush could observe it approaching, when suddenly Germanus the standard-bearer urges everybody to action, and announces that they ought to answer with a single shout to his voice. While the enemies felt safe, believing themselves to be unexpected, the priests shout out Alleluia three times. The voice of all follows as one and the powerful cry is multiplied by the mountains' echoes after it strikes the air. The enemy's troop is prostrate with fear, trembling because of the mountains encircling them and because the very frame of the heavens seem to have crashed on top of them. The speed of their feet is scarcely thought sufficient for the fear they had conceived. Everywhere they flee, throw away weapons, rejoicing to have escaped danger even with bare bodies. Also, the river they had slowly crossed when coming angrily swallowed many who jumped into it in fear. The innocent army witnesses its revenge and becomes quiet spectator to the victory offered. The jettisoned spoils are collected and the devout soldier obtains the booty of a heavenly victory. The priests triumph over the enemy without shedding blood; victory obtained by faith, not force, triumphs. And so the hiding places in the very rich island are brought into safety and the invisible and visible enemies are conquered, as the bishops vanquished both the Pelagians and the Saxons and, surrounded by the sadness of the entire country, they finally prepare for their trip home. Their own merits and the intercession of the martyr Albanus secured a safe sail and the happy ship returned these peaceful bishops to the needs of their own people.

**19.** And so at the return of the venerable priests the churches of Gaul rejoice—the demons tremble. Surely the anticipation of his own city made him strive for the twofold vows he was accustomed to keep: both near divine majesty and among the tumults of the world.

For the payment of an unexpected tax and countless necessary expenses had heavily oppressed his fellow citizens, who felt almost like children torn away from their father. The abandoned finally regain protection: he recognizes the reasons, sighs with the lamenters. And planning to seek assistance for the city to achieve peace and tranquility he sets out on the hardship of a journey by land after the dangers at sea. And so planning to wander through Gaul, he is content with a very small escort and sets off with a limited number of horses—he who carried Christ in his heart as the most abundant of treasures.

**20.** I think it is worthwhile to record that his journey was distinguished by miracles. Germanus was quietly making his way and had not yet left the territory of his own city [*civitas*]; the evening was about to fall, and the day was rainy, when suddenly a barefoot traveller, who did not even wear a cloak, joined his group, and Germanus felt sorry for his lack of clothing. Clinging to the band with malice, he joins them at their night abode and, among these innocent custodians, whose attention was for God not the animals, during the night he stole the mule that carried the old man. Once the day arrived, the loss of the animal is noticed and, so that the priest would not lack an animal, one of the clerics chose to walk instead of ride.

And while they were on their way Germanus's companions, who surrounded him, notice the blessed man was hiding the amusement in his face, which was not his usual custom. And when this was noticed by all, one of them, after having gathered courage, asks the cause of his amusement. And he says, "Let us stop for a short while, because the unhappy labour of that one, whom you will soon see in distress, is at once amusing and painful." As they had stopped after dismounting from their animals, they notice, a little behind them, a man on foot leading the stolen animal by hand. He hastily comes closer and, while he speeds up, the group halts. He immediately prostrates

himself at their feet and confesses the crime he had committed. He felt entangled, for the entire night, as if prisoner in a net, in such a way he could not move further, neither to find a way to escape, nor to return the stolen animal. To these words, the most blessed man answers, saying, "If, yesterday, we had given covering to you when you were naked, there would have been no need for stealing. Take what you need; give back what is ours." And so the man who confessed to the crime received not only a pardon for what he had done, but also in fact a reward with a blessing.

**21.** When he became known for miracles this man full of God sought privacy and hiding from all. In that, the saying of the Gospels according to which a city built on a mountain cannot be concealed<sup>4</sup>, was truly confirmed. He would avoid the solace of his own people's company as well as meeting strangers; still, he could not stay hidden, surrounded as he was by the light of his majesty. For the inhabitants of all villages and towns would place themselves in his way, they flocked to meet him with women and children, and a continuous, large procession would form, when those arriving joined those who followed him already.

