Il testo inedito medio inglese Of Seint Alex of Rome, incluso nel Ms. XIII B 29 (Napoli, Bibl. Naz.), ha ricevuto limitata attenzione accademica, probabilmente a causa dello scarso valore letterario che lo caratterizza, in contrasto con altre rielaborazioni volgari della vita del santo.
L’obiettivo del presente articolo è di fornire un’edizione critica del testo, così come tramandato dal codice napoletano, e procedere quindi all’analisi linguistica dello stesso, al fine di evidenziarne le caratteristiche dialettali, e proporre una localizzazione geografica. L’approccio editoriale e filologico permette di rilevare il valore del testo in quanto documento linguistico e consente di caratterizzarlo quale testimone di una situazione dialettale particolarmente composita e dinamica.
Nell’articolo viene quindi proposta una discussione delle valenze culturali della leggenda Of Seint Alex of Rome; il testo viene considerato anzitutto in quanto parte dell’unità codice, e contestualizzato alla luce della vicenda della sua diffusione nell’Europa medievale.

1. Introduction

The legend of St. Alex is one of the most widespread hagiographic narrations of the Middle Ages. Its original nucleus may be tracked between Syria and Greece in the 5th century A.D. (cf. Amiaud 1889 and Rösler 1933) but, by the late 10th century, the legend had already spread throughout Western Europe in the form with which we are familiar today. The Latin prose Vita edited by the Bollandists in the Acta Sanctorum (BHL 286) preserves the closest extant version to the ‘panoccidental’ (Odenkirchen 1978: 13) life of St. Alex which had begun to circulate in Europe, and which most probably also constitutes the basis of much of the Western tradition. The Latin version dates from the late 10th century; from this moment on, the legend of the Saint experienced enormous success and wide circulation; such a rapid development led to the
formation of an extremely rich tradition, the charting of which was undertaken by Margaret Rösler\(^1\). By the late 11\(^{th}\) century the life of Saint Alex had reached England, where evidence of its popularity, even in later centuries, is provided by the number of manuscripts – almost 20 – preserving the nine extant Middle English versions.

Without disregarding this varied insular tradition, the scope of the present article will be more limited. The main interest will focus on one specific branch of the Middle English tradition, represented by the unedited text *Of Seint Alex of Rome*, handed down by Ms. XIII B 29, housed in Naples National Library (the text will be henceforth referred to as N). The purpose of this article is mainly editorial and philological, as it aims to present the edition of the text as handed down by the Neapolitan Ms., proceeding then to its linguistic analysis in the attempt to localise the Middle English dialect used in N. This is a challenging task, due to the late date of the manuscript (1457)\(^2\); nonetheless, much of the interest in N lies precisely in its dynamic and composite language.

The text N has elicited little interest from a literary standpoint. A broader contextualisation of the text may nonetheless bring to light some interesting aspects that would otherwise go unnoticed: on the one hand, N exists as part of the larger entity represented by the codex in which it appears\(^3\); on the other, N stands as a realisation of hagiographic dramatization, and it therefore constitutes an exemplar of a very widespread medieval genre, as further discussed in paragraph 5.

2. Textual Tradition

The extant Middle English versions of the Legend of St. Alex have been organised into nine groups by Charlotte D’Evelyn (1970: 564-5), primarily on grounds of metre and content. In the following survey, the interest is centred on group A (D’Evelyn 1970: 564), to which N

\(^1\) Cf. especially Rösler (1905: 23-34). Rösler’s seminal work comprises the Western tradition of the life of St. Alex, focusing primarily on the Middle English period.

\(^2\) The manuscript is dated by its scribe in the colophon on page 146.

\(^3\) The composition of codex XIII B 29 and the interrelation of the different texts included in it certainly deserve further investigation.
belongs and which includes the ‘early 6-line stanza’\(^4\) versions of the legend with rhyme scheme aabcccb. Besides N, group A also includes the two earliest Middle English versions of the legend: Ms. Vernon-Bodley 3938, dating from 1385 ca. (henceforth V) and Ms. Laud 108-Bodley 1486, dating from the beginning of the 15\(^{\text{th}}\) century (henceforth L), both edited by Furnivall (1878: 19ff.). Ms. Durham University Cosin v.ii.14 (15\(^{\text{th}}\) cent.) should also be included in A; the text has not yet been edited, apart from a brief passage published by Furnivall (1878: 99-100).\(^5\)

V represents the oldest exemplar; V, L and N all descend from the same antecedent, yet a number of disjunctive errors, despite closely connecting N and L, exclude the hypothesis of a tradition with an archetype. Thus, V, L and N all descend through different grades of distance from the same Middle English original, which has not survived, each of them respectively through mediation of a *codex interpositum*. Despite the obvious connections with BHL 286 (the Latin *Vita*) it seems that the ultimate source of this branch of the Middle English tradition is to be identified with the *Legenda Aurea* version of the life of the saint (Rösler 1905: 79-82). The Middle English texts and the *Legenda Aurea* retain significant similarities, whereas BHL 286 can be excluded as the direct source of group A, mainly on the basis of a number of omissions.\(^6\) The *Legenda Aurea* version shows a tendency to the essentiality that is also reproduced in the Middle English texts, and is, in contrast with BHL 286, richer in details. Omissions account for a descendence of V, L, N from the *Legenda Aurea*, as it is very unlikely that hagiographic narrations would omit parts of the content, especially when these might serve as further demonstration of the saint’s virtue.

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\(^4\) The label has the intent of distinguishing group A from group B – referred to as the ‘late 6-line stanza’ (D’Evelyn 1970: 564) – on palaeographical grounds. Both groups present in fact the same metric structure, but vary considerably in contents.

\(^5\) Another edition of version A is the study by Schipper (1877: 67-94). Schipper’s approach aims to restore a critical edition of the text, most closely approximating the original. With this aim in mind he argues V’s eligibility as collation exemplar (1877: 12-16). Despite being dated, the work has the merit of dedicating specific attention to the sole Middle English tradition, as handed down in branch A.

\(^6\) For instance, Alex’s habit of receiving the Communion daily appears in BHL 286, but not in V, L, N, nor in the *Legenda Aurea*. The reference to the temptation of the Devil is also left out in the ME texts and their antecedent, while it appears in BHL 286.
3. The text

The text Of Seint Alex of Rome appears on pages 80-86 of Ms. XIII B 29, the title caption is scribal, and it is inserted on the first page of the legend. The text is organised in two columns per page, the script is a combination of anglicana and secretary forms (see Appendix). The closing caption at the end of the text in Latin is in gothic script7.

