

The Life of S. Germanus by Constantius.

BY THE REV. S. BARING GOULD, M.A.

THE author of the Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre was Constantius, apparently of Lyons. To the Life are prefixed two letters dedicatory, one to S. Patiens, Bishop of Lyons (451-491), another to Censurius, third bishop in succession to Germanus in the See of Auxerre. There is also a prologue.

Constantius professes in the second letter to have revised and amplified the Life which he had written at the desire of S. Patiens. "The authority of the holy bishop, Patiens, your brother, has required me to retrace in part, at least, the life and acts of the blessed Germanus. If I did not do this as well as I ought, I did what I could. My obedience being known to your beatitude, you ordered me to plunge once more into an excess of temerity, in desiring that I should enlarge the little page, which still remained almost in obscurity, and that I should myself come forward in some sort as my own accuser and betrayer." Censurius, to whom this letter dedicatory was written, was bishop of Auxerre from 472 to 502.

Schoell, in his *De Ecclesiasticæ Britonum Scotorumque Historiæ Fontibus* (Berlin, 1851), has treated this Life with corrosive criticism; and he argues that it was not the composition of Constantius some thirty-five years after

the death of Germanus, but was a forgery of the sixth century.

His main arguments are these:—Constantius of Lyons was the friend of Apollinaris Sidonius. Now Sidonius (*Ep.* 111) speaks of Constantius in 470-3, as one “*ætate gravem, infirmitate fragilem*”. Is it credible, Schoell asks, that a man who was old and frail in 470-3, should have written this memoir some few years later?

The first edition was dedicated to S. Patiens, at any time between 451 and 472. How long the little page remained unnoticed, we have no means of judging. The second edition, issued whilst Patiens was, as we may judge, still alive, but at the request of Censurius, appeared any time between 472 and 491. It may well have been published earlier than Schoell supposes, the first tract in 460 and the second in 474 or thereabouts. Although Constantius was old and infirm in 470-3, he may have been quite capable of writing. He was not so old and feeble but that, when the Goths were besieging the capital of Auvergne, which made a gallant resistance, but was distracted by internal feuds, he was able to make his journey thither, slip between the lines of the investing barbarians, enter the city, and assist Apollinaris Sidonius in composing the quarrels. A man who could do that could surely write a little memoir. It is a pure assumption that the *Life of Germanus* came out some thirty years later.

Another objection raised by Schoell is this. Constantius, or he who figures under his name, says of the life of Germanus, in his epistle to Patiens, that it was “*obumbratam silentio*”; and so also in the Prologue, “*Nec vereor persuasorem me hujusce ministerii judicandum tanta enim jam temporum fluxere curricula ut obscurata per silentium*

vix collegatur agnito". In thirty or thirty-five years, argues Schoell, the memory of the acts of a great prelate could not have become obscured. But Schoell left out of consideration that the period was one peculiarly stormy. The Huns, the Suevi, the Visigoths and the Alans had ravaged Gaul. Attila had burst in, in 451, sacking and burning cities, and massacring the population. Roman Gaul was invaded and was crumbling to pieces on all sides. The Gallic party with the Visigoths had set up Avitus to be emperor. He was dethroned, and Majorian severely chastised Lyons for the favour it had accorded to Avitus. The roads were broken up, intercommunication between the cities was interrupted. In the desolation and confusion of the times men thought of their own safety, and the rebuilding of their ruined homes, rather than preserving reminiscences of past saintly acts of bishops.

Moreover, Constantius wrote at Lyons, some one hundred and sixty miles as the crow flies from Auxerre, so that what with distance, and inability to come in contact with those who could recall any facts in the life of the great prelate, his first biography would necessarily be *jejune*.

It is most improbable that a fabricator of the sixth century should prefix to his composition two apocryphal dedications, one of which gives out that the former Life written by him had been meagre, and that at a later period he had amplified it. What is far more likely is, that this is a statement of fact, that the "paginula" Constantius had written at Lyons at the instance of Patiens, reached Auxerre, and was brought to the notice of the bishop there, who could furnish him with fresh material, which he sent to Constantius, with the request that he would recompose the biography with the aid of what was now

furnished. Schoell has noted that in no place does Apollinaris Sidonius speak of the Life of S. Germanus in his letters to Constantius. But if the first edition was a mere "paginula", the author may not have deemed it worthy of being brought under the eye of Sidonius. Schoell further remarks on the number of miraculous stories introduced into the Life, some very absurd, so many as hardly to comport with a biography written so short a time after the death of the subject.