**22.** I think it remiss to pass over in silence the greatness of the miracle Germanus performed in the village of Alésia, even though he was not there. In that place there was a priest called Senator, noble in birth and nobler in religion. His wife, Nectariola, was similar to him in holiness. And when Germanus was passing by he went to them as longtime friends. They prepare a dwelling for their visitor, the more prominent the person arriving, the less imposing the furnishing chosen. The woman of the house secretly added some straw to the priest's modest bed, where he lay without noticing anything. When day returned, after he had spent the night in prayer and Psalms, he sets out again upon the journey he was undertaking. The entire household rejoiced at such an illustrious guest and the faithful woman of the house gathered and hid the remnants of his bedding.

It came about some days later a certain Agrestius arrived. He was a well born freeman who had a wife, children, and parents. He became possessed by demon and the

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<sup>4</sup> Mt 5:14

absence of Germanus was mourned tearfully by all his relatives as much as his capture. When no remedy could be found, the most venerable matron trusted the power of faith: she offers the hidden straw, with which the raging man is covered and restrained. And for an entire night Agrestius called the bishop's name, almost as if surrounded by a fire burning close. Although not present physically, Germanus' holy power had not been absent. Through divine help Agrestius is cleansed, and afterward the danger of temptation never returned again in the entire course of his life.

**23.** And so, while going to Ârles along the river Saône, Germanus arrived in the city (*urbs*) of Lyon, where people of all ages and genders, contending in enthusiasm, ran with one thought to meet him. All ask for a blessing, seek his touch, and it comforts the rest of the multitude to have seen him. Various illnesses are cured by his blessing everywhere, the city (*civitas*) is renewed by his preaching, and, although he had departed in haste, he quenched the thirsty people with the springs of his doctrine.

If I listed all his travels, if I recalled them in their entirety, the dense flood of words would be boring, but God will forgive me if I omit many things that I know. And so the city (*urbs*) of Ârles greeted the arrival of the most blessed man with religious rejoicing, receiving the priest as the very image of an apostle of his time. At that time, the city was resplendent with the multifarious virtue of the priest Hilarius, for he was a fiery torrent of heavenly eloquence ignited by faith, a tireless worker of divine teaching. And he esteemed the venerable holy man in affection like a father, in reverence like an apostle.

**24.** Also at that time, Auxiliaris ruled at the head of the prefecture in Gaul. He welcomed the presence of the bishop with double joy, as he desired to know such a man, renowned by his virtues, but also because his wife had been wasting away for a long time due to troublesome malarial fever. Contrary to custom, he hastened to meet Germanus while he still traveled, and he is struck with admiration. For the dignity of his face, the erudition of his speech, and the power of his preaching so filled Auxiliaris's soul with wonder that he recognized that his renown was less than his merit, for he is found to be greater in reality than in words. He offers gifts, proffers services, and he



begs the most blessed man to find it worthy to accept what he was seeking. Also he confesses the illness of his wife. Germanus visited her and, just as the intensity of her suffering is overcome, so are the tremor that precedes it, and the fever that follows. The faithful wife received a heavenly remedy and is returned to her former health: her body strengthened its wellness and her soul its belief. And so after accepting the voluntary favours, he delivered to his city (*civitas*) the desired help, although he most of all represented the greatest relief and joy for the people.

**25.** Meanwhile, from Britain comes the announcement that the Pelagian perversity is again being spread by a small number of instigators, and again the prayers of all the priests are directed to the most blessed man, asking that he defend the cause of God, which he had already once saved. He quickly answers their request, for he delights in difficult tasks, and happily devotes himself to Christ. At last the ill-will of the enemy finally stops, conquered by divine power, and it did not dare to try the strength of the man it now recognized was a friend of God. And so, after he was joined by Bishop Severus, a man entirely holy, he goes down to the sea with Christ as guide; the elements are suited to the tranquility of the journey: [favourable] winds, waves, and sky attend the voyage.