3.1. Editorial practice

Punctuation, capitalisation and word-division are editorial. Single words written separately in the original are hyphenated in the edition. Emendations are enclosed in square brackets in the edited text. Abbreviations are expanded in italics. The division into stanzas is editorial, page number and column-breaks, as they appear in the original, are given in brackets in the right margins of the text. Words presenting problematic reading or interpretation are transcribed in the edited text following the scribal variant, and footnotes in the textual apparatus give the corresponding forms in other manuscripts (V and L)8.

4. Linguistic profile

4.1. Introductory remarks

The earliest studies on the manuscript tend to localise its language to the “East Midland, probably toward the North” (Manly 1940: 377), or as “nordlichen jungeren Ms. N” (Schipper 1877: 64); in more recent years A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English (LALME) proposed a

7 For further palaeographic descriptions of the manuscript cf. Seymour (1997: 149-50), Rice (1987: 241-2), and in greater detail Manly Rickert (1940: 376-80), who deserves credit for having detected the connection between the codex itself and Tommaso Campanella, as well as a suggestion for the name of the scribe, Henry More (1940: 378-9).

8 Developments in historical linguistics and dialectology argue for a diplomatic rather than a critical approach in text editing (cf. Laing / Lass 2007). The significance of such practice is fundamental, let alone the importance of preserving a text’s value as historical document. The choice of the editorial practice in the present edition is motivated by the scope of the paper, which is limited to making the text Of Seint Alex of Rome accessible for fruition as a literary text.
Southern localisation, specifically the Dorset area (LP 9490), to which Seymour also adheres. However, the analysis of *LALME* is based on the sole text of *Patient Griselde*, a fragment of Chaucer’s *Clerk’s Tale*, which appears in the manuscript on pages 119-146.

A Northern provenance or strong influence on N should be excluded, on the basis of a number of linguistic features. To anticipate some elements: the results of OE /a:/, the dropping of -l- near -ch sounds, and the verbal forms, for instance. In addition, it is possible to trace other linguistic features that help limit the area: the -th form of the 3rd person singular of present tense verbs excludes the North and North Midlands; the forms of the verb *wol/wolle* and the 3rd person plural pronouns eliminate East Midlands and East Anglia, together with the Northern area.

However, the situation is not so clear-cut, and it is possible to detect some influences from those dialects which seem easiest to exclude. Together with its Southern features, the text often deploys linguistic elements stemming from the Midland dialects, especially South-Eastern and South-Western, and a few traces of a Northern influence may be noted as well. Moreover, some linguistic observations seem to highlight elements that contradict the assignment of the dialect to the South: e.g. the forms of the *be*-type of the verbs ‘to be’, which are not much attested in the Southern areas, or the form of the present participle.

Being a late exemplar, N mirrors a rather composite linguistic situation, in which dialectal forms of different areas, archaisms and innovations coexist.

4.2. Spelling

The scribe’s hand employs a combination of anglicana and secretary scripts, which was a widespread practice in 15th-century productions. Throughout the text of the legend it is possible to trace an attempt at consistent usage; yet, in some instances – as will be seen in the case of verbs – oscillating spellings still prevail. The use of digraphs to indicate long vowels is rare, and it is mainly limited to the spellings for /u:/, for which both <ou> and <ow> can be found: *hous, doun/downe, lowde, nowe*. Some instances of the use of digraphs also occur in the rendering of /i:/, as in *hie/hye*.
In most cases long vowels are indicated by a weak final -e, as in *same, take, sone, loke, meke, fete, grete, life*. Reduplication is found only in the spelling of the word ‘good’: *good, goodis*.

The use of the graphemes <i> and <y> to indicate /i/ or /i:/ is not regular, the two variants occurring regardless of context; even within a series on minims <i> is often found: *him, bring, drink*; and the same word often has both spellings: *bi/by, icche/ycche*.

The text shows a tendency towards the use of a set of two-letter spellings, where <þ> is replaced by <th> and <gh> is used instead of <3>. However, the pattern of the two-letter spelling is not yet established, and <þ> and <3> appear quite frequently. It may be noted, on the other hand, that the <ch> grapheme is used consistently followed by that of <sh>, for which only a couple of erratic spellings can be detected: *sulde, scho*. Yogh seems to be the most resistant grapheme, it is used both for the approximant /j/, as in *3ave, 3ere, 3erde*, and for the palatal fricative: *my3t, nou3t, ri3t*.

A number of verbs show a frequent oscillation in spelling, especially the forms of ‘hear’, ‘fall’, ‘go’ and ‘do’. In the past tense the spelling of ‘hear’ appears alternately as *hurd 445, 475*, and *herde* (l. 307, 361, 409). The spelling of ‘fall’ presents alternation of the radical vowel: it is <e> in ll. 449: *fel*, and 458: *felle*; <i> in *fillen, l. 363, fille, l. 494, fille, l. 505*. The past of ‘go’ alternates between *went, l. 74, 78, 80, 97 and wende* (l. 237); in line 170 the form of the past participle has the voiced dental: *y-wend*. However, the past form in *yede* is also frequent (ll. 267, 315, 416, 422, 580). ‘Do’ has the past forms *didde* in l. 17 and *dud* in l. 29.

4.3. Phonology

Due to the presence of the rhyme it is possible to infer some distinctive features on the status of spelling and pronunciation, and on the relationship between them. The rhyme scheme suggests the merely graphic value of final -e, which is most likely already pronounced as /ə/, where not mute. The tendency originates from the North, but by the 15th century it had already reached most Middle English dialects. The presence of final -e may also indicate the length of the preceding vowel as discontinuous representation for long vowels (Lass 1992: 38), and
has therefore no phonetic value of its own, as in the following examples of rhyme: _downe/diuocioun_, ll. 100-1; _Eufamyan/gone_, ll. 171-4; _churche/wirch_, ll. 196-7.

In the pair _downe/diuocioun_, the second term retains the digraph <ou> in the last syllable, rhyming with stressed <ow>. It can be supposed that this is an instance of sight rhyme, preserved by the scribe, since by the 15th century French borrowings already presented a shift of the primary stress to the word’s first syllable (Mossé 1952: 14-15) or most often presented variation between native and Romance stressing (Lass 1992: 89; Burrow, Turville-Petre 1996: 13).

