

Anonymous

The “Life” of St Valentine of Terni

(Passio sancti Valentini episcopi Interamnae martyris)

BHL 8460

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¹ This translation is placed in the public domain by the translator.

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Introduction

The feast of St Valentine on the 14th February is one of the few saints' days known to everyone. The sending and receiving of "valentines", small love-letters, is now universal. The association of "Valentine's Day" with romance is not attested earlier than Chaucer.²

But few know anything of St Valentine himself. The internet contains various narratives whose authenticity is quite dubious.

In the *Acta Sanctorum* (AASS) volume which contains February 14 (February, vol. 2), we find two saint Valentines; one a presbyter of Rome, the other a bishop of Terni, ancient Interamna in Umbria. It is possible that both texts are simple pieces of medieval fiction. It is also possible that the two saints are just two divergent narratives about a single person. The subject is discussed at length in Bassetti, to whom the reader is referred for more information.³

Here we are concerned with the *Passio* of Valentine of Terni, BHL 8460.⁴

The work must be earlier than our first knowledge of it, in the early 8th century Martyrology of Bede, where a couple of sentences are quoted more or less literally. It probably belongs to the 6th century AD.

The text of the *Passio* is most readily available in the *Acta Sanctorum*, February vol. 2 (1658), on pages 754-7. The heading for this claims that it is based upon five manuscripts and the earlier edition of Mombricitus; but the footnotes refer to three manuscripts, six breviaries, and the editions of Mombricitus and Surius.

A modern critical edition was provided in the Bassetti volume by D'Angelo as an appendix to his contribution.⁵ D'Angelo counted around 120 manuscripts, but did not produce a *stemma*. The earliest manuscripts, of the 9-10th centuries, originate from the area around Rome and Umbria, and he edited using these seven manuscripts. He adds, generously, that the AASS text has stood the test of time; and indeed there are few real changes.

² The connection with romance is explored by Jack B. Oruch, "St. Valentine, Chaucer, and Spring in February", in: *Speculum* 56 (1981), pp. 534-565. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2847741>

³ M. Bassetti & E. Menesto, *San Valentino e il suo culto tra medioeue ed età contemporanea: uno status quaestionis. Atti delle Giornate di studio, Terni, 9-11 dicembre 2010*. Spoleto 2012.

⁴ The *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* is an index of saints' lives.

⁵ E. D'Angelo, "La Passio sancti Valentini martyris (BHL 8460-8460b). Un "martirio occulto" d'età postcostantiniana?", in: Bassetti &c, p.179-222.

The translation was originally made against the AASS text, and then revised when D'Angelo's very welcome critical edition became available. In the translation many of the "et"s and "autem"s copiously present at the start of sentences have been ignored where English usage makes them unnecessary. The headings in the English translation were composed by myself. The paragraph numbers in square brackets are taken from the AASS. D'Angelo's method was to number all the sentences. This is logical but too fussy for a translation.

The Latin text translated is given at the end. This is basically that printed by D'Angelo, but the spelling has been normalised to a form most useful for the general reader, who may have limited Latin, but still take an interest in what exactly the Latin says. D'Angelo understandably sought to preserve the spelling of the medieval copyists, but here it seemed more useful to give the text with the spellings with which everyone is familiar. For the same reason the use of U and v has been restored in the text, against both the AASS and D'Angelo. It may indeed be the case that lower-case v was unknown to the Romans, but then so was lower-case, and so was punctuation. To create an unreal archaism here is merely to create a barrier to the general reader which confers no advantage on anyone. Those who prefer to read the *Life* in the language, bookhand and orthography of the Middle Ages can easily consult any of the manuscripts now online.

But it is hoped that the reader will feel encouraged to dip into the Latin, and the text and footnotes have been made with this in mind.

Translation

Prologue

[1] The prophet says to God, “According to your greatness, you have increased the children of men.”⁶ Among that “increase”, thus, those people are especially the concern of God who have consecrated their life to the creator in order most seriously to unite⁷ body and soul with Christ. For this reason the blessed bishop of Terni, St. Valentine, by living rightly earned the right to unite with the virtues, which virtues deliver the “hidden man” to the souls of all the believers of the world.⁸

The son of an Athenian living in Rome is sick. St Valentine is sent for.

[2] Proculus, Ephebus and Apollonius, noble-born Athenians, were scholarly men living among the Greeks who had desired [to learn] Latin studies, and they were staying as guests in the city of Rome with Crato their fellow-citizen, a speaker of both languages, and enjoying both his teaching and hospitality. It came about that Crato’s only son, named Chaeremon,⁹ a young scholar, was ill in such a way, that, after bending his back, he was stuck with his head between his knees.

While nearly all the physicians who were in the city of Rome, were unable to help him in any way, there stood forth a certain ex-tribune Fonteius, who said to him that the same bitter suffering had happened to his own brother, and that he had been cured by a certain St Valentine, a bishop, who was a citizen of the city of Terni; and he encouraged (them) to take (him) to him. In fact the boy himself, from the time when he was cured, did not desert him, [St Valentine] saying that he was constrained by the affection of Jesus¹⁰ and his goodness.

Hearing this, Crato sent to him [Valentine] noble men, his friends, who asked him to condescend to come to the city of Rome. When he came, Crato received him with hospitality, showed him his son Chaeremon, and asked him to help him also with this, just as he had cured Fonteius’ brother.

Valentine now attempts to get Crato to believe, so that Crato’s faith can save his son. It doesn’t work.

[3] To this St. Valentine the bishop said, “If you wish, he will be cured.”

Crato said to him, “I have arranged to give to you half of my possessions if you are able to free him from this infirmity.”

To this St. Valentine replied, “I am surprised that you, a careful teacher, did not attend to what I said: ‘If you wish, he will be cured.’”¹¹ For, if you have believed in my Christ, your

⁶ Ps. 12:8 / 11:9.

⁷ “adhaerere”.

⁸ This is a clumsy sentence, but perhaps the idea is simply that Valentine possessed the virtues which God gives to believers. The “hidden man”, “latentem hominem” is Christ. It is an odd phrase, but probably a memory of Augustine. See Augustine, Sermo 293.5 (PL 38, 1331): “et homo apparuit inter homines, latens deus” (“He appeared as a man among men, the hidden God”); and sermo 220, “deum latentem hominem apparentem” (“hidden God, revealed man”). See E. J. Bickerman, “The recognition of Christ in the gospels (latens deus)”, in: *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, Brill, 2007, vol. 2, p. 629.

⁹ D’Angelo gives the name as “Cerimon”.

¹⁰ Reading here “Iesu” rather than “Jesus”.

¹¹ “Tu si vis”, emphasising the “You”: the suggestion is that the “bilingual” Crato missed the Latin emphasis.

faith is more valuable to God than yourself, who are spending¹² your life in the most trivial and pointless things, believing that the idols of wicked men, portrayed in wood or in some metal, have some kind of divinity, which they have in their own right. But these days, when those who were engaged in the most sordid and cruel deeds cannot be believed in [as gods any longer],¹³ at no time have they been free from wickedness. But if you could hold that faith, as I suggest, after this injury, and trust to the invisible and omnipotent God, health will be given to your son, as you are requesting. But your wealth, half of which you wanted to promise to me, you must give to the poor to pray for your son. By no means will you be able to convince me to accept anything else for his health, than the faith I seek for. Believe then that the son of God is truly God, Jesus Christ, and renounce all idols, and you will see your son healed.”

Crato said to him, “Granted that I am ignorant, how your religion works,¹⁴ however I have heard, that each may be saved by his (own) faith, nor does the faith of one bring profit to another, nor is it possible for the infidelity of one to harm another.”