**26.** Meanwhile, the evil spirits flying around the whole island announced, by unwelcome soothsayings, that Germanus was coming, to such an extent that a certain Elafius, a prominent man of that region had hurried to meet the saints, without news of their actual arrival, bringing with him his son, whom disease had condemned to torment in the very flower of his youth. For after the tendons dried and withered and the knee stiffened, he was denied the use of his foot through the dry withering of his leg. All of the province follows closely after this Elafius: the priests arrive, the crowd, unaware, meets them. Without delay, a blessing and the doctrine of the divine word are poured forth. [Germanus] recognizes that the people remained steadfast in the faith in which he had left them. The people understand that only a few are guilty, they seek the perpetrators and condemn those they had found.

**27.** Suddenly Elafius prostrates himself, embracing the priest's feet and offers his

son, whose age and infirmity revealed the problem without any need for prayers. Sadness struck all the people, especially the priests who directed the mercy they felt to divine clemency. And immediately blessed Germanus shouts that the boy should sit, he fondles the knee bent by sickness and his healing right hand touches in succession all the diseased areas of the body. Health quickly follows his healing touch: that which was dry became moist, tendons regained their function and, in front of all, good health is returned to the son, and the son to his father.

The crowd is filled with wonder by the miracle, and catholic faith, already impressed on the hearts of all, is strengthened. From then on, preaching is addressed to the crowd for the correction of [Pelagian] transgression and, by decision of all, its authors are expelled from the island to be given over to the priests, who are led to the interior, so that the region might delight in deliverance and the Pelagians in correction. And this was done to such a beneficial degree that even now faith persists in those places uncorrupted. And so, after all were reconciled, the most blessed priests returned with the same good fortune with which they had arrived.

28. He had hardly returned home from his overseas expedition when a delegation from Brittany (*tractus Armoricanus*)<sup>5</sup> came soliciting the efforts of the blessed bishop, for the powerful man (*vir magnificus*) Aetius, who governed the state (*res publica*) at that time, had been offended by the arrogance of this proud region. In the obstinacy of its rebellion it had permitted Goar, the most ferocious king of the Alans, to take those places for which he had eagerly longed with the ardour of barbaric desire. And so the old man alone is opposed to a most bellicose people and a king who is the servant of idols. Yet he is still greater and stronger than all with the assistance of Christ. Without delay he hurries on his way, because preparations for war were threatening. Already the people (*gens*) had marched forward and the entire road had been filled with armoured cavalry. Yet still our priest marched up to meet them, until he reached the king himself, who was following close after. Meets them in the road and stands opposite as the armed leader is marching, surrounded by a troop of his men. First, through an interpreter, he

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<sup>5</sup> Notitia Dignitatum 37 lists the troops commanded by the '*dux tractus armoricani et nervicani*'.

pours forth a prayer of entreaty, then he rebukes the superior man, and finally he seizes the reins of the bridle with his outstretched hands and, in that very place, he brings the entire army to a halt. At this, the most ferocious king, at God's order, felt wonder rather than rage; he is astounded at the, venerates the reverence, and is deeply moved by the constancy of his power.

After the excitement had been put aside, the preparation for war and commotion of arms gave way to the civility of a council and there is negotiation such that what came to pass was not what the king had wished, but what the priest had asked. The king and the army returned to the tranquility of their post. He promises a most faithful assurance of peace on the condition that the pardon that he himself had accorded would be sought from the emperor or Aetius. Meanwhile, thanks to the intercession and the merit of the priest, the king was restrained, the army called back and the provinces freed from devastation.