But the age was one that craved for miracles, and imagined them. Moreover, Schoell was unaware that there is extant a text of Constantius that is comparatively free from this padding of marvel.

This is a MS. from Silos in Spain, recently acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. It is a MS. of the twelfth century, but it is a copy made from a text so early that it precedes the adulteration of the Life that took place late in the sixth century. That the Life of Germanus by Constantius was "farced" in that century, of that there can now remain no doubt; and we also know some of the sources from whence the additions were made. The additions, in the main, are these:—

1. The whole story of S. Amator cutting down the pear tree, on which Germanus hung offerings of the spoil of the chase, as also of Amator consecrating Germanus priest, of the death of Amator, and a subsequent miracle—all this is derived from a Life of S. Amator by Stephanus Africanus, written at the request of Aunarius, Bishop of Auxerre (573-603).

2. The very absurd story of the conversion of Mamertinus at the tomb of Corcodemus. Whence this long interpolation came, is not known.

3. The narrative of S. Germanus' encounter with S. Geneveva at Nauterre, on his way to Britain. This is taken from the life of that saint, written by a priest who had known her; anyhow, written in the reign of Childebert (511-558).

4. The account of Germanus seeking and exhuming the body of S. Alban at Verulam.

5. The narrative of the intervention of Germanus in favour of S. Geneveva on his way to revisit Britain the second time. This is from the same source as 3.

As the MS. from Silos (Nouvelles Acquisitions, Lat. 2178) has never been published, and is of great importance, we shall give in the sequel a collation with the Life as amplified, which was published in the *Acta SS. Boll.*, Jul. vii, pp. 200-221.

A fragmentary copy of Constantius, of the eighth century, has been assumed by the Abbé Narbey (Bibl. Nat., Paris, Nouvelles Acq., Lat. 12,598; printed in *Etude critique sur la vie de S. Germain*, Paris, 1884), to be the original Constantius. But it is obviously made up of Breviary lessons for some church unknown. Such lections were mere scraps taken out of a biography, by the aid of a pair of scissors. The compiler of the office selected just those portions which he regarded as most conducive to edification, without attempting to compile an historical summary. Accordingly he chose details about the saint's self-denial, his scanty food, poor raiment, and bed of cinders, with a specimen miracle, and that sufficed.

There is a Gallican missal of the sixth century that was published by Mabillon in 1685; this contains the feast of S. Germanus, and has a proper preface summing up the principal events of his life, but giving no details. These details, however, we obtain from the lections for

the feast of the saint, in the Breviaries of S. Germain des Près, and S. Corneille de Compiègne, printed by Narbey. There are eight in the office of the former, twelve in that of the latter, and in them are none of the interpolations. All these snippets are fragmentary. In Lection V of the office in the Breviary of S. Corneille, after detailing the charity and sanctity of Germanus, it goes on to say :—"In the meantime these apostolic priests had filled the isle of the Britons with their renown, that isle of the Britons which is the first or greatest of the isles. An immense crowd pressed daily on them," etc. Not a word about who these "apostolici sacerdotes" were, not a word about their having been commissioned to combat Pelagianism in Britain.

Narbey, who has criticised the Life of Germanus by Constantius, as well as has Schoell, contends that the second epistle dedicatory is a forgery prefixed to the adulterated Life. But there is no real basis for such an opinion, as we shall see; the Silos MS. possesses both, though in inverted order, and this is without the interpolations.

Both epistles are apparently by the same hand, both bear the same character of mock humility, and are couched in the same obsequious tone.

In the book *De Vitis Illustrium Virorum*, attributed to S. Isidore (d. 636) we have: "Constantius episcopus Germani vitam contexit". The writer was mistaken in making Constantius a bishop, or else the transcriber has written episcopus in lieu of episcopi.

Bede, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (I, xvii-xxii), quotes from the amplified and adulterated Constantius.

The annexed collation was made for me, at my request, by M. Michel Prevost of Paris, who I have reason to know may be thoroughly trusted.

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis., Lat. 2178. Life of S. Germanus by Constantius, as printed in the *Acta Sanctorum, Boll.*, Jul. vii, 200.

[Exclusively orthographic differences are not noticed, as where an *h* is omitted, or where a *p* is omitted, as in *redemptio*, or where *e* takes the place of *æ*. The passages in italics in each column are such as are wanting in the other version.]