[4] St. Valentine the bishop said, “There are some cases¹⁵ of human behaviour, which do not allow some to be freed for others, nor to perish for them. For a hesitant father in the faith is not able to harm a faithful son. Therefore in these cases, as if forced by necessity, they search for healing, while he suffers, the father for his son, the sister for her brother, the owner for his slave: and the son is restored to the father, and the brother to his sister, and we read that the slave was restored to his owner.¹⁶ So because of the illness¹⁷ of those who were being tormented, they themselves received the true faith at this time, so that they both would become believers, and temporal health having been given to their bodies, they might acquire eternal [health]¹⁸ for their souls. Just as also happened, when the centurion received back his dying slave, and the ruler of the synagogue saw his dead daughter returned to life, and the sisters of Lazarus, already four days in the tomb, whom they were mourning and weeping over, rejoiced that he was resurrected by the voice of the Lord.¹⁹ There are also many others which may confirm these things in the New and Old sacred books, and show that the faith of one had assisted others, and the unbelief of one had injured others, whom now it is tedious to recall. For also the unbelief of one man, Pharaoh, made all Egypt to be slain by various plagues, until he perished with his army, and the faith of Moses obtained victory over a militant²⁰ enemy. And the holiness of Jesus (son of) Nun brought many triumphs to a scattered people. What may I recall of the believing²¹ widow whose deceased only [son] was raised by Elijah, from a funeral bier he was returned by Christ alone to the widow?²² What about the paralysed man who together with his bed was lowered down by the believers and

¹² “expendis”; AASS has “collocas”, “placing your hope”.

¹³ ut non possint credi; AASS adds “dii”, which I have inserted.

¹⁴ Lit. “quo ordine religio vestra teneatur” – in what way your religion is held.

¹⁵ “causae”, law suits, cases.

¹⁶ By God. Philemon 1:15.

¹⁷ “interitu”.

¹⁸ AASS inserts “salutem”.

¹⁹ John 11.

²⁰ “preliantibus”. The AASS has “praesentibus”, “present”.

²¹ credenti is dative; possibly should be credentis?

²² 1 Kings 17:17-24.

cured?²³ Was not the faith of one so useful to others that the faith of those who believed received praise from the divine mouth, and drove out incredulity from non-believers, and restored health to the sick, and life to the dead?”

[5] After St. Valentine the bishop had detailed these and many similar ones, Crato the orator fell down at his feet, saying, “I believe that He, whom you preach, is true God, and that beside Him there is no other who rules over sickness so that it may depart; He rules over death, so that it may flee; he rules over life, so that it may return.”

St. Valentine the bishop said, “The Christian faith is not just words but is also revealed in actions.” Crato said to him, “What are the works by which faith can be shown?”

St. Valentine, the bishop said, “To repudiate idols made by hands, whose image is worshipped in the temples, and to be washed from all sin in the purest spring, and to be adopted by the son of God.”

Crato said, “How can water, which washes away the filth of the body, cleanse sins?”

St. Valentine the bishop said, “Water itself through the mystery of the invocation of the Trinity receives the Holy Spirit within itself, and through itself every sin and crime will be sent away.”

Crato said to him, “While our debate gets longer, the life of my son is getting shorter!”

[6] St. Valentine, the bishop says to him, “Unless you believe in something which you cannot hear or see, it will not be possible for your son to be healed.”

Crato said to him, “What is it that I have not been able to hear or conceive of in my heart?”

St. Valentine the bishop said: “Have you never heard that a virgin conceived, a virgin gave birth, and remained virgin after giving birth? Have you ever heard of or seen anyone who was said to have walked across the wavy sea with dry feet, ruled over the winds, restrained the tempest with a command, and finally was crucified, died and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and having been seen by many, ascended in the heavens, and after angels testified, thus that he ascended, and that he would return [again to judgement]?²⁴ If you believe that this happened, come near and be baptized, in order that you may restore the health of your son, and that you may attain to eternal life through Him.”

Crato said to him, “Whatever you say, and let a multitude of words be postponed, this may be summarised in one, if he may be saved here, on behalf of whom these things are said.”²⁵

²³ Luke 5:17-39.