**29.** After that he left for Italy, this man who never found satisfaction in rest nor enjoyed time free from labour, but, as the prophet says, went from strength to strength.<sup>6</sup> For while he passed by, out of an affectionate habit, he visited once again his friend Senator the priest. And he is shown by him a mute girl of about twenty years, whose mouth, forehead, and entire face he blessed by touching with oil. Then he ordered that a seasoned drink be brought, in which he dipped three morsels of bread broken by his own hands. He himself placed one in the girl's mouth, ordering that before she took it, she ask for a blessing. And she immediately asked for one in a clear voice before she took the bread, and from that time on the power of speech, born of miracles, remained with her the rest of her life. Then when he was about to leave, [Senator] burst in to his friend more affectionately than usual. He kisses his mouth, forehead and eyes, he holds him in a hug, and leaves him with these words: "Farewell forever, dearest brother; farewell, part of my soul! May God grant that we see each other without trouble on the Day of Judgment; we shall never enjoy the sight of each other in the rest of this life."

**30.** His journey was solitary, with only himself for company, but so often

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<sup>6</sup> Ps. (LXX) 83.8. The translation from the Hebrew '*de fortitudine in fortitudinem.*'

interrupted by crowds rushing to meet him that, wherever he preached or taught along the known roads of his itinerary, oratories or venerated effigies of the cross still shine brightly today. While he passed safely through the region of Autun, many people ran to meet him, regardless of their age and sex. There, in the presence of all, two parents laid down on the ground and presented their daughter of marrying age, in whom illness had produced a most cruel punishment with the passage of time. For from the time of her birth, a contraction of the tendons caused her fingers to curve into the palm of her hand, so that because her fingernails grew too much inward, because the softness of the flesh yielded, she began to have as many wounds as she had fingers. And if her bones, which were in the way of the pressing sharpness, were not somehow to resist, those piercing wounds would have penetrated the entire palm, through to the other side.

And while the priest took her right hand and enclosed it, he blessed the touch with healthfulness and, taking each of the fingers one by one, he recalled the yielding tendons to their flexible purpose and the hand, which was bringing danger upon itself, was returned to its function. And he joined to this something more of piety (*pietas*), namely that he trimmed the long nails of the now straightened fingers to the customary length.

### THE HOLY MAN

31. After he travelled through the cities (*civitates*) of Gaul, while he was ascending the Alps and about to enter Italy, by chance he fell into conversation with artisans on their return journey home from paid labour. And while these, weighted down by excessive baggage, climb the peaks piercing the clouds, they are halted by a river in their way, that, in those rugged precipices, offered a safe path neither to animals nor to men. Among these travelers there was one man who was old and lame, whose bundle the most blessed man carried on his own shoulders among the wide streams and, after repeating the crossing, he carried the man, now free of the burden, in his arms<sup>7</sup>. And

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<sup>7</sup> lit. 'beneath his neck.'

although he concealed his identity with great humility, in Milan he could no longer hide who and what he was.

**32.** It was the venerable day of the Mass for saints, which had brought together many priests in one place. And while the mass is celebrated with the sacred mysteries at the altar, he walked in unexpected and unrecognized. Immediately a member of the congregation, a captive of the Enemy, cries out in an immoderately loud voice: “Why do you follow us into Italy, Germanus? It should be enough for you to have removed us from Gaul; enough that you have overcome us and the ocean sea with prayer. Why do you wander all over? Rest, so that we ourselves can have rest.” There was wonder and fear among the people. ‘Who is Germanus?’ they asked, turning to one another. And although his clothing seemed despicable, he was recognized by the worthiness of his face. When asked, he denied neither his rank nor his order. All the bishops venerate the holy man of God with worthy humility and beg him to visit the raving man who had revealed his identity. He ordered that the man be produced, not out of grandeur that comes of boldness, but out of eagerness for obedience and, after taking him to the sacristy and cleansing him with swift absolution, he returned the man to the assembled people.

This was the first sign of His miraculous power that Christ performed through his servant in Italy. A diverse crowd rushed together, waiting for the blessing of his proven holiness and by joining miracles with preaching, he cured both souls and bodies.