Fol. 6.	In the MS. the Epistola ad Sanctum Patientem follows the Epistola ad Sanctum Censurium.		1. Epistola ad Sanctum Patientem.
	In the Epistle to S. Patiens, after the word "intimetur" is added <i>Valete longinquum meique semper memores preces Christo fundite.</i>		2. Epistola ad Sanctum Censurium.
Fol. 7. caritati peccavimus	p. 201, col. 1.	A caritati operam damus
	actu demum	" " "	2.E . . . uberiore § 1 In quo actu dum . . .
	preminentiae profecto occulto divini fati judicio . . .		preminentem . . . divinitatis occulto
		pp. 202-3, § 2-8	are wanting in N.A.L. 2178
	cum postulabat	p. 201,	§ 9 tum postulat
			§ 10 <i>civile vero</i>
	initium tantæ dies		exordium tanta die
			<i>ita</i>
	panes hordeaceas sumit		panem hordeaceum sumpsit
Fol. 8.	aderictione summitate marginis continentem		§ 11 attritione marginem continentes

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis., Lat. 2178.

Life of S. Germanus by Constantius, as printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Boll., Jul. VII, 200.

Fol. 8. damnaverat membra
 cassulla
 continentem
 toth
 pedes manibusque suis
 populis et congrega-
 tionibus monachorum
 ecclesiastica gratia re-
 pleretur.
 visendi episcopum causa
 et tunc
 postero die
 ex malitia quod com-
 miterat denegavit . . .
 tuncvero pia commotio
 sacerdotis premissaque
 in plebe addutione
 solemnī in oratione tota
 corporis strage pro-
 sternitur, produci in-
 ficiantem precipit in
 populo. Nec mora,
 missam celebraturus
 egreditur statimque . .
 infestatio
 scidium
 pervios
 Fol. 9. inmisso
 contexisset.

quum
 inspiratam
 abba
 spiritus

p. 204, § 11 membra damna-
 verat
 capsula
 continente
 tot
 § 12 *et convivium je-
 junus pastor ex-
 hibuit*
 pedes omnibus .

 raperentur

§ 13 causa visendi
 eum
 et tum
 post triduum

p. 205, § 14 crimen et mali-
 tiam

. statim
 § 15 infestatione
 excidium
 pervios
 admissam
 contigisse

§ 16 *autem*
 cum
 insperatam
 abbas
 spiritum

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Aquis., Lat. 2178.

Fol. 9. tota per inanem aërem
quam non ut
dignus erat

quum
hæc die tota
succederet

semirutis
algore
quum
orrentes
expetit
ad mediam jam noctem
effligiem terribilem im-
aginem

id
rogare
est reditus
ortatur
domicilio frequentatu

tempus jam
premineret
legatio directa
promptior auctores

oceanus
conscenditur
reddit
in altum navis
projecta

Fol. 10. procellas, pericula
ut

Life of S. Germanus by Constantius, as printed in the *Acta Sanctorum, Boll.*, Jul. vii, 200.

p. 205, § 16. per inane aeris
quam ut
erat dignus

pp. 205-10, § 17-37 are not in the MS.

p. 211, § 38 *enim*
eum
ac diem totam
secederet

absque
semirutum
rigore

cum
horrentes
expectiit
alta jam nocte

§ 39 effligiem terribilis

hoc
rogat
redditus est
hortatur
domicilium fre-
quentato

§ 40 *noctis*
jam tempus
preminebat

§ 41 directa legatio
promptius heroes

pp. 211-12, § 42-44 are not in the MS.

p. 212, § 45 *Ili*
Oceanum
conscendunt

reddidit
navis in altum
provecta

pericula, procella

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis., Lat. 2178.	Life of S. Germanus by Con- stantius, as printed in the <i>Acta Sanctorum, Boll.</i> , Jul. vii, 200.
Fol. 10. ferebatur	p. 212, § 45 mergebatur
causa legionis opponitur	§ 46 causam opponit
collegat	collegam
e contra	contrarii
revertuntur	vertuntur
	ibi <i>que</i>
<i>dum</i>	
Britannarum insula	p. 213, § 47 Britanniarum in- sulum
quum	cum
divinitus	divinus
fundebatur	diffundebatur
fides catholica firmaretur	fide catholici fir- marentur
fulget preterea	accedebat pre- terea
abditæ	abditæ
precedunt	procedunt
	<i>multitudinis</i> <i>etiam</i>
excitata	<i>suis . . . excita</i>
expectator futurus	spectator
	<i>adstabant</i> <i>dissimiles</i>
primore	primo
nuditate verborum	verborum nudi- tate
eloquiorum	eloquii
set cum	§ 48 sed illi
deterri	deteriti
	<i>sanctam</i>
sanctorum reliquis con- tinentem	cum sanctorum . .
dies	diem
declarata	deleta
nt eis prestaretur orabant	sectarentur
martyrem <i>petierunt</i>	§ 49 martyrem auctori
gratiam referentes	gratias acturi <i>pet- ierunt</i>