²⁴ This is one of the few points at which the AASS differs from the critical text. Following “ascendit”, the critical text has “venturus adsertus est”, with “assertus est” as the main verb of the whole sentence. The AASS has “denuo venturum ad iudicium”. The “ad iudicium” seems to be a gloss, although a sensible one, which I have included but placed in brackets.

²⁵ The modern reader may suppose that Valentine is meanly demanding conversion as the price of aid from a desperate parent. But the author has his eye on the bible, and is recreating the narrative from Mark 9:14-29, where Jesus heals the epileptic. Jesus tells the boy’s father, “I believe: help thou my unbelief”. So here Valentine is asking Crato to believe, not as a price, but as a necessary precondition so that Valentine then has the power to heal his son. Valentine’s struggles to get to

Valentine gives up, and proposes to heal using his own faith, if Crato will convert

[7] St. Valentine the bishop said:²⁶ “Because the wisdom of the world, of which you are considered to be a teacher, is foolishness with God; and you are not able to believe so perfectly, as that faith requires, in which it is required to believe, give me your trust under this promise, that if²⁷ your son is saved through my faith, and you through the health of your son with all your household [will] convert to Christ.” Then Crato called his wife with all the family and, prostrate at his²⁸ feet, he began to promise that, if he²⁹ was healed, they would all believe in Christ. But also present at this scene³⁰ were Proculus, Ephebus and Apollonius, whom we learned [earlier] were perfect in Greek and had come to study Latin. These too in the same way³¹, wishing that Chaeremon the son of their orator be made well, said that they [also] would believe.

Healing of the boy

[8] Then St. Valentine the bishop ordered that a room was prepared for them, and that silence should be kept for a day and a night. Closing the door behind himself and the boy Chaeremon, who was lying down – a third year³² had passed and [the disease] had taken hold and strengthened³³ throughout his whole body,³⁴ so that he was stuck with³⁵ his head between his knees, and he was unable to keep flexible in his members in any part of his body. For his arms and legs were contorted at the same time, and none of the physicians knew what his illness was.³⁶

Then St. Valentine the bishop, the man of God, full of faith, after closing the door, and laying a goatskin³⁷ on the ground, he lifted the boy Chaeremon from the bed, and cast him down half-dead on that goatskin, on which he [Valentine] himself was accustomed to pray; and after remaining in God with praises and prayer throughout the whole night, a light appeared around the middle hour of the night, so strong that those who were watching³⁸ around the room thought that a fire had been kindled inside.

But after the space of one hour had passed, the boy arose in very great health, and likewise at once began with a loud voice to shout unimpededly with praises to God. His parents

this are what we see here. Eventually Valentine does find a way to get past the difficulty that an unbeliever can't trust that God will heal, by getting Crato to trust instead in Valentine himself.

²⁶ Valentine now realises that Crato will not be able to believe in God enough for his faith to do any good. Instead he invites Crato to trust in *him*, Valentine, on condition of becoming a believer if it works.

²⁷ AASS has the “si”, “if” here.

²⁸ St Valentine's feet.

²⁹ Chaeremon.

³⁰ “in hoc spectaculo”. The whole business is in public, so like a “spectaculum”, a public show.

³¹ Lit. In a similar way.

³² “tertio anno transacto” – understood by some as meaning that the boy got ill at the age of three; but earlier he is described as “scholasticus”, which surely must mean that he was well until relatively recently. I understand this to mean that he has been ill for three years.

³³ “glomeratus”, literally “amassed”.

³⁴ “toto corpore”, but AASS undoubtedly has the sense, “per totum corpus”.

³⁵ Lit. “remaining having”.

³⁶ Lit: “so that none of the physicians might say that the name of his illness was known.” Far too many words for a simple idea, so paraphrasing.

³⁷ “cilicium”.

³⁸ Lit. “in spectaculis.”

celebrated in the Lord, hearing this, when for three years they had heard only groaning from him, and his bellowing returning, at the same time everyone was rejoicing, and pleading with St Valentine to open the doors to them. But he said, “I may not open to you until I have completed the set number of prayers and hymns.”

[9] But when dawn began to put an end to the night, St Valentine opened the doors of the room, and restored the youth Chaeremon to his parents, and as if nothing had been endured, he conferred on him freedom from every illness. Then Crato with his wife and all her household believed, and were baptized. However Chaeremon could not be persuaded by any argument to relinquish the footsteps of St Valentine.³⁹

Now Proculus and Ephebus and Apollonius, casting aside the study of human wisdom, so united themselves to the Lord, that they read nothing much more of literary studies. But, converted to the Lord, they gave themselves over to a master in spiritual studies, in whom they demonstrated, not only words, but also marvellous actions.

Arrest and Execution of St Valentine in Rome

[10] Meanwhile through them a multitude of scholars were flocking to Christ so that Abundius, son of the prefect of the City, was attracted in his soul, and in fullness of faith, was proclaiming himself in public as the servant of Christ.

Then the indignation of almost all the senators was kindled. And St Valentine the bishop was arrested and beaten with rods, compelled to sacrifice to demons, and after a lengthy beating was remanded in custody. But seeing that he constantly gloried [in being persecuted],⁴⁰ and strengthening the souls of all those who through him believed in Christ, in the middle of the night in silence he was discharged from prison and beheaded by order of Furiosus Placidus, Prefect of the City.⁴¹

Then the body of the venerable martyr of Christ Valentine was taken away by Proculus, Ephebus and Apollonius and transported at night⁴² to his own church of the city of Terni; and there they gave him most honourable burial, in a purchased piece of land in the suburbs, not far from the same city.

Arrest and execution of the Athenians at Terni

While they were staying there with daily vigils and praises in God, they were arrested by the pagans, and placed in custody by the consular Lucentius.⁴³ Lucentius recognized that Proculus, Ephebus and Apollonius had many of the people, who knew them, as admirers, and

³⁹ I.e. wouldn't leave his side.

⁴⁰ The AASS text is different here: instead of “Et uidentes autem eum constanter gloriari”, it has “Videntes autem eum constantiorem fieri, & in ipsa caede & custodia gloriari,” “But seeing him made even more resolute, and glorying in each blow and his imprisonment”.

⁴¹ The text is “furiosi”. AASS took it as an adjective, “angry”, and at least one scholar has treated it as a witticism – “the furious Placidus” - but D’Angelo notes (p.196) that there was indeed an Urban Prefect named Furiosus Placidus - Marcus Mecius Memmius Furiosus Baburius Cecilianus Placidus, praetorian prefect in the period 342-344 and *praefectus Urbi* 346-7. This is then adduced by some in favour of a historical core for the work. Likewise the secret midnight execution, instead of one in public and in the day time, has suggested that the action of Placidus was by this date unlawful, and that this is evidence of a post-313 date for the events. The case is made for an early date for the text, rather than the generally accepted medieval date, but the arguments do not convince.

⁴² Lit. “by a nocturnal journey”.

⁴³ Lucentius: in the AASS it is Leontius.

was afraid that they might be taken away from him violently by the people, and he ordered them to be brought before his tribunal⁴⁴ in the middle of the night. When he saw that they were not deceived by his promises, and could not be intimidated,⁴⁵ ordered that they should be undergo the capital sentence.⁴⁶ But he himself at once fleeing with his entourage,⁴⁷ and wherever he went to, he did not permit it to be known.

Then the whole population felt grief indeed at their death, and joy at their martyrdom. They were buried by St Abundius not far from the body of St Valentine,⁴⁸ praising together the Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever,⁴⁹ Amen.

THE END

⁴⁴ Plural in Latin, but English must be singular.

⁴⁵ “terroribus flagitari”.

⁴⁶ I.e. execution.

⁴⁷ “officio”. OLD 1244 6b, meaning “department, entourage”.

⁴⁸ “Quique a sancto Abundio” – AASS has “Porro Martyres sancti a S. Abundio”, “Furthermore the holy martyr by St Abundius”.

⁴⁹ “in saecula saeculorum.”

Latin Text

[1] Propheta loquitur ad Deum: “Secundum altitudinem tuam multiplicavisti filios hominum”. In ipsa multiplicatione illi specialiter ad Deum pertinent, qui vitam suam voverunt Creatori, ita ut corpus et animam intentissime⁵⁰ Christo faciant. Unde beatus vir Interamnensis episcopus, sanctus Valentinus, bene vivendo meruit virtutibus adhaerere, quae virtutes latentem hominem omnis mundi credentium animis tradiderunt.

[2] Igitur Athenienses nobiles nati Proculus, Ephebus et Apollonius, scolastici viri, cum apud Grecos Latina studia desiderassent, apud Cratonem civem suum, oratorem utriusque linguae, in urbe Roma hospitabantur, huius et magisterio et hospitio fovebantur. Factum est autem, ut unicus Cratonis filius, Chaeremon nomine, ivuenis scolasticus, sic incurreret aegritudinem ut, incurvatus dorso, caput habens inter genua remaneret. Cumque omnes paene medici, qui in urbe Roma erant, nulla ei possent ratione succurrere, extitit quidam Fonteius tribunicius, qui diceret ei istam passionem acrius suo evenisse germano, et curatus esset a quodam sancto Valentino episcopo, qui est Interamnae urbis civis, et hortatur transmittere ad eum. Denique ipse puer, ex quo curatus est, non illum deservit, dicens enim Iesus et huius bonitatis affectu esse constrictum. Audiens haec, Craton mittit ad illum nobiles viros, amicos suos, qui illum rogarent, ut ad urbem Romam dignaretur venire. Quem cum venientem Craton hospitio recepisset, ostendit ei filium suum Chaeremonem, et coepit petere eum, ut, sicut curavit germanum Fonteii, ita et isti succurreret.

[3] Cui sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Tu si vis, curabitur». Et Craton dixit ad eum: «Dimidiam partem substantiae meae tibi dare disposui, si istum ab hac infirmitate liberare potueris». Cui sanctus Valentinus respondit: «Miror te magistrum prudentem non advertisse, quod dixi: “Tu si vis, curabitur”. Nam, si credideris Christo meo, fides tua pretiosa est Deo magis quam tu, qui in rebus vilissimis et vanis vitam tuam expendis, credens effigies malignorum hominum, in ligno aut in quocumque metallo expressas, aliquam divinitatem habere: quae merito hoc obtinuerunt. Nunc autem, ut non possint credi, qui sordidissimis actibus et crudelissimis occupati, nullum tempus immune ab sceleribus habuerunt. Sed si istam, quam insinuo, fidem ab hac defendas iniuria, et Deo illam invisibili et omnipotenti committas, dabitur salus filio tuo, quam postulas. Censum vero tuum, cuius mihi medietatem polliceri voluisti, offerre debes pauperibus, qui orent pro filio tuo. Mihi autem nulla ratione persuadere poteris, ut pro salute eius aliquid aliud accipiam, quam fidem queram. Crede ergo filium Dei verum Deum esse, Christum Iesum, et omnibus renuntia simulacris, et videbis salvum filium tuum». Dicit ei Craton: «Licet ignorem, quo ordine religio vestra teneatur, audiavi tamen, quod unusquisque per fidem suam salvetur, nec prosit alteri alterius fides, nec obesse poterit alteri infidelitas alterius».

[4] Sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Certae causae sunt conversationis humanae, quae alteros pro aliis nec liberari faciant, nec perire. Neque enim in fide dubius pater filio potest obesse fideli. In his ergo causis, quasi necessitas flagitat, sanitatem querunt, dum patitur, pater pro filio, soror pro fratre, pro servo dominus: et filium patri esse redditum, et fratrem sorori, et servum legimus domino restitutum. Igitur pro eorum interitu hi, qui cruciabantur, fidem integram acceperunt ad hoc, ut efficerentur utrique fideles, et salus temporalis data

⁵⁰ “intentissima” in D’Angelo, but I have preferred the “intentissime” in AASS.

corporibus acquireret animabus eternam. Sicut et factum est, ut centurio morientem servum suum reciperet, et filiam mortuam archisynagogus ad vitam reversam aspiceret, et sorores Lazarum, iam sepulturam quadriduanam habentem, quem lugebant et flebant, voce Domini suscitatum esse gaudebant. Sunt et multa alia, quae in Novis et in Veteribus Sacris voluminibus ista affirmant, et fides alterius subvenisset aliis doceatur, et infidelitas alterius aliis nocuisset, quae nunc memorare longum est. Nam et Pharaonis unius hominis infidelitas totam Egyptum caedi fecit variis plagis, quoadusque cum suo interiret exercitu, et fides Moysis preliantibus victoriam ex hostibus tribuit. Et Iesu Nave sanctitas populis in dispersione positis plurimum triumphum attribuit. Quid memorem viduae credenti ab Helia mortuum unicum suscitatum, dolenti e feretro redditum a Christo unicum viduae? Quid paralyticum a credentibus cum lectulo suo funibus depositum ac curatum? Nonne fides alterius ita aliis profuit, ut fides credentium divini oris laudem acquireret, et a non credentibus incredulitatem eiceret, et sanitatem languentibus restitueret, et uitam in mortuis repararet?».

[5] Haec et his similia multa sancto Valentino episcopo prosequente, Craton orator cecidit ad pedes eius, dicens: «Credo, quod iste, quem predicas, verus sit Deus, et praeter ipsum non est alius, qui imperat languori, ut abscedat, imperat morti, ut fugiat, imperat vitae, ut redeat». Sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Fides Christiana non tantum verbis, sed et operibus demonstratur». Dicit ei Craton: «Quae sunt opera, per quae fides possit ostendi?». Sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Ut abrenuntietur idolis manufactis, quorum effigies adorantur in templis, et ab omni peccato lotus fonte purissimo, Dei filius adopteris». Craton dixit: «Aqua, quae sordes corporis lavat, quomodo poterit peccata mundare?». Sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Aqua ipsa per mysterium inuocatae Trinitatis, Spiritum Sanctum in semetipsam recipiet, et per ipsum universa peccata et crimina dimittentur». Dicit ei Craton: «Dum disputatio nostra longius tenditur, vita mei filii breviatur!».

[6] Dicit ei sanctus Valentinus episcopus: «Nisi credideris ea, quae nec audire potuisti aliquando nec uidere, saluus esse non poterit filius tuus. Dicit ei Craton: «Quid est, quod ego nec audire potui nec corde conspicer?»». Sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Numquid audisti aliquando virginem concepisse, virginem peperisse, virginem post partum permansisse? Audisti aliquando aut vidisti siccis pedibus undarum pelagus pertransitum, imperasse ventis, tempestatem iussu compescuisse, postremo crucifixum, mortuum ac sepultum, die tertia resurrexisse, atque multis videntibus ascendisse in caelis, angelis testantibus, ita ut ascendit, venturus adsertus est? Si ita credis facta, accede et baptizare, ut possis ad salutem filii tui pertingere, et per ipsum ad vitam perpetuam pervenire». Dicit ei Craton: «Quantacumque dixeris, et verborum ampliata fuerit multitudo, uno hoc colligi poterit: si salvetur hic, pro quo ista dicuntur».

[7] Sanctus Valentinus episcopus dixit: «Quoniam sapientia mundi, in qua tu magister esse uideris, stulta est apud Deum, et non potest tam perfecte credere, quam fides ipsa deposcit, cui credendum est, da mihi fidem tuam sub hac pollicitatione, ut [si] filius tuus per meam fidem salvetur: tu vero per salutem filii tui cum omni domo tua convertaris ad Christum». Tunc Craton vocavit coniugem suam cum omni familia, et prostratus pedibus eius, coepit promittere, quod, si ille salvus esset, omnes crederent Christo. Erant autem in hoc spectaculo

Proculus et Ephebus atque Apollonius, quos cognovimus in Graeco perfectos ad Latina studia pervenisse. Hi itaque simili modo, oratoris sui filium Chaeremonem cupientes salvum fieri, se credituros affirmant.

[8] Tunc sanctus Valentinus episcopus iussit sibi cubiculum preparari, et die et nocte silentium fieri. Et claudens ostium super se et super puerum Chaeremonem, qui tertio anno transacto ita toto corpore implicatus atque glomeratus iacebat, ut caput inter genua habens remaneret, et nullam partem corporis possit liberam in membris habere. Erant enim eius brachia simul et crura contorta, ut nullus medicorum passionis istius assereret repertum esse vocabulum. Tunc sanctus Valentinus episcopus, vir Dei fide plenus, clauso ostio, stratoque humi cilicio, elevavit puerum Chaeremonem de lecto, et projecit eum seminecem in eo cilicio, in quo ipse orare consueverat; et per totam noctem in Dei laudibus et oratione manenti, lumen circa mediam noctis tantum apparuit, ut hi, qui in spectaculis erant circa cubiculum, putarent intus flammam accendi. Sed spatio unius horae transacto, surgens sanissimus puer, simul coepit voce clara in Dei laudibus incolumis concrepare. Audientes autem illum parentes eius Domino canere, cuius per tres annos solum gemitum audierant, mugitumque reddentem, omnes simul gaudentes, fores ut reseraret eis, sanctum Valentinum exorabant. At ille dixit: «Nisi complevero statutum orationis numerum et hymnorum, non vobis aperiā».

[9] Sed cum iam aurora noctis finem imponeret, sanctus Valentinus reserat claustra cubiculi, et Chaeremonem iuvenem parentibus, ac si nihil perpessus fuisset, ab omni aegritudine liberatum assignat. Tunc Craton cum coniuge et omni domo sua credit, et baptizatus est. Chaeremon autem vestigia sancti Valentini relinquere nulla potuit ratione suaderi. Proculus vero et Ephebus atque Apollonius, abicientes studia humanae sapientiae, ita se contulerunt ad Dominum, ut ultra penitus nihil humanarum legerent litterarum. Sed conversi ad Dominum, spiritualibus studiis se tradiderunt magistro, cuius non tantum uerba, sed etiam facta mirabilia probarentur.

[10] Interea per hos confluebat multitudo scolasticorum ad Christum, ita ut Abundius, prefecti Urbis filius, animo duceretur, et tota fidei plenitudine Christi se famulum publica voce clamabat. Tunc indignatio paene omnium senatorum accensa est. Et tentus sanctus Valentinus episcopus atque virgis caesus, compellebatur sacrificare demoniis, et post diuturnam caedem custodiae mancipatur. Et uidentes autem eum constanter gloriari, et omnium, qui per ipsum Christo crediderant, animos confortantem, medio noctis silentio eiectionem de carcere decollaverunt iussu Furiosi Placidi, Urbis praefecti. Tunc a Proculo, Ephebo atque Apollonio ablatum corpus venerandum Christi martyris Valentini ad suam ecclesiam Interamnae urbis nocturno itinere transtulerunt; ibique, in suburbano empto terrae spatio, non longe ab eadem ciuitate, sepulturae honestissimae tradiderunt. Ubi cum cotidianis vigiliis in Dei laudibus permanerent, tenti a Gentilibus, custodiae sunt traditi consulari Lucentio. Qui Lucentius agnoscens, quod Proculus et Ephebus atque Apollonius populos multos, quos cognoverant, amatores haberent, timens ne violenter ei a populo tollerentur, noctis medio suis eos iussit tribunalibus praesentari. Quos cum vidisset nec blandimentis decipi, nec terroribus flagitari, iussit eos capitalem subire sententiam. Ipse autem statim cum officio suo fugiens, et quo perrexit, non se permisit sciri. Tunc omnis populus luctum de nece eorum, et gaudium de martyrio habuerunt. Quique a sancto Abundio non longe a corpore

sancti Valentini sunt sepulti, collaudantes Dominum Iesum Christum, qui vivit et regnat cum Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

FINIS