

Fragmentology

A Journal for the Study of Medieval Manuscript Fragments

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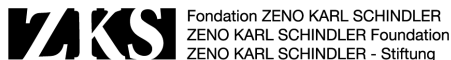
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Editorial Address:

Fragmentology
University of Fribourg
Rue de l'Hôpital 4
1700 Fribourg, Switzerland.

tel: +41 26 300 90 50

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Research Note

An Unnoticed Uncial Fragment of the *Passio Iuliani*

Pieter Beullens, KU Leuven – FWO Vlaanderen*

pieter.beullens@kuleuven.be



While I was browsing the digitized medieval manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Municipale (now Médiathèque Pierre-Amalric) of Albi, I was struck by the presence in MS 18 (Biblissima: [Q227483](#)) of a parchment strip written in Latin uncial letters [[F-05yb](#)]. It was apparently retrieved from the manuscript's original binding when it was restored and the binding substituted with a new one in 1978.¹ At present, only the recto of the fragment (henceforth: F) remains legible, probably as a result of the fact that it was previously used to reinforce the spine of the manuscript and that the now unreadable verso was glued to the block of the quires.

No modern catalogue description of the manuscript is available. The *Catalogue général* merely lists its content, a fourteenth-century religious miscellany.² F does not appear in volume 6 of Lowe's

* I thank the two anonymous referees for their valuable suggestions, most of which I incorporated into this note without acknowledging each contribution individually.

1 Médiathèque Pierre-Amalric (Albi), catalogue, <https://koha.ic2a.net/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=207922>: “Ouvrage restauré en 1978 par l'atelier de restauration de livres anciens de la Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse. Reliure de substitution en pleine peau retournée faite lors de la restauration du manuscrit” (accessed January 2022; as of December 2022, the entry has disappeared). See also <https://cecilia.mediatheques.grand-albigeois.fr/idurl/1/15>.

2 *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques des départements*, t. 1, Paris 1849, 485. The description provides the basis for the electronic catalogue, which lists 1. *Meditationum liber in septem dona Spiritus sancti* [=Stephanus de Borbone, *Pantheon seu morale aedificium*; ff. 11a–129va], 2. *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, Saint Bernard [from the rubric on f. 129vb, but with the incipit *Gratia est divine misericordie donum gratuitum*, which is from Isidore, and having contents that appear to be a patristic miscellany, ff. 129va–173rb, followed by a table, f. 173rb–vb introducing *sententiae* extracted from various volumes on ff. 173vb–189va; ff. 129vb], 3. *Collectio canonum* [=dedication of

Codices Latini Antiquiores, where two other manuscripts from the Albi library are listed as numbers 705 and 706, nor in the two *Addenda* articles published in 1985 and 1992.³ It seems therefore probable that F was hidden in the binding until the fairly recent restoration, but even after that it remained unnoticed. Surprisingly, the online description on the library's website fails to recognize its features as an *antiquior* and rather underwhelmingly acknowledges the existence of a "[m]ontage en fin d'ouvrage d'un ancien onglet de charnière en parchemin."⁴

The online description reports the dimensions of the manuscript itself as 230×150 mm. F has the same height, which is perfectly logical if it was used to reinforce the manuscript's spine. On the basis of the image, F's width can be estimated at approximately 90 mm. The strip must have been cut from a folio that was considerably higher: the writing starts abruptly at the top and the last line is cut in half, which means that at least the upper and lower margins are missing, but probably also an undetermined number of lines adjacent to either edge. By a lucky coincidence, F preserves a single column of a leaf that was probably written in two columns. If we allow for room for the margins and space between the columns, we can conclude that the original size of the folio from which the strip was cut was at least 300×230 mm. However, it is not impossible that the page originally had three columns: in that case the original size might have been close to 300×330 mm.

The text can be identified as a passage from the story of the early-4th-century martyr Julian of Antinoopolis, his wife Basilissa, and their companions. The *Passio Iuliani* was originally written in Greek (BHG 970-971) and soon afterwards, possibly in the early sixth century, translated into Latin (BHL 4529). The latter version is of considerable interest, since the oldest Greek manuscript dates from

volume by Bernard de Fabrica, see below, f. 189vb; incomplete and discarded beginning of the *Pantheon*, above, likely used as a binding fragment, f. 190].

3 E.A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores. A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*, v. 6, Oxford 1953; B. Bischoff, V. Brown, "Addenda to *Codices Latini Antiquiores*", *Medieval Studies* 47 (1985), 317-366; B. Bischoff, V. Brown, J. John, "Addenda to *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (II)", *Medieval Studies* 54 (1992), 286-307.