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis. Lat. 2178.

Life of S. Germanus by Constantius, as printed in the *Acta Sanctorum, Boll.*, Jul. vii, 200.

		p. 213, § 49	<i>ubi . . . est</i> the whole of this paragraph does not occur in the MS.
Fol. 10.	propugumanda vertebantur et infirmus jacens flagrantis curare videt Saxon adversum maximum . . . exemplum	pp. 213-4, § 50	propugnandam tegebantur jacens et infirmus flammanis curari vidit
	baptismi gratiam devotio exercitus unda tenture pararent	p. 214, § 51	Saxones adversum maximum . . . exercitus gratiam baptis- matis maxima exercitus undam pararet tentaret <i>Germanus . . . profitetur</i>
	acminis insidi superaturas	§ 52	agminis insidiis imperatas
Fol. 11.	contremiscit <i>admirat bellator populus, spolia</i> prae celestis triumphant <i>victores</i> fugassent merere intercessione demonia depresserat quesituras de territorio erat quia tempestibus claudebatur		contremescunt <i>spectator efficitur</i> praedam celestis vicissent numero intercessio § 53 daemones depresserant quaesituras § 54 territorium eratque pluvius

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis., Lat. 2178.

Fol. 11.	cuculla	p. 214, § 54	cucullo
	mansiones		mansione
	fur		praedo
	pediti		peditem
	inquiens		inquit
	commoremur		remoremur
			<i>se</i>
	crimimum		crimimis
	objectationem	pp. 214-5, § 55	objectationem
	probabatur		probatur
	<i>suorum</i> solatia		
	in <i>ejus</i>		
	et		ac
	quantas virtutes		quantum virtutis
	deductaque		deductoque
	illustratam		illustrato
	agrestios		
	quum neil		cum nihil
Fol. 12.	conligatur	p. 215, § 56	colligatur
			<i>Sanctus Germanus</i>
	cura		Arari
	exultans se cum vidisse		releuat vel
	itinere		itinera
	adveniente		advenientem
	in suo tempore		sui temporis
			<i>enim</i>
	ingredienti		<i>pontificem</i>
	minore		ingreditur
	cognoscerent		minorem
	ambiturque		cognosceret
	tradebat		ambitque
	<i>etiam</i> confitetur		quaerebat
	quia		qta
Fol. 13.		§ 58	<i>quievit</i> , this paragraph deficient in the MS.
	Britanniis	p. 216,	Britanniis
	sustentatur		delectatur

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre
by Constantius, as in the Solos
MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles
Acquis., Lat. 2178.

Fol. 13. *navis* Christo auctore
conscendit

preparaberit
quum
admiratione
cumulata formatur
absolutionem
redierunt
vix dum
remeaberant
Etius
iniaberat
et mons sacerdas nostras
accedere occurrit
fudit
inerepavit
veniam
petierat
presteretur
virtute
preteriens
presbyterum *iterum*
afferri
potionem, benedictionem

deinde husus
amico
salutatur

aspectum
solitario
occurrentium
constipato
inlustratos
preteriret

Life of S. Germanus by Con-
stantius, as printed in the *Acta*
Sanctorum. Boll., Jul. VII, 200.

p. 216, § 60 *viro* — *inceptum*,
mare not in the
MS.

§ 61 properavit
eum
stupore
firmabatur
absolutione
reversisunt

pp. 216-7, § 62

remeaverat
Actius
inhiaverat
tamen
accederet
fundit
inerepat
venia
praestiterat
peteretur

p. 217, § 63

virtutem
dum praeterit

offerri
petitionem bene-
dictionis
deinceps usus
amicum
salutatam reli-
quit
in aeternum
vale

§ 64 solitarium
occurrentibus
constipatum
inlustratis
preterit
qui dum
responderet, all
this not in the
MS.