The last rhyme example mentioned, _churche/wirch_, ll. 196-7, raises problems connected to the words’ root vowels. The spelling of the word _wirch_ retains inconsistencies in the interpretation of the root vowel, which appears either as -i- rhyming with -u-, as in the example above, or as -u- rhyming with -u-, as in _churche/wurch_, ll. 597-8. The word ‘work’ presents the same peculiarities: it appears as _work_, rhyming with _clerk_ in ll. 112-3, while in ll. 46-7 the variant _werk_ rhyming with _clerk_ occurs. The differences in spelling may be an indication of the indefinite pronunciation of the stressed tonic vowel. The change involves not only the terms _work_ and _wirch_, but also _churche_ and _clerk_: in fact, for the latter pair the written form does not change, despite their alternate rhyming with different stressed vowels. The stressed vowel’s tone is thus undefined, and documents the gradual rise of the stressed /ə:/ sound. The OE /y(:)/ remains /y(:)/ in Middle English in the South West and West Midlands, but the delabialisation had already appeared elsewhere in the 13th century. The spelling _wurch_, which occurs only once in the text, might be an erratic spelling.

Old English /a:/ is regularly /ɔ:/ in the text, which would exclude a Northern dialect: _holy, go, one_. The only occurrence of the infinitive form presenting the old root vowel in /a/, _gang_ (l. 44) may be connected to rhyme needs, as the first rhyming word of the couplet is _lang_ (l. 43).

When <a> is followed by a nasal consonant the spelling is less consistent throughout the text, and it is rendered as <a>: _man, name_, or <o>: _thonkid, hond_. Sometimes the same term has both spellings: _land/lond_ (ll. 152, 166), _lang/long_ (ll. 43, 264). Despite the spelling, an obscuration in the pronunciation of /a/ can be hypothesised considering the rhyme in _man/echon_, ll. 559-60. This example seems to further
testify a Southern influence on the language of the text, and in any case rules out a Northern provenance. The spelling <o> before -nd is from the West-Midland area, but it was also found in Southern dialects. Short /a/ became dominant later again starting from the East Midlands, where the situation was however still unstable, and a deeper penetration was documented around the 15th century. In two cases the spelling of /a/ followed by nasal sound is <aun>, but this is limited to the French borrowings *comaundement* (l. 224) and *seruauntis* (l. 313).

The text shows a predominance of the sounds -i/-y- in final syllable before a consonant. This feature has been traced in 13th-century Middle English Northern dialects.

### 4.4. Morphology

On a morphological level the text shows more complications: as will be seen, numerous morphological features point to a rather unstable situation, due in part to the constraints of rhyme and metre.

The noun inflection retains the sole distinctions for the plural and possessive forms. The plural of nouns is generally marked by the -s morpheme, but two examples of the mutated plural can be found in the terms *fete* (l. 507) and *men* (e.g. ll. 10, 15). Some examples of zero-morpheme plurals are noteworthy: the example *partener* (l. 371) is doubtful, as it can be considered either as zero-morpheme plural and or as a singular noun. However, the stanza context seems to support the former hypothesis: all the personal pronouns related to *partener* are in the plural form (e.g. *bade ham* l. 368, *that ye mowe* l. 370); the noun *yere* (l. 502) after the numeral *seventene*, appears as zero-morpheme due to the loss of the Old English genitive plural morpheme.

As regards collective nouns, the text bears evidence of the unstable development they underwent during the Middle English period. A case in point is the term *folke*, which presents alternative constructions in both the plural and the singular: in *folke that wel was di3t* (l. 268) the verb is in the singular form; in *al the folke of Rome were* (l. 352) the verb is plural, possibly also because of its rhyming position with *hire*.

Furthermore, the possessive form is of particular interest in the text, as different strategies to build the genitive are employed. The regular -ys/-is morpheme is used: *mannys olde* (l. 50), *pore manis fere* (l. 184).
In one instance -es occurs: *for oure althres nede* (l. 192). A zero-morpheme genitive can be traced in the noun *church*: *churche yate* (l. 97), *churche yerde* (l. 531), and this may be linked to a Southern origin or influence on the text, a zero-morpheme genitive form for the feminine gender in Southern Middle English dialects is documented.

The periphrastic genitive also appears frequently – *the life of an holy man* (l. 2-3), *wardeyn of that churche* (l. 196) – and it is especially common in phrases with a partitive meaning, eg. *a parti of his good* (l. 76), or *som of hem* (l. 154).

The most frequent form is the ‘genitive of definition’, or ‘possessive dative’, especially in connection with the noun *God* – eg. *God-is sone* (l. 22), *God-is sake* (l. 107), *God-is grace* (l. 154) – but also with *lady* – *lady-is comaundement* (l. 224), *lady-is sake* (l. 228) – and in the phrases *Emperour-is bour* (l. 52), *Ihesus Crist-is wille* (l. 326), *Eufemyan-is hous* (l. 381). It is also used a few times with *man*: *pore man-is rewe* (l. 157), *pore man-is rout* (l. 261), *man-is honour* (l. 236). This form is found in Old English, where the postnominal possessive *his/is* is used in the cases of problematic genitive inflection (Blake 1992: 230). The form of the pronoun, often *is*, is then phonetically identical with the genitive morpheme *-is/-ys*, favouring the assimilation between the two constructions. This form of the genitive is to be found in the Middle English dialect in the South West area (Mustanoja 1960: 161). It is interesting to note that, apart from the few occurrences with the word *man*, or *fidir* (*fidir-is in*, l. 328) the ‘genitive of definition’ is preferred with proper names (*Eufemyan*), and terms defining the imperial dignity or sacred entities (*Lady*, which defines in fact the Virgin Mary, *God, Christ*).

As regards the dative, it is mainly periphrastic, with the prepositions *with, throwe/throw, on*, as well as *to and for* for the simple dative. Despite a few examples in which it is possible to distinguish different case forms, the text presents an accentuated assimilation between forms of the noun inflection.