4 n. 1, above.

the tenth century,⁵ while the Latin is already attested in the Luxeuil lectionary (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9427; Biblissima: [Q67215](#)), which is usually placed around 700.⁶

The Latin text of F largely coincides with chapter 52 of the Greek text, framed by a few words from the previous and from the following chapters.⁷ A total of 23 lines are preserved, a few of which lack their first letter(s). In the transcription below square brackets indicate where they were supplemented. When loss of parchment made letters illegible, they are put between curly brackets. Letters that are only partly readable are marked by a dot under the line. The apparatus gives the differences with the text of the Luxeuil lectionary (L)⁸ and with the *Acta Sanctorum* for January (A) (I.585). I also list the seemingly trivial variants, in particular those that regard the spelling, as they may reflect characteristics from the linguistic or educational backgrounds of the scribes. The comparison with the facing Greek text will help the reader to assess the relative value of the variants in each witness.

The differences with L are too far-reaching to be caused by scribal inadvertence. It is conspicuous that L twice adds *sanctus* to Julian's name, in contrast with *beatus* (line 21). It seems therefore likely that what is added on line 17 results from deliberate editing, although the whole group is twice called *sanctos* (lines 1 and 22). The shortening of the names and details in lines 14–16 to *matrem et filium*, and the change of *Deus* to *infernus* can likewise not be considered mere mistakes. The comparison with the Greek text

5 F. Halkin, “La passion ancienne des saints Julien et Basilisse BHG 970–971”, *Analecta Bollandiana* 98 (1980), 241–296; A.P. Alwis, *Celibate Marriages in Late Antique and Byzantine Hagiography: the Lives of Saints Julian and Basilissa, Andronikos and Athanasia, and Galaktion and Episteme*, London 2011, 5–6.

6 E.A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, v. 5, Oxford 1950, no. 579; E.A. Lowe, “The ‘Script of Luxeuil’. A Title Vindicated”, *Revue Bénédictine* 63 (1953), 132–142.

7 Halkin, “La passion ancienne”, 287.

8 P. Salmon, *Le lectionnaire de Luxeuil* (Paris, ms. lat. 9427). *Édition et étude comparative. Contribution à l'histoire de la Vulgate et de la liturgie en France au temps des Mérovingiens* (Collectanea Biblica Latina VII), Rome and Vatican City 1944, 51–52.

Albi Passio Iuliani

Greek Original (ed. Halkin)

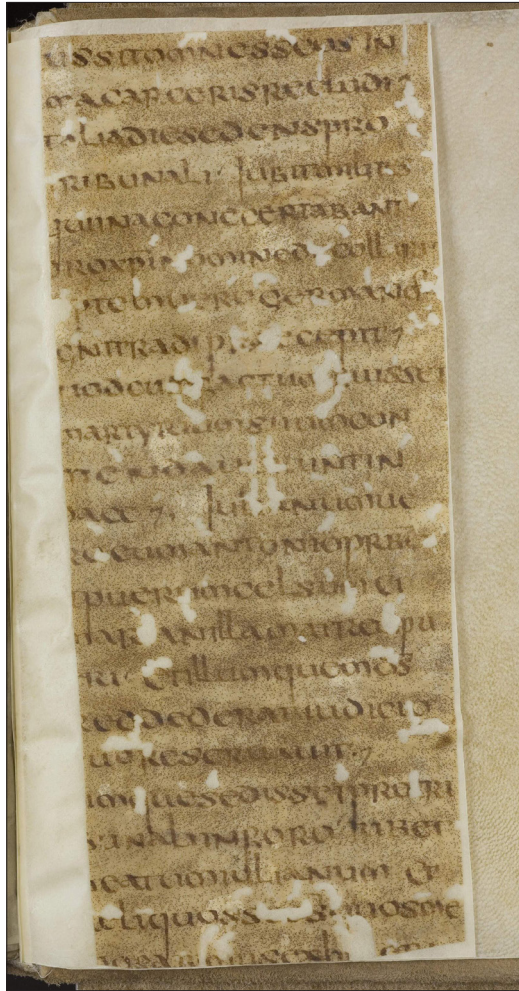
	I]USSIT OMNES SCOS IN	κελεύει πάντας εἰς
	I]MA CARCERIS RECLUDI 7	τὴν κατωτάτην φυλακὴν ἀποκλεισθῆναι.
	E]T ALIA DIE SEDENS PRO	Τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον καθήμενος ἐπὶ τοῦ
	T]RIBUNALI IUBIT MILITES	βήματος ἐκέλευσεν τοὺς εἴκοσι στρατιώτας
5	QUI IN AGONE CERTABANT 7	τοὺς ἀγωνιζομένους
	PRO XPI NOMINE D{E} COLLARI	ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ
	S]{E}PTEM UERO GERMANOS	καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀδελφοὺς
	I]GNI TRADI PRAECEPT 7	τῷ πυρὶ παραδοθῆναι.
	Q]UOD CUM FACTUM {F} UISSET	Ἐκείνων δὲ
10	MARTYRIUM SUUM CON	τὸ μαρτύριον
	MENDAUERUNT IN	πληρωσάντων
	PACE 7 IULIANUM UE	ἐν εἰρήνῃ, Ἰουλιανὸν
	RO CUM ANTONIO PRBO	μετὰ Ἀντωνίου τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου
	E]T PUERUM CELSUM ET	καὶ τὴν μητέρα
15	MAR{I}ANILLĀ MATREM PU	καὶ τὸν υἱὸν
	ERI ET ILLUM QUEM DS	καὶ τὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντα
	REDDEDERAT IUDICIO	τῇ οἰκεῖα κρίσει
	S]UO RESERUAUIT 7	ἐφύλαξεν.
	CU]MQUE SEDISSET PRO TRI	Καὶ καθεσθεῖς
20	BUNALI IN FORO IUBET	ἐν τῷ φόρῳ
	B]EATUM IULIANUM ET	τὸν μακάριον Ἰουλιανὸν
	R]ELIQUOS SCOS QUOS ME	καὶ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἁγίους
	MORAUMUS EXH{IB}ERI	τοὺς λεχθέντας παρεῖναι

L = Luxeuil Lectionary (ed. Salmon, *Le lectionnaire de Luxeuil*, 51–52)

A = *Acta Sanctorum*, I.585

1 iussit] iubit L jubet A | sanctos *om.* LA 2 ima] imo A 3 et alia] alia vero LA 4 iubit] praecepit viginti L jubet viginti A 7 germanos] germanus L 8 tradi praecepit] cremari L 9 factum fuisset] factus fuisset L 10 suum *om.* L | commendauerunt] consummaverunt L cum gaudio et exultatione consummaverunt A 12 pace] pergentes ad dominum cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum amen *add.* A | iulianum vero] sanctum vero iulianum LA 14-16 et puerum... pueri] matrem et filium LA 16 deus] infernus LA 17 reddederat] reddiderat A orationibus sancti iuliani hos omnes *add.* L 18 reseruauit] reservari praecepit A 19 sedisset] sedissit L 20 iubet] iubit L 22–23 quos memorauimus *om.* A

Figure 1: *Passio Iuliani*.
Albi, Médiathèque Pierre
Amalric, 18, f. 192r.



demonstrates that already at an early stage of its transmission, the original translation was significantly edited.

The scribe of F uses clearly written uncial letters in a pure form with few abbreviations for *nomina sacra* and religious terminology, like *sanctos*, *Christus*, *presbyter*, and *Deus*. He closes his sentences with a punctuation sign in the form of a crochet or a modern number 7. In general, descenders are longer than ascenders. The scribe often lengthened the former by tracing an additional stroke under the first

one. The vertical stroke of the letter *F* goes under the baseline, while its horizontal strokes are “drooping”. Its upper stroke even nearly closes into a curl, although it cannot be mistaken for an *R* due to its descender. There are ascenders for *I* at the beginning of a sentence. The upper part of the *E* is closed. The stem of the *T* has a minute flourish below to the right. Once the *O* forms a ligature with a high *S* at the end of line 7 (*germanos*).

Obviously, a small strip of written parchment yields but few clues to situate it in time and space. The most relevant evidence comes from comparisons with dated manuscripts of known origin. I found several striking similarities in the letter forms of a collection of council documents (T) in Toulouse, Bibliothèque municipale, 364 (Biblissima: [Q246356](#)), of which some folios ended up in MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8901 (Biblissima: [Q66940](#)).⁹ T is incomplete and has no colophon, but Samaran showed that it was written before 666 or 667 for the bishop of Albi.¹⁰ His dating relies on a late-ninth-century copy of T, MS Albi, Médiathèque Pierre-Amalric, 2 (Biblissima: [Q227424](#)), which, on f. 117v, contains a reference to events in the year 666 or 667 that must be considered a *terminus ante quem* for T. Without reference to Samaran’s article, Ourliac confidently dates T to the early years of the seventh century.¹¹

In general, the letter forms and abbreviations in T are very similar to the ones in F. The nearly closed curl of the upper stroke of the letter *F* in particular catches the eye, but there are also striking similarities in the forms of the *T* and the *A*. Moreover, the measurements of 357×229 mm of T are consistent with the hypothetical size of the original leaf (if it had two columns) from which F was cut. Yet, some differences cannot be ignored. T is written in long lines. The conspicuous punctuation sign at the end of sentences occurs only seldom and is far less extravagantly executed.

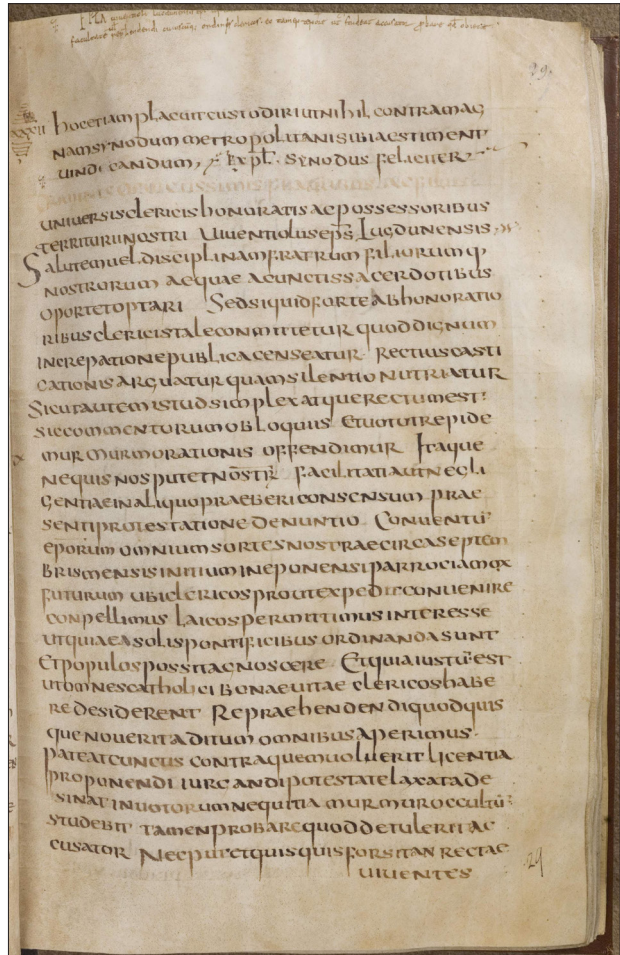
If we can trace the origin of F back to a scriptorium of the Albi cathedral chapter on the basis of the similarities with T, the conclusion

9 Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, v. 6, no. 836.

10 C. Samaran, “Sur la date d’un manuscrit en onciale”, *Bibliothèque de l’école des chartes* 96 (1935), 437–438.

11 P. Ourliac, “Le manuscrit toulousain de la collection d’Albi”, *Revue de droit canonique* 28 (1978), 223–238.

Figure 2: T, Toulouse, Bibliothèque municipale, 364, f. 29r



would be in line with the earlier history of the parchment strip as far as it can be ascertained. MS Albi, Médiathèque Pierre-Amalric, 18, which preserved F in its binding, contains a fourteenth-century *ex libris* in red ink on f. 189v, identifying the book as belonging to the chapter library of the Albi cathedral from a donation by canon Bernard de Fabrica. A note on f. 190v (probably the pastedown of the former binding) refers to the year 1369. This evidence shows that the codex probably remained in the same city. It is therefore very likely that the binding from which F was detached was also

produced there. It is to be expected that the binder would have used local manuscript waste for his work. If that evidence is added to the similarity with T, it seems safe to conclude that F was taken from a codex written in Albi around the middle of the seventh century. T would then no longer be the only remaining manuscript from that place and that period, as Ourliac complained.¹²

This likely hypothesis for the origin of F significantly adds to the understanding of the spread of the *Passio Iuliani*. Its Greek original travelled from Syria to Constantinople and Egypt, and the intricacies of its circulation are still being investigated.¹³ As for its arrival in the Western world, Alwis claims that there was a “Spanish connection”: Queen Brunhild (†613), a Visigothic princess married to the French king, allegedly brought the saint’s relics via Spain to Gaul. It is reasonable to suppose that the martyr’s story followed the same route.¹⁴ The discovery of a fragment from a seventh-century manuscript of the *Passio Iuliani* from Albi, in the south of France close to the Spanish border, can easily be interpreted as a corroboration of Alwis’s hypothesis.

¹² Ourliac, “Le manuscrit toulousain”, 229.

¹³ For a recent contribution, see E. Rizos, “Saint Julian of Cicilia: cult and hagiography, including the edition and English translation of the *Passio S. Iuliani Anazarbeni* (BHG 966) and its *Epitome* (BHG 967d)”, *Analecta Bollandiana* 139 (2021), 106–155. I thank Dr. Anne Alwis for the reference and for reading the first version of this article.

¹⁴ Alwis, *Celibate Marriages*, 311–313.