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis., Lat. 2178.

Life of S. Germanus by Constantius, as printed in the *Acta Sanctorum, Boll.*, Jul. VII, 200.

Fol. 14. introrsus
 toth
 incipient vulnera esse
 prestitissent
 adprehendam
 adjurgitur
 Italia
 artifices
 redeuntes
 sociantur
 dum
 patiuntur
 viatoribus
iterato transitu subjecta

p. 217, § 65 introrsum
 tot
 incipient
 restitissent
 comprehendam
 adjungit
 pp. 217-8, § 66 Italianam
 artificibus
 redeuntibus
 sociatur
 cum
 potitur
 viator

Libet . . . *collocaverat*, all this lacking in the MS.

celari
 altare
 quur
 Gallias

p. 218 § 67 celare
 altari
 cur
 Galliis
sufficiat fit

negavit se esse Episcopum
 motum
 celeri

negavit, *Episcopi omnes*
 remotum
 celebri
incolumem
 operari dignatus est
 sanctitatis

operatus est
 sanitatis
 erogare
 agitur iter
 intuetur
 concitus
 obvoluti
 domicilium fovet
 dicitis

pp. 218-9, § 68 erogari
 iter agitur
 intuentur
 concitatas
 provoluti
 domicilio fruitor
 ducitis

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Life of S. Germanus by Constantius, as printed in the *Acta Sanctorum, Boll.*, Jul. vii, 200.

Fol. 15.	causa	p. 219,	§ 72	causam
	depulso			repulso
	fideique			
	concutiens <i>pectus</i>			<i>Uter consurgit</i>
	<i>Interea mobetur exanimis</i>			extollitur
	adtollitur			Christus virtutes
	virtutes Christus		§ 73	Achollii
	Accule			tum
	tunc			menstruum
	monstruum			
	<i>Hic intervenientu</i>			<i>ergo</i>
	Tunc vero latebris mani-			tum . . . erupit
	festus erupit			
	inlabeunte			ab ineunte
	obtinuisse			obtinisset
	battonis			titubationis
	effectum non habuit			evanuit
	iterata revelionis intentio			circumscriptione
	sermo	pp. 219-20,	§ 74	<i>Germanus igitur</i>
	confertur			sermonem
	tristissimam			conferret
				moestissimam
				<i>Ubi</i>
Fol. 16.	aliquos			aliquot
	contremuit			turbatur
	postulavit	p. 220,	§ 75	<i>Placidia</i>
	petit			postulat
				petiit
	heredes			<i>aut amisit</i>
	fugum			heres
	adparatum			fagulum
	ferbens		§ 76	apparatu
	conferentu <i>et invicem</i>			fervent
	quor			conferentium
	adivetur			cur
	Accolius			deberetur
	imperium			Acholius
				imperator

Life of S. Germanus of Auxerre by Constantius, as in the Solos MS., Bibl. Nat., Paris. Nouvelles Acquis., Lat. 2178.

Fol. 16. ministerium
 sacerdotis *impudent*
 in presenti ordine in-
 stituto se ipsi premi-
 tunt
 Dum preterit placentiam
 ibbi dum in ecclesia
 corpus conlocatum
 fuisse et vigiliis sancte
 devotionis excolerent
 illius
 paralysis
 detenta

 mirantibusque
 famulatum
 reverentia
 repercussus
 Dum publicem
 ad te
 solecismum
ad eorum exemplum
 conscius futurorum

 eui se
 suppressendum

Life of S. Germanus by Con-
 stantius, as printed in the *Acta*
Sanctorum, Boll., Jul. vii. 200.

p. 220, § 76 ministros

 presenti
 premittunt

 Placentiam . . .
 praeterit quod

 excolitur

 ejus
 paralysis
 extenta
et mulier et

 famulatu
 reverentiae
 repercusso
 § 77 duplicem
 a te
 solecismis
 exemplo
 conscium secre-
 torum
 tacuisse
 suppressendo
sedit . . . gloria,
 all this lacking
 in the MS.
Epitaphium . . .
panunt, also
 lacking in the
 MS.

*Sanctus Germanus episcopus pridie
 Kalendas augustas de hoc corpore
 migravit ad Dominum quem vener-
 abilem diem omnes ecclesiae provin-
 ciae Gallicanis predicabili devo-
 tione suscipiunt et venerantur ut
 per suffragia illius misericordiam
 Domini consequantur.*