

**Anonymous**

**Three More Latin Miracle Stories of St Nicholas**

**BHL 6177, 6178 and 6209**

## Introduction

Last year I gathered the text and provided them with translations of a mass of Latin miracle stories of St Nicholas. This was part of my work on the “Life of St Nicholas” by John the Deacon. In the manuscripts this “Life” is often followed by such stories, and it was helpful to have all the Latin in a file where I could search it, while looking through manuscripts.

The Bollandists in the *Bibliographia Hagiographica Latina* (BHL) list still more miracle stories, but these tend to be much longer, later, and belong to a particular locality. Nor do they seem to be part of the manuscript tradition of John the Deacon.

I did work through three more such stories, which appear below. As before I have mainly reprinted the text given by the Bollandists. For BHL 6177 the Bollandists omitted the last paragraph, which I have restored from the manuscripts. Again as before, the translations are fairly rough, made using Google Translate and quickly corrected. In the last year we have seen “AI translators” become available, and these were also made use of for BHL 6209.

This concludes my work with the Latin texts of St Nicholas. I find from my blog that I have been working to make the hagiographical literature about this saint more accessible for a long time; indeed since 2013, which is probably long enough! I hope, as ever, that this is useful to readers and researchers. As usual this file and its contents are placed in the public domain.

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## 10. [BHL 6177] The miracles that took place at Angers.

Text: *Catal. Paris.*, vol. 3, p.158-62 (missing last part, which I have supplied from manuscript). From BNF lat. 12611, ff. 72v-74v . 12<sup>th</sup> c. Also found in BNF lat. 12611, 142r-145r (13<sup>th</sup> c.), and Angers 121, ff. 157-166v. (11<sup>th</sup> c.)

Note: The location is the Abbey of St Nicholas in Angers. The text is the work of Noel, Abbot of Saint-Nicholas in Angers, and corrected by Joel, Abbot of de la Couture in Le Mans.<sup>1</sup>

1. Venerabili patri coenobii sancti Nicholai gloriosi confessoris Christi, domno videlicet abbati Natali, sibique commissae sanctissimae congregationi, frater Johelus, beati Petri apostolorum principis, qui dicitur ad Culturam, Cenomannis habitu monachus, vita peccator, quod solum potest, humilis obsequii fidelem devotionem.

Quid causae fuerit quia ad me scripta vestra de mirabilibus beati et gloriosi Nicholai transmisistis quasi gratia corrigendi ea, postpositis venerabilibus totius scientiae columnis, quarum firmissima soliditate subnixa gloriatur dignius urbs Andegava quam<sup>2</sup> gloriabatur Atheniensis illa antiqua Aristotelis prudentia aut Academia Socratis peritia seu Aegyptia Memphis Platonis astutia, versanti mihi usque modo [non] patuit, praesertim cum non lateat sanctitatem vestram quanta bellorum strage nostrates agitentur inter se, adeo ut, tot tantisque malis immixtus, nullatenus divino et spirituali otio ad votum possum intendere.

Sed quia scriptum est: "Caritas omnia vincit," non potui vobis negare quod injunxistis, illud vobis humiliter innuens, quod quaedam, licet regulariter composita, magis vero nuda et minus colorata, nullo modo passus sum penitus de medio auferri; et quasi novum opus superaddere veteri, quin potius, quia vobis non ingratum fore arbitratus sum, quasdam digressiones, quae minus conferebant operi, ita temperavi, ut et summam eas tangerem et ex toto illis non supersederem.

Bene et sobrie vigilare et custodire vigilias noctis super gregem vestrum, ut in vero natali boni pastoris angelorum chori magna cum luce decantent et referant gloriam Deo in excelsis et domno Natali pacem in terra merito bonae voluntatis.

2. Hodierni diei festivitas a nostris majoribus instituta, fratres carissimi, translationis nomen accepit, ob venerationem videlicet reliquiarum sacri corporis gloriosi patroni nostri beati Nicholai, quas olim allatas Andegavorum comes reverendus Goffridus in hoc loco reposuit. Hujus igitur ecclesiae fundamentum ita exorsum est. Andegavorum Fulco comes famosissimus, post rebelles hostium suorum multotiens bello extinctas barbaries, post rei militaris sua fortia gesta, in quibus contra Deum graviter offenderat, tandem in se reversus paenitentiaque ductus, Jerusalem petiit. Quo dum tenderet, iter suum celerius explicaturus mare ingreditur. Diebus igitur aliquot prosperis feliciter usus flabris, veloci jam illuc propinquabat navigio, cum repente caelum coepit nubium caligine tetra obvolvi, lux obtenebrari, tantus ventorum necnon imbrium fragor audiri, ut omnes qui in illa nave aderant mortis timore territi paene deficerent. Navis, undique quassata fluctibus, prope ima petebat pelagi. Re tali tam subita tamque insolita praefatus comes vehementer afflictus, quid dici vel fieri posset in tanto mortis horrore penitus ignorabat. Hoc tamen illis solummodo supererat spei

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<sup>1</sup> Yvonne Mailfert, "Fondation du monastère bénédictin de Saint-Nicolas d'Angers" *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 92 (1931) pp. 43-61; p.45. [https://www.persee.fr/doc/bec\\_0373-6237\\_1931\\_num\\_92\\_1\\_448924](https://www.persee.fr/doc/bec_0373-6237_1931_num_92_1_448924). Mss and partial edition.