The pronominal system requires close observation (see Table 1).
Table 1. Pronouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pronouns (subj.)</th>
<th>Pronouns (obj.)</th>
<th>Possessives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sg. 1</td>
<td>ycche, iche, ich, y, I</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>my, myn, myne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>þ(o)u, thou, thow(e), ye</td>
<td>þe, the, thowe</td>
<td>thi, thyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>he, s(c)ho, it</td>
<td>him, hur, it, hit, 3it</td>
<td>his, is, hir, hur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl. 1</td>
<td>we</td>
<td>us</td>
<td>our(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ye</td>
<td>you, yow(e)</td>
<td>your, yor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>thei, þei</td>
<td>hem, ham</td>
<td>her(e), har(e), hur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First of all, the forms of the 3rd person plural should be noted: at the time when the N ms. was composed the subject form of Scandinavian origin thei/þei had already spread to all the Middle English dialects, whereas their and theim reached London around the 15th century from the North. This element may confirm the exclusion of both the North and the South Midlands as dialectal sources of the N ms., since N forms for the possessives are her(e)/har(e)/hur and for the object pronouns hem and ham. The North is the area from which the innovation stems, and by the 15th century the Scandinavian form of the possessive had already reached the Midlands, although the forms hem/ham resisted longer in the language. The form of the feminine possessive may also point to the conservative character of the text, since the variant hir, dominant in N, had already been substituted by her in Middle English dialects in 1400. Moreover, there are instances of the nasal form of possessive adjectives: thyne halle (l. 283), myn owne yn (l. 465), myne elde (l. 473), thyne thrallis (l. 521), myne hert (l. 527), which is an archaic element, attested longer in Southern England than elsewhere.

The verbal system shows a rather unstable situation (see Table 2).

As regards the present indicative, the ending of the third person singular in -th further suggests the influence of a Southern dialect, and the dental ending also appears twice in the plural: now goth they furthe (l. 151), [ye] þat havyth travaile (l. 356). Whereas the past of weak verbs is regular overall, in the past of strong verbs traces of the -en ending in the plural – fillen (l. 363), criden al (l. 558), thei leiden (l. 597) can be detected – although most forms have no ending.
Traces of the inflected infinitive can be found in the text: [for to] bedden holy bede (l. 354), we have to kepyng (l. 431). The present participle recurs mainly in -and, showing the influence of Northern usage; however, the text presents two occurrences of the -yng form: hiryng is fadir also (l. 444), sowning he fell down to grounde (l. 449). This is a typical innovation of the Southern dialects. However, the -ing form is not dominant within the text, and the other occurrences of the -yng participles retain an adjectival or noun usage: of him was grete speking (l. 230), seking sore (l. 455). It is not clear whether the presence of the two -yng present participles should be connected to the influence of the antecedent of the text, or whether it is a scribal introduction, suggesting the Southern origin of the scribe.

The past participle shows an even more problematic situation, as there is coexistence of archaic and mixed forms. The composite profile is certainly favoured by the metrical structure, which allows the use of archaic forms to make a rhyme. At the same time 15th-century Middle English was far from being a standardised language, which accounts,
for instance, for the numerous strategies deployed in tense formation. Weak verbs in N form the past participle in different ways: in a number of occurrences the use of the Middle English y- prefix (OE ġe-) is still registered: y-thonkid (l. 162), y-honowrid (l. 518), y-dwellid (l. 127); otherwise the form presents the dental suffix: servyd (l. 19), weddid (l. 55), levyd (l. 339). Frequently, the same verb is conjugated by following both uses: was y-sent (l. 223), were out send (l. 169).

Strong and irregular verbs have the nasal morpheme: founden (l. 562), chosen (l. 51), leyn (l. 451), but also forms where the prefix appears as well: y-done (l. 498), y-gone (l. 174). In some instances they appear with the sole prefix: y-lore (l. 544). Often, the same strong verb, like the weak ones, occurs in different forms: hast y-sey (l. 499), was y-sene (l. 65); had do (l. 73), hast y-done (l. 498), was done (l. 114). The verbal system does not show other peculiarities: the compound forms and the passive are regular, and so is the imperative, despite the occasional difficulty in interpreting a verbal form as either imperative or subjunctive.

The linguistic profile mirrored by the text is a rather problematic one. It has been pointed out that the date of the text in itself denotes a situation in which the most distinctive dialectal features are already blending or spreading, when not lost, and in which some of the innovations may be singled out. Complications arise from the metrical structure of N, since elements which may be defined as indicative, thus pointing at a certain dialectal influence, intertwine with metrical requirements. On the one hand, instability represents a problem when trying to assign the text to a specific geographic area; on the other, the very status of the language mirrored in N constitutes in itself an element of major linguistic interest. Although a Northern provenance may safely be excluded, as well as a North Midland one, some uncertainties still remain on whether to assign definitively the dialect to a Southern one, especially as south as the Dorset area as stated by LALME.

5. Hagiographic narration and literary discourse

The Middle English tradition of the legend of St. Alex has apparently attracted little interest among scholars. It is somewhat
suggestive that Furnivall’s comprehensive, though dated, edition of four of the Middle English versions, is prefaced by a note in which the scholar apologises “For wasting so much space on a mere legend of a so-calld [sic.] saint’s life” (Furnivall 1878: 18). More than a century later, referring to Furnivall’s apology, Upchurch aptly points out: “But the legend of Alexius [...] was more highly regarded during the Middle Ages than Furnivall’s apology would lead us to believe” (2003: 1). The popularity of the legend in Medieval England is actually easy to infer, taking into account the strikingly rich number of manuscripts in which it has been preserved, against the background of England’s ill-fated manuscript transmission.

Upchurch’s insight has the merit of salvaging the versions of group B of the saint’s life from literary oblivion, demonstrating the poet’s underlying creativity and independence. To attempt a similar approach in the case of group A would most probably prove a desperate task: Of Seint Alex of Rome is essentially a slavish version of the legend, in which there is no trace of any intention to re-elaborate the matter. In other words, group A, and specifically N, does not seem to hide between its lines an individual poet actively and independently engaged in reworking the tradition, as is the case with group B.

However, a broader contextualisation of N can show that though the text may be said to lack literary merit, it undoubtedly gains ground not only as a linguistic, but also as a cultural document. In support of this statement it is important to consider N in its context, and evaluate both its cultural function as hagiographic discourse, and its material existence as part of Ms. XIII B 29.

Ms. XIII B 29 also contains medical recipes, a fragment of the Clerk's Tale and three Middle English romances: Sir Bevys of Hampton, Libious Disconius and Sir Isumbras (incomplete). The resulting impression might be that of a rather heterogeneous miscellany of texts; however, it is possible to demonstrate that the underlying plan is essentially homogeneous. The codex may in fact be treated as an exemplar of that particular kind of compendium, or anthology, which enjoyed considerable popularity in 15th-century England. Indeed, the palaeographic analysis of the manuscript highlights characteristics in the format, collation and overall organisation of the matter suggesting that the manuscript is analogous to the more famous Thornton or
Auchinleck manuscripts\(^9\). These *compendia* became common due to a combination of factors: first of all, the increasing use of paper in scribal production made the circulation of texts more affordable for a wider readership; at the same time, societal changes saw the rise of new social classes, gentry and mercantile bourgeoisie, who enjoyed economic power and literacy. Jointly, the secularisation of culture, through universities and social transformations, took manuscript production outside monasteries, into the hands of professional scribes. *Compendia* were thus produced on demand, both with didactic and moral intents, as well as to respond to practical and entertainment needs. The presence of hagiographic narration in this kind of anthology is recurrent, as it clearly serves a dual purpose, functioning both as a moral *exemplum* with an educational and religious message, and as an entertaining narration. The hagiographic legend lends itself to precisely this kind of literary purpose: it offers moral and religious guidance, but at the same time it fulfils the need of the public for the marvellous and wonderful, religiously domesticated into the form of the Christian miracle. It is in this sense possible to look at N as a document, but from a literary perspective: *Of Seint Alex of Rome* retains the traditional characteristics of the hagiographic legend, and aptly complies with this kind of discourse. For instance, its narrative structure parallels the saint’s deeds from his birth (st. 1-6), to his exemplary ascetic life (st. 7-58), to the miracles God dispenses through him after his death and the cult of the Saint (st. 59-103). The dominant stylistic feature is repetition, by means of *variatio* and *amplificatio*, which leads to the insistent reiteration of leitmotifs: Alex’s virtue and holiness, his patience, the familiar grief and lament. The simple codified language and appeal to the pathetic – especially in the long *planctus* starting with st. 75 – aims to reach the widest possible audience, including less educated people.

The need for the narration to reach a wide and composite audience draws attention to the kind of cultural context against which the legend spreads. It is notable, in fact, that after the legend reached the West at the end of 10\(^{th}\) century\(^10\), its success and propagation was so rapid that the cult of the saint was already attested in Italy in 986, when the church of St. Bonifacio was dedicated to St. Alex. It is likely therefore that the


\(^{10}\)
narration had already started to circulate in Europe prior to the date considered, the end of 10th century – probably as part of the oral legacy – and that its later popularity in such numerous manuscripts intertwines with the long process of reformation experienced by the medieval religious world. From the 11th century onward the legend started to appear in written form in the vernacular languages and its fortune spread steadily, giving shape, for instance, to the bulk of the Middle English tradition, already numbering nine different versions of the life of St. Alex by the end of the 15th century. The pervasiveness of the legend in the Middle Ages perfectly fits within the cultural environment of religious and spiritual reformation, which affected Europe from the late 10th century. In other words, the joint action of the monastic experiences of Cluny and Citeaux, the rise of mendicant orders, and not least, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 had the effect of bringing religious discourse to the common people, and making it accessible to the uneducated public for the first time. Thus, regardless of its contingent realisations, the narration *Of Seint Alex of Rome* can be seen as a vehicle for the ideals of spiritual reform, and concepts such as poverty, chastity, or separation of temporal and religious powers find in it direct expression and immediate representation. In this sense, the hagiographic discourse underlying the legend serves the purpose of conveying a deep and profound spiritual meaning in the form of direct narration; as aptly summarised by Upchurch, “Not long after it became available in the West at the end of the tenth century, the legend served as hagiographical dramatization of the ascetic ideals of the reform movement of the eleventh” (2003: 2).

6. Concluding remarks

It has been suggested that the primary interest in *Of Seint Alex of Rome* resides in its linguistic nature, which mirrors the coexistence of

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10 The Archbishop of Damascus seems to have been responsible for the fortune of the legend in Europe. In 977 he was in exile in Rome, where he founded a monastic community in the church of S. Bonifacio sull’Aventino. The community was very active and, through mediation of its founder – who as a Syrian was already familiar with the life of St. Alex – is traditionally considered to be the mediator of the diffusion of the life of St. Alex in Rome, and thus in Western Europe. The hypothesis has some historical confirmation, although it may be criticised as too simplistic (cf. esp. Rösler 1905: 4-5).
archaisms and innovations, as well as influences of different dialectal areas: together with Southern features, the text often employs linguistic elements stemming from the Midland dialects; however, traces of a Northern influx can also be detected.

A broader contextualisation of the text, both from a codicological and cultural perspective, has made it worthwhile to reassess the text’s literary value. First of all Ms. XIII B 29 – in which the legend appears – can be regarded as the expression of a rising phenomenon in 15th-century England: compendia production. The codex stands thus as a representation of Medieval English readerships’ literary tastes, and testifies to the gradual secularisation of culture. As stated above, the recurrence of hagiographic legends in compendia – and specifically the presence of the text Of Seint Alex of Rome in ms. XIII B 29 – serves the dual purpose of functioning both as a moral exemplum with an educational and religious message, and as an entertaining narration. The literary strategies that can be detected (e.g. the use of the pathetic, the miraculous, and the codified narrative patterns) aim at presenting an appealing and effective narration, able to reach a wide audience. Finally, the circumstances of the legend’s fortune intertwine with a more complex cultural context: the spiritual reform of the Medieval Church. Indeed, the rapidity and pervasiveness of the diffusion of the life of St. Alex can elicit a reflection on the interaction of factors underlying such a success. On the one hand it seems possible to detect the action of a religious strategy, which intentionally exploits the text in order to bring its message forth (the leitmotifs of poverty, chastity and humility might be considered); on the other, the effectiveness of such a strategy can also be explained on the basis of the prior diffusion and popularity of the text.

The stylistic merits of the legend of St. Alex as handed down by group A are very few; however, the cultural implications of the text and its transmission should not be underestimated. Thanks to a combination of complex factors the legend of St. Alex became one of the most widespread narrations in the Middle Ages, and, as discussed, the text Of Seint Alex of Rome represents an important document to access such a rich literary tradition.
Sittith stille with-outen [s]trife, [p. 80a] yche wolle yow telle the life of an holy man. Alex was his right name, to seruy God he thouȝt no schame, ther-of neuer he ne blan.

His fadir was a grete lordlyng, of Rome a kyng euyenying, and hight sir Eufamyan; pore men to clothe and fede, in al Rome that riche stede suche ne was ther nan.

Eche day in his halle were leide iij bordis, for to calle pore men for to fede. Therof he was fulle glade, and didde as Ihesus Crist him bade, ther-fore he happid to haue mede.

When thei were seruyd by and by, than at arst was he redy to go to his mete, than in drede of God-his sone, with men of religione, he wolde sitte and ete.

His wife hight dame Agles, to sey the sothe, with-outle les, that moche was to preise, but sho myȝt do the same manere as dud hir lord, as y seid ere, was sho nought at ese.

Childe bitwene hem had thei none, þer-fore to God thei made her mone bothe day and nyght. Ihesus Crist herd here bone, and sent hem a ful good sone, her hertis for to light.

Whan he was bore þat blesful childe, Alex, bothe meke and mylde, and of maners hende, sone ther aftir in gret hast, thei auowid to leuy in chast tille hare lyvis ende.

Ther aftir was it lang, Alex cowthe bothe speke and gang, and was sette to lere. Sone he was a ful good clerk, [p. 80b] and moche he lovid God-is werk to speke and to here.

Whan that childe bi-gan to bolde and for to come to mannys olde, him was chosen a wife out of the Empeour-is bour, a maide good with gret honour, to weddi with-out strife.

Whan he was weddid þe first nyȝt, in God-is lawe as it was riȝt, and was brouȝt to hous, mekely he gan hur teche to drede God of synne leche, that was maydon-is spous.

He prechid hur with al is myght, of synne sho sulde haue no plight, but kepe wel hur maiden-hede, and of Ihesus, that maide clene,
in wham was neuer wom y-sene, sho schulde haue hur mede.

Than toke he his golde ryng and yave it that maiden yong, and seid to hur thus: “Take this ryng, and kepe it me, til that God-is wille be. God be bitwene vs”.

When he had do as y yowe say, he toke his leve and went is way fro that maiden fre. A part of his good he with him toke, and alle that othir he for-soke, and went to the se.

Shippis he founde redyly, to one he went privelie ouer for to fare. He seide he was a chepman, and praide he must with hem gan, and har ship were 3are.

Furthe he went with good wille, a feire cite he come vn-tille, the name y shalle yow telle, Edissa hight that cite, God-is seruaunt for to be, ther-in wolde he dwelle.

The goodis that he with him brou3t, [p. 81a] of hem he wolde right nou3t, but 3ave hit to pore men. His robe he yau3e ther he say nede, and clopid him-silue in pore wede, for no man shulde him kenne.

He went to a churche yate, ther pore men sate in the gate almys for to take; a-mong hem he sate a-downe, and axid with diuocioun sum good for God-is sake.

Alex, of alle that he myght gete, nedely but that he wolde ete, eny holde to his bi-houe, to pore men he wolde it take, and othir he yave for God-is sake, that is in heuen aboue*.

That churche was of Our Lady, ther-in was a celly an image of hur sone, y-makid of a wondir work, ne myght ther lewid neithir clerk my3t y-wete how it was done.

Ther-fere was ther gret sikyng of on and othir, olde and yong, of alle that contre, for the pore that ther were alle the betir my3t thei fare, throwe hare cherite.

Alex, of alle that he myght gete, nedely but that he wolde ete he ne helde to his bi-houe, to pore men he wolde it take, that othir he yau3e for God-is sake, that sittith in heuyn a-boue.

Nowe hath Alex y-dwellid there, his fadir at home seghith sore

* Scribal repetition. Lines are repeated on ll. 121-126. In mss. L and V, they correspond to ll. 121-126 in N.
and seith alas, alas;
his mothir wepith boþ ny3t and day,
and seith alas, and wel-a-way
132 that euer sho y-bore was;

his wif wepîþe and makiþe hir mone,
that sho shalle leue a-lone,
as turtil on the tre;
eue more with-outen make, [p. 81b]
joy and blis sho wol for sake,
138 til sho hur spowse y-se.

Nowe his fadir with drery chere,
he biddith his men to come hym nere,
as thei wolle haue har mede.
He praieth ham þat thei be boune
to wynde to seche his dere sone
144 in eueri ilke a stede:

“That ye ne dwelle for no-thing
or ye haue hurd sum tithing
whare that he be.
Goth furthe nowe, and God you spede,
ther-fore y shal, so God me rede,
ye ye gotolde and fe”.
150

Nowe goth thei furthe Alex sekand,
echone in-to dyuers land,
yef thei my3t him wynne.
Som of hem, throw God-is grace,
come in-to that ilke place
156 ther Alex was jinne.

He sate in pore man-is rewe,
ther-fore cowthe thei him not knowe,
thei yaue him cherite,
and he hit toke with mylde mode,
and seid: “Thesus Crist þat deied on rode,
162 lord y-thonkid the!

Lord y-heried be thowe ay,
that y haue beden that ilke day
that y may, for thi sake,
of hem that in my owne lond
seruid me to fote and hond,
168 her almys for to take”.

Nowe this men that were out send,
a-yen homward thei bith y-wend
to sir Eufamyan;
þei swore to him, al bi heuen kyng,
of Alex hurd thei no tithing,
174 as wide as thei had y-gone:

“In eche lond þat we haue bene,
we found no man þat couthe hym sene,
that to him cowthe vs wis”.
Now he seid alas þat he was borne,
“Bothe haue nowe for-lorne
180 my ioy and al my blis!”.

In þis tale wol we not dwelle,
but of Alax wolwe telle, [p. 82a]
that riche is pore man.
Alex was pore manis fere
fully seuentene yere,
186 fro that he bi-ganne,
sittand in a churche yerde
amonge poremen, an herde
in a symple wede.
An ymage in that churche stode
of his modir that deied on rode,
192 for oure althres nede.

* 128. V: sikeþ; L: seyet3
At the seuentene yeris ende
ther spake and seid wordis hende,
that ymage of tre,
to the wardeyn of that churche
and seid: “Wardeyn, yef þu wolt wirch
enyething for me,

tere þou yn my son-is man,
for seuentene yere it is a gan,
that he hath be ther out.
I warny the witturly,
to dwelle her in he is worthy,
dar ye haue no dout.

He hath seruid heuen bri3t,
the holy gost in him is li3t,
and yeue him myght and grace,
that his praier, with mylde stevyn,
is swete and good, an hie in hevyn,
bi-fore my sonnys face”.

Than answerid the wardeyne
and seid: “Lady iche wol fayne
and y wist whilke”.

“Go out tite as thow my3t go,
thou fyndist ther-on and no mo,
bring him yn that ilke”.

Pe wardeyn went him out ful yare,
he found hym redy sittand there,
he brou3t him yn ful sone,
and seid: “Per yof it be thi wille,
thowe art wel come vs vn-tille,
here in schalt thow won.

I was out aftir the y-sent,
throw our lady-is comaundement,
the in for to take. [p. 82b]
Moche honour schalt thow haue,
and al thing that thow wolt craue,
for that lady-is sake”.

Whan the worde bi-gan to spryng,
that of him was grete speking
for his holynys;
for then thou3t he for to wende,
tille a-nothir lond for to lende,
ther men knewe hym les.

Ther wolde he ne lengir be,
man-is honour for to fle,
fro that stede he wende,
a-none to laodritan
furthe the ri3t wey he name,
as Ihesus Crist him kende.

To a-nothir lond, he thou3t,
God-is wille to haue y-wrou3t,
ther no man had him knowe.
As swithe as he was in the se,
for to wynde ther he wolde be,
the wynde bi-gan to blowe,

the wynde bigan hur ship to dryve,
til that het gon to a-ryve,
as it was God-is wille,
in Rome, ther he was fed and borne,
ther his wonyng was bi-forne,
there alle him thou3t ille.

Whan he say none othir wone,
he bi-thou3t him sone a-none
where him thou3t best to be.
To him-silue he seid and thou3t:

* 238. V: Laodiciane; L: laodician
“Sith that Ihesus me hath brouȝt in-to this Cite,
I can no betir rede of alle,
but go to my fadir-is halle
in poreman-is rout.
I may sitte at the rewe,
ther is none that schal me knowe,
so long y haue be out”.

On a day sir Eufemyan,
fro the paleys he was gan,
and homeward he yede
with moche folke, that wel was diȝt bothe knave, swayn and knyȝt,
that good were in dede. [p. 83a]

Alex thouȝt him to mete,
and ranne furthe fast in the strete,
vn-tille that he him mette.
Whan he say that he was nye,
with a vois bothe lowde and hye,
sir Eufemyan he grette,
and seid with al mylde steuyn:
“Sir, for God-is love of heuyn,
haue merci on me.
Ich am a pilgryme pore and nakid,
that gret defaut hath y-makid,
sir, as ye may se.

Resteyuy me into thyne halle,
ther-in pore men bene alle,
and graunti me sum of thi mete,
and y schal pray nyȝt and day
for thi sonne, that is a way,
that Ihesus Crist him the gete,
and graunt the for this woundes v,
that thou maist ȝit se him on lyve,
that was thi hart blys.
And the sir, with-outen strif,
ioy and blis in sowle and lyf,
Crist the til him wys”.

Than sir Eufemyan þer with-stode,
and grauntid with a myld mode
the poremannys bene.
He grauntid for to cloþi and fede,
and his men shulde him lede
to his hous as sone.

He grauntid him, as y yow telle,
an hous alone, ther-in to dwelle
with-outen eny fere.
And a man schulde him gete
and bring him boþe drink and mete,
whan the mystir were.

Nowe Alex hath, þat ye haue herde,
is dwelling in is fadir ȝerde
as a pore man.
In fastyng praier and wakyng
he serwyd Ihesus heuen kyng
in alle that he can.

Seruauntis þat were provt and yong,
thei drewe him to heything,
as he yede vp and doun,[p. 83b]
and oft-sithis broth of fischis
and water that thei wasch in dischis,
thei cast it vppon his croun;
and alle the schame þat þei hym wrouȝt,
he thonkid Ihesus þat him bouȝt,
and yauue ham myȝt ther-to.
He was tholemode in al thing,
ther owt myȝt no man him bryng,
324 for nouȝt that thei couthe do,

ther dwellid Alex stille,
as it was Ihesu Crist-is wille,
330 seuentene yere,
in his owne fadir-is in,
neithir furre ne nere.

At the seuentene yeris ende,
he wist he schuld hens wynde,
336 throw grace of the Holy Gost,
to Ihesu Crist God-is sone,
in blis with him ay to wone
in life that euer schal last.

He gate him ink and parchemyn,
and al his life he wrote ther-in
that he had leuyd here,
and radde it sith eueridele,
342 with welle blithe chere.

Whan he had do as y yow say,
vppon the holy sonday
that come aftir next,
with moche ioy and moche liȝt,
his sowle þat was so feire and briȝt,
348 went out of his brest.

Whan his sowle was went to heuyn,
ther come a voys with mylde steuyn
in-to an holy stede,
ther al the folke of Rome were
354 and bedden holy bede,
and seid þis wordis with-outen faile:

“Comyth to me þat hauyth travaile,
or chargy for my sake.
Comyth to me, y schal yow telle
with ioy and bllys at your wille,
360 þat neuer more schal slake”.

Whan þat folke had þat worde herde,
thei weren echone a-ferde,[p. 84a]
and fillen doun to grounde,
and as thei lay and hyd her face,
ther come out throw God-is grace,
in a litil stounde,

anothir steuyn mylde and meke,
and bade ham a-rise vp and seke
a God is manne of Rome:
“That ye mowe, throwe is prayer
and þowe is godenys, be partener
at the day of dome”.

Thei rose vp al with mylde chere,
and souȝt bothe fer and nere,
bi wey and bi strete*,
but for no-thing that thei wrouȝt
with that relik that thei souȝt,
378 myȝt ther now here mete.

Til the vois, with wo[ri]dis meke,
come a-yen, and bade ham seke
in sir Eufemyan-is hous,
for ther schulde thei sone fynde,
384 a relik precious.

Then went thei furthe a-none,
and askid sir Eufemyane
yef he knewe suche a man;
he answerid redily
and seid: “Lordlingis sicurly
390 of suche ne wote y nan”.

50
Than went furthe the Empour, Archidiacanus of honour, and Innocent the Pope a-non to sir Eufamyns in, til þei come þer wolde þei not blyn, with hem come gret rout.

Than come furthe a knave a-non and axid: “Sir Eufemyan, go we sir, y rede, and loke nowe at your pilgrume that ye haue kept so long tyme, wher he be quyk or dede.

Yef he be dede, þat was so meke, he is þar man that thei seke, I wote wel, with-outen drede, he was a man of holy lyfe; of him come neuer stynt ne stryfe, ne wikkid worde ne dede”.

Whan Eufemyan that herde, he went to loke howe Alex ferde to his house ful right. He founde him dede, whan he come þer, his face ther it lay on bere as sonne it schy-ned bright, tho in his hond he helde a scripte, Eufamyan yede ther-to as tite to loke whate was ther-in, but for no kynde ien, out of the honde that was in, myþt he it nouþt wyn.

Whan he myþt no betir spede, to the Empour he yede, and tolde him that tithand. Thei come furthe bothe good pas, til thei come ther it was the deþe corpus liggand. Whan thei come in-to that hous, the Empour seid thous, and on this manere: “Thei we for synne be vnworthi, we haue to kepyng nouþt for-thi of this londis here, and this man, that we Pope calle, hath the kepyng of vs alle, and of alle holy churche; ther-fore deþliuery vs that scripte, þat we þer þrowe may se and wate howe we schul with the wirche”.

Whan thei had seide hare wille, the Pope leide his hond ther tille, Alex than lete it go. The Pope as tit lete rede it there bi-fore alle that ther were, hiryng his fadir also.

Whan his fadir had hurd þat y-rad, he was for-wondrid and for-ferd, for sorowe he was nye dede; as a man had a dede wounde, sownyng he fel doun to goronde, heuy as eny lede.

Whan he had longe leyn, tille his state come a-yeyne, [p. 85a]
and made newely chere.
He ros his brest, he drowe his here,
with deolful cry and seking sore,
that pite was to here.

Moche deole it was to telle
howe he on the body felle,
of wepyng blan he nou3t.
He seid: “Alas, my dere son!
How mi3tist thow so long won
with ous that knewe the nou3t?

Alas, nowe hast thow dwellid here
al this seuyntene 3ere,
in myn owne in,
and thou hast borne þe so lowe,
and woldist neuer ben a-knowe,
that thou were of my kyn.

Out alas and wel-away,
that ich euer a-bote this day
this sorowe for to se.
Ich wend of the haue solas
in myne elde. Alas, alas!

Whan his modir hurd of this,
sho stert furthe in hast y-wis,
as a lyonesse.
With hur-silue sho ferde to wonder,
sho rose hur clothis al in-sonder
in gret wodenesse.

Whan his modir hurd of this,
sho stert furthe in hast y-wis,
as a lyonesse.
With hur-silue sho ferde to wonder,
sho rose hur clothis al in-sonder
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sho rose hur clothis al in-sonder
in gret wodenesse.

Whan his modir hurd of this,
sho stert furthe in hast y-wis,
as a lyonesse.
With hur-silue sho ferde to wonder,
sho rose hur clothis al in-sonder
in gret wodenesse.
Nowe hast thou had dispit and wrong,  
of thi thyne thrallis euer a-mong,  
and borne it fulle stille.

Alas! Who schalle yeue to me  
welle of teris to wepe for the,  
bothe day and ny3t?
Alas alas, what me is wo!  
Y wolde myne hert wolde breke a-to,  
that y sey nou3t this si3t”.

Than come furthe a drery þing,  
y-clad in clothis of mornyng,  
that was Alex wife.
Sho was al pite th[a]t to se,  
and seid: “Alas, ful wo is me,  
that euer y had life.

Nowe al my ioy is a-wey gon,  
here had y hope now haue y non,  
to se him on lyue.
Now am y wedow, alas þat stound  
sorow hath yeue my hert a wound  
that me to dethe schal dryue.

Alas, whate is me to rede,  
my myrrour is broke and is dede [p. 86a]  
that my likyng was in.
Hope of ioy nowe haue y-lore,  
and sorowe is newid me bi-fore,  
that neuer more schal blyn”.

Al folke that stode bi-side,  
that say hur sorowe so vnride,  
thei wept fulle tendirliche.
Ther was none that my3t hur holde,  
man nothir woman, yong ne olde,  
and that was ferliche.

The Pope come furthe and þe Emperors  
to lete him bring out of þe hous,  
and leide him on a bere,  
and bere him out with gret solempnite,  
vn-to mydward of the cite,  
and criden al that my3t here,  
and seide: “Comyth se þat holy man  
that ye haue sou3t echon.  
Here he is in this place,  
founden he is and he is here,  
that holy body in a bere.
throwe help of God-is grace.  
al that holy body in a bere  
throwe help of God-is grace*  
Al that wist of that cry,  
thei ranne thedir hastly,  
and drowe it nou3t a lite.

And al the sike that ther were,  
that my3t touche that body there,  
thei were hole as tite.

The blynde of him had hare si3t,  
the wode hare witte had ful ri3t,  
the holte hare lemys lele;  
was þer none that thedir my3t wyn  
whate sikenys that thei were in,  
that thei ne had hare hele.
Whan the Emperour say þat wondir,  
thei toke the bere and yede þer vndir  
with the Pope helpand;  
for he wolde be made holy  
throwe bering of that body,  
he toke the bere on honde.

He lete sowe in that Cite

* ll. 565-6 scribe’s repetition
golde and siluer grete plente,  
and that was for this skille  
588 for the folke schulde with-drawe, [p. 86b]  
but that a-vailid not an hawe,  
4  
thei toke none entent ther tille.  
594 ther proceden to þat with gret fors,  
that vnnethe with that holy cors,  
600 In seyn daies was it di3t,  
ful rechely and alle a ri3t,  
thei leiden ther-in is bonns.

Whan þat holy corps was leide,  
in þat tombe, þat wel was greithid  
606 to al that were in þat place,  
ther come out throwe God-is grace  
a ful swete odour.  
612 Than worschippis thei al with o steuyn  
Jhesus God-is sonne of heuyn,  
and his modir Marye.  
618 graunte vs al good endyng,  
and in heuyn a wonnyng.  
Amen amen pur cherite.  

Explicit vita sti Alex  
Hic pennam fixi penitet me si male scripci

* 602. V, L: bones  
* 612. V: worschipeden; L: worchipeden
References