**33.** After leaving the most opulent city, was slowly pursuing his voyage with a joyful attitude, when paupers ran up to meet him, asking for alms. He asks the deacon how much they had in expendable money. He answered that there were only three gold pieces, and [Germanus] immediately orders him to give all to them. At this the deacon said, ‘What shall we live on today?’ Germanus answered, saying, ‘God cares for his paupers. You give what you have to those who need it.’ The cautious deacon gave two coins away and kept one. And while they were back on the route they planned, they heard horsemen galloping behind them. And after they reached them in a short time, they quickly dismounted and, embracing the knees, poured out a prayer like this: ‘Our

lord, the high official (*vir spectabilis*) Leporius, has his domicile not far from here. He and his family are so gripped by different illnesses that each is in danger of death from his own illness. And we bring you their tears: visit the ill, if you deem it worthy! However, if the demands of your duty conquer our request, say a prayer of intercession: he deserves your blessing, even if he does not deserve a visit.”

At this the most blessed man is filled with mercy and left the planned journey, judging the way to be straighter<sup>8</sup> that provided the reward of good work. He walked off, although his companions protested, and offered his welcome presence to those who asked, saying: “To me, nothing comes before fulfilling precepts of the Lord.” The horsemen, then, offered to him with joy and happiness a compensation of two hundred gold coins, with which they had been entrusted. And then, turning to the deacon, he said, “Take the things that are offered and understand that you have defrauded the poor, for if you had given everything to the indigent, our benefactor today would have given us three hundred.” The deacon trembled that the bishop had known the secret of his crime.

**34.** Meanwhile, they hasten their pace. They arrive and, just as manifest good health had come upon them, so the arrival of the holy man lifted up the spirits of all. He offers and shows his known remedies: while lying prostrate he prays to Christ and purchases joys for others with his tears. Masters are visited, servants are also visited: without treating any differently on account of status, he goes around the huts, visits all the beds. Within the space of one day, the heavenly remedy prevailed in such a way that, upon the arrival the third day, he departed accompanied by the master, who had been lying in bed upon his arrival, leaving the entire household happy with their good health. A praiseworthy reputation preceded the venerable man so that when his arrival was announced making his acquaintance was desired.

**35.** Word is carried through all the people of Ravenna, and anticipated affection is blamed for the delay in his arrival. The man so long expected is received. Indeed, he had planned an entrance by cover of night, protected by darkness; but he could not avoid those expecting him who were keeping watch. At that time Peter the bishop of Christ

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<sup>8</sup> Cf Mk 1.3

preserved the Church with apostolic teaching there. Placidia the queen ruled the Roman Empire with her son Valentinian, then still a boy, and they loved the catholic faith so much that, although they gave orders to all, they obeyed the servants of God with sublime humility.

And all these received the venerable priest by rivaling each other in enthusiasm for divine love. The leaders surround him, the nobles meet him; the church is embraced with exultation. The venerable queen sent a very large silver vessel filled with the luxurious dishes, but without any meat, to the lodging of the priest. That which he received, he gave away in this manner: he handed over the food to his ministers, he kept the silver dish,<sup>9</sup> returning in its place a small wooden plate containing barley bread. She was seized with enormous joy for both reasons: namely, that her silver had been given to the poor and that she had received the bread of the blessed man along with the dish of humble plate. For afterward, she enclosed the wood with gold and saved the bread for many cures and miracles.

**36.** One day, while entering a very broad square, pressed closely by the crowd, he passed by a prison filled with chained men waiting for torture and death. And when these men became aware of the priest passing by, they raised a single shout with united voices. He asks the reason; he understands; he calls the guards; they are taken away. For several powerful men of the palace had condemned the crowd of miserable men to the night of that penitentiary. Wherever he turned, there was no mercy. At last he returned to a familiar support and entreated from [divine] majesty that which was difficult to obtain from men. He redirects his steps toward the prison, bowing down he prostrates his limbs in prayer. Then truly, as the people were standing there, Our Lord showed the grace he had granted to his servant. The lock and bolt closed with chains is released, the iron-bound bars burst apart. Divine piety (*pietas*) opened that which the habit of human cruelty had closed. The crowd walks away from chains to freedom brandishing the now useless weight of shackles, holding the fastening by which they had been held. After

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<sup>9</sup> This passage is interesting: it is clear from the next sentence that Germanus has not kept the dish (or if he did, that he sold it). For this reason, manuscript (A 2a4) adds that he sold the dish and gave the money to the poor. The confusion probably arises from *vendo*.

awhile the prison is abandoned, harmless now because empty, and the crowd of wretched men, preceded by the triumph of piety, is brought with rejoicing to the bosom of the Church.

**37.** Wonder at the bishop and his renown increased daily; people rushed to greet, the ill were cured, and Christ amplified the grace he had conferred. Six venerable and obedient priests sat by him all the time, wondering no less at the long torments of his continual abstinence as at his constant miracles. These witnesses of his labour were still living long after.

**38.** The son of a certain Volusianus who, at the time, was head of the chancellery of the patrician Sigisvultus, was tormented by fiery fevers, and the increase of this raging heat had so consumed the boy's internal organs and body that only cries of desperation were the only course left to follow. The doctors then withdrew both their treatment and their promises and the parents were left with nothing but grief. A late hope is addressed to the blessed man: the parents, with all their friends and neighbours, embraced the knees of the holy man. To this is added the intercession of the priests, with whom he hastens to the sick boy. And on the way, a messenger announced to those going that the young man was already dead and that there was no reason for the venerable man to tire himself. The bishops, however, insist, the crowd implores, that he fulfill the duty of mercy he had undertaken. They find the body lifeless and deprived of life's warmth, already cold with the stiffness of death. After giving up a prayer for the rest of his soul, the bishops prepared to return, when suddenly the grief of the multitude is brought forth: the priests take the hands of their elder so that he would pray to the Lord for the loss of the parents and the return of the dead man. For a long time he resisted, troubled by holy modesty, yet he yielded to the command of mercy and love.

Brandishing the weapons of faith, he threw out the crowd and joined himself to the dead man, prostrate in prayer. He waters the earth with tears, the deep groans are offered into the sky, he calls Christ with his cries. During this there is movement in the dead man and, little by little, the vital function of his lifeless limbs is restored. The eyes seek light, the fingers tremble, then the tongue makes sounds. Both rise up: one from



prayer, the other from death.

Germanus raises the sleeper with his hand: he sits, he breathes, he is restored; he looks around and after having gradually regained his strength, he recovers full health. The son is returned to the parents, grief is turned to joy and the power of majesty is proclaimed in a single cry of the people. Christ continues His miracles through his servant and he glorifies, by the eminence of these miracles, the one soon to be admitted to eternal rest.

**39.** The eunuch Acolus, who was royal chamberlain at the time, had a young pupil, liberally educated, tormented a demon of this sort: in the course of the month when the moon was waxing, it strikes its victims with the falling sickness (epilepsy).

At the intervention of the queen and nobles, he is brought to the holy man and presented. After examining him for a long time, he put off the cleansing from the same day, although he was accustomed to drive off the most furious of demons at the first imposition of his hands. Indeed, the demon had penetrated the entrails and the marrow of the unfortunate young man in such a manner that, at times, it possessed him almost as if he were its own object. Germanus decided he should be closed up with him for the night. Then truly the demon broke out of his inner hiding places and, as confessing during torture, he discloses he had seized the innocent from a young age. And thus ordered, it departs and the adolescent who had been cleansed returned to the palace the following day.

**40.** Clearly Germanus would obtained what he wanted in the case of Armorica (Brittany)—which had imposed the necessity of his journey—and obtained both mercy and perpetual safety, had the treachery of Tibatto not drawn the fickle and undisciplined people back to the former rebellion. After this was done, the intercession of the prelate lost its effect, and imperial trust was deceived by this trickery. Nevertheless, Tibatto quickly lost the advantages of his wicked impudence because of his continuous scheming.

**41.** On a certain day, after having completed the morning celebration [of Mass] while conversing about religion with the bishops, Germanus uttered the saddest remark

and said, “I commend to you, my dearest brothers, my passing. During my sleep, I saw myself receiving from Our Lord the viaticum as one about to set out on a voyage and, when I asked the cause of the departure, he said, ‘You should not fear, for I am leading you not on a journey, but to your native land (*patria*), where you will have peace and quiet forever.’ ” The priests were explaining the dream with another meaning, but finally he commended his own more vigorously, saying, “I know well which native land (*patria*) God promised to his servants.”

**42.** It happened that after a few days that illness followed; when it became severe, the entire city (*civitas*) was agitated. He who called him to glory hastened the passing and the Lord summoned the hero, tired from his labour, to his reward. The queen, putting aside the arrogance of empire, runs to the poor man, looks after the sick man, giving whatever he asks of her as a favour. In particular, Germanus asked her that his body be returned to his native land (*patria*), which she granted unwillingly. Indeed, the crowd visitors was for days, day and night, as large as the entrance could allow and the house could contain. The time was filled with prayers uttered as by one single voice. On the seventh day of his illness, his blessed and faithful soul is brought to Heaven.

**43.** Next, his inheritance is divided: first, the empire takes a part, the priests claim another, and while there is nothing they might take, the dispute that usually comes about because of riches, arises here from poverty: they are heirs of only a blessing. The queen takes the reliquary (*capsula*) of the saints; bishop Peter obtained his hood and hair shirt. Indeed, the six bishops, in order to take a memorial from the passing of the holy man, preferred to share what was left. One took his pallium, another his belt; two shared his tunic and two others his small cloak.

**44.** The plans for his funeral develop in hostility, on account of the accusation that very little money was spent for the dead man. Acolius embalmed the body with a preparation of spices; the queen dressed it. After everything had been carried out properly, the Emperor arranged for the journey’s expenses documents and he rewarded Germanus’ companions with a great gift of money. The priests organize the start of the religious procession, and also plan in advance by sending instruction; a unified

procession in the direction Gaul is planned.

**45.** When the body was on its journey, it reached Piacenza during the dark of night. The body is placed in the church and, while it is honoured by vigils of holy devotion, a certain woman of the place, so consumed by paralysis that none of her limbs functioned, begged to be placed under the body's bier, and there she lay until light shone. Early in the day, the body is taken away; she stands up: both matron and woman brought to life by the dead, to the amazement of the people, pays her debt by following the procession on her feet.

**46.** Gaul receives her own patron with greater humility, as affection was joined with reverence. Every sort of person rushes to perform all types of duties: some prepared the roads by clearing stones away, others connected them through the renovation of bridges. Some give money, others start to sing Psalms, others still carry the bier on their shoulders. A multitude of flames shone, reflecting the sunbeams, claiming, during that day, the splendor of the sun. It is through a great show of love that Germanus is returned to his own city, where his body is buried, but where he lives thanks to his daily miracles and his glory.

I beg your pardon twice, O reader: first because I wound your ears with my solecisms and meagre vocabulary; then because too lengthy a work seems intent on ennui. Yet there should be no shame in describing what Christ was not ashamed to perform: he who invites us by example when he glorifies his saints. And yet I call upon God as my witness, who knows all, that I kept silent about many acknowledged and proven deeds of my lord Germanus. On account of this, I admit being guilty of having held back what was miraculously performed by divine power for the edification of us all. And for that reason, I think I have been brief in my writing, but not too much.

*The life of the blessed bishop Germanus ends.*

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