<sup>2</sup> "Quae sequuntur usque ad initium num. 3, non leguntur in cod. 12611, sed in solo 13772."

suae confugium, divinae pietatis implorare subsidium. Cumque diutissime hac ingruente tempestate quaterentur, votisque peractis Domini misericordiam precarentur, dictum est a quibusdam qui simul in navi aderant, in illis esse regionibus quandam civitatem, Myrream nomine, in qua erat ecclesia beati et Deo digni almi pontificis Nicholai, in qua etiam ipse a Domino antistes electus fuerat, cujus sanctissimis precibus et meritis, etiam post peractum vitae hujus cursum, nonnulli in marinis periculis experti fuerant praesentis interitus effugium. Quod cum audisset reverendus comes, sanctum Domini confessorem Nicholaum flagitare coepit ut suis sanctis precibus ei obtineret a Domino tranquillum et salutarem portum : "Sancte," inquit, "Nicholae, pie et pastor bone, quem in talibus necessitudinibus pium subventorem audivimus, pro nobis exora Dominum. Qui si mihi tua intercessione optatum portum concesserit, mox ut ad domum propriam urbemque fuero regressus, monasterium tibi construam, in quo Deo tibi que servientes mittam." Haec ubi peroravit, ilico fida redit tranquillitas, nubium ventorumque necnon imbrum discussa caligine. Obtento igitur prospero, ut ipse optabat, cursu, ad sanctam Domini Jerusalem, quo tendebat, felici pervenit navigio. Peractis igitur devotis prout potuit orationibus per sancta loca in quibus Dominus Jesus Christus secundum carnem cum hominibus est conversatus, ad urbem Andegavam regressus, hic in honore sancti Nicholai monasterium fundavit atque in ipso, ut praefati sumus, de sanctis supradictis reliquiis portionem quandam venerabiliter posuit, praeficiens loco abbatem nomine Baldricum, qui postmodum vitam eligens solitariam, inde secessit in eremum. Non multo post praefatus comes, ad destinatum finem propinquans atque sua omnino delere peccamina volens, Jerusalem iterum petiit. Qui cum inde rediret, in ipso sanctae peregrinationis officio adhuc positus defunctus est, atque ad sanctum sepulcrum, Belliloci, in monasterium quod ipse proprio sumptu construxerat, tumulatus est.

3. Quo defuncto, successit in comitatu Goffridus filius ejus pro eo. Qui nihilo minus quam pater suus nostrum, ut res postea probavit, dilexit monasterium, cum et ipsum in vita sua de suis redditibus augmentavit, et ad extremum perveniens diem, post veram cordis et oris confessionem de principe noster monachus factus, in hoc loco<sup>3</sup> quiescit humatus. Qui cum magnis militiae floreret actibus, Hainricus Alemanniae imperator, ob praeclaram strenuitatis ejus famam et servitia multa ab eo sibi honeste impensa, inter alia munera, dedit ei aliquando portionem unam de praefati beati et gloriosi Nicholai reliquiis. Quas comes, cum gaudio maximo et honore complectens, venerabili cuidam istius loci abbati, nomine Arraldo, de eis partem dedit. At ille, cum processione et veneratione non modica, ab ipsa comitis aula ad hoc usque delatas coenobium, condigne in hoc loco reposuit ad laudem et gloriam nominis Christi necnon ad venerationem sancti confessoris Nicholai. Ex tunc hujus diei institutio a nostris praedecessoribus, ut praefati sumus, translationis nomen accepit, quo, sicut supra diximus, sancti Nicholai hic sunt reliquiae reconditae. In quo divina ita convaluit gratia, ut mira suorum signa operum, quae ubique ad excellentiam nominis sui per eum Dominus operatur, testentur eum vivere etiam post sepulcrum. De cujus generosa secundum saeculi dignitatem genealogia hic modo tacentes, ad ea quae per ipsum nostris temporibus gesta sunt accingamur narranda, quae grata sunt legentibus et perspicua, et ipsa rei novitate dulcius acceptabilia. Hujus itaque sancti pontificis fidem, miris declaratam operibus, ex his quae narrare cupimus, potestis perpendere.

4. Contigit<sup>4</sup> igitur in una sollemnitate, quam supra diximus, ad excubias sancti viri nonnullos decubare infirmos et debiles, inter quos puer unus erat, Brientius nomine, qui ab ipsa fere materna

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<sup>3</sup> "Hic jam pergit cod. 12611."

<sup>4</sup> contigo implies a dependent clause, accusative (infirmos) and infinitive (decubare).

alvo contractus, a renibus videlicet infra membrorum omnium officio destitutus, a quodam Britanniae pago, qui Sanctus Briuntius dicitur, ortus, ad Andegavensem usque devectus fuerat urbem. Qui in hac urbe pauperem diutius agens vitam, psalmos et hymnos et cetera quae poterat, utpote inops et contractus, assidua prout poterat meditatione discebat. Quem miles quidam de Sanctonia, Franco nominatus, in hujusmodi studio videns perseverare, in domo sua eum aliquantum temporis hospitatus est, aliqua ei ad victus proprii sufficientiam praebens necessaria. Sed idem Franco non multo post, quadam necessitate urgente, compulsus Sanctoniam usque procedere, rogavit abbatem Sancti Nicholai ut praefato contracto in pauperum hospitio stipem juberet praebere. Qui abbas pro [re]verentia militis, multo amplius instinctu superni amoris, ei libentissime jussit victum sumministrari. Hic vero factus juvenis, ceteris qui inibi debebant pauperibus hilari serviens prout poterat animo, in ecclesia strenuus pervigil, psalmos et hymnos capaci retinens memoria, in Dei servitio assidue pernoctabat. Cumque ille istis polleret moribus, jamque tempus esset ut ei patientiae suae fructus remunerare deberet omnipotens Deus, more solito ad sancti pontificis vigiliis excubans, totam noctem in psalmis et hymnis ducebat pervigilem, devota mente Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum sanctumque famulum ejus Nicholaum postulans tam corporis quam animae salutem. In hac petitione dum tota nocte persisteret, accidit ut, dum duodecima lectio, ut moris est, monachis legeretur, supradictus ante sanctum Domini crucifixum obdormiret Brientius. Repente igitur fit per totum monasterium quidam mirabilis et, ut ita dicam, caelestis fremitus. Inter haec de supernis vox intonat dicens ad Brientium: "Surge." Mox iterum sermonem eundem repetens ait: "Surge." Qui adhuc sopore pressus, sperans tamen se a circumstantibus, ut ipse nobis postea narravit, evocari, respondit: "Quis es tu?" At vox iterum, tertio eum vocans nomine, dixit: "Surge, Brienti; Nicholaus ego sum." Ad hanc vocem ille ilico expergefactus surrexit, clamans et dicens: "Sancte Nicholae, adjuva me." Quod audientes qui circumquaerue assistebant viri, clamore insolito attoniti, conveniunt, videntes illum in pedes consistere, qui numquam pedum nisi tantummodo imaginem habuerat. Quibus ipse dixit: "Auxilium mihi, ut pergam ad altare domini mei Nicholai, qui me erexit; nescio enim ambulare." Nec mirum si ille pergendi erat nescius, qui jam amplius quam quindecim aetatis annos habens, numquam super pedes steterat, quippe quos non habuerat. Tunc viri illi, admiratione cum gaudio repleti, per medium chorum psallentium monachorum eum ad altare deducunt. Tunc stupor nimius omnes monachos arripuit, qui haec cernebant. Resonabat coetus psallentium mixta cum lacrimis laetitia: dignum nempe erat, ut sanctus Dei Nicholaus sua antiqua nostris temporibus renovaret miracula; unde ille cantantium chorus reboabat: "Ex ejus tumba marmorea sacrum resudat oleum, quo liniti sanantur caeci, surdis auditus redditur et debilis quisque sospes regreditur." Cui ante altare posito omnes certatim caligas detrahunt. Tum vero stupendum et aetate nostra inauditum vidimus mirabile quoddam. Nam nervorum quibus antea constrictus fuerat vinculis dissolutis, sanguinem erupisse conspeximus, qui ad terram usque per ejus suras defluens, cunctis quod factum erat in eo, sanitatis signum propalabat. Inde nova res. Scilicet coepit se primum praemortuis membris vivax infundere tepor, caro turgescere, surae atque bases succrescere, distorta atque gibbosa vestigia in pedum modum demutari, pubescentibus ilico arteriis et unguibus. Nemo eorum qui ibi aderant, haec prospicientium, a fletu se cohibere poterat; nomen Domini benedicitur, qui tanta ac talia per servos suos magnifice operatur ad laudem et gloriam nominis sui. Abbas quoque et monachi de proprii patroni gratulantur beneficiis. Congaudet plebs nimium, quae videbat hoc miraculum. Mane igitur facto, gens Andegava, audito quod acciderat, accurrit laeta ad videndum. Cumque multa adesset populorum frequentia, qui ad hoc spectaculum convenerant, unus ex monachis ad altare pergit, ubi adhuc juvenis decubabat, eique taliter inquit: "Brienti, si vera sunt ea quae astipularis, te videlicet per

beati Nicholai merita sanitatem a Domino percepisse, sta super pedes tuos rectus, quatinus hic populus, qui ad hoc convenit, videat non fantastico, sed divino factum esse in spiritu." Tunc ille de terra consurgens, ad altare perrexit, deferens secum scabellos et alveolos, cum quibus antea reptans gradiebatur, easque super altare deposuit. Monachi hoc videntes, laudes Domino ejusque famulo Nicholao tam corde, quam voce depromunt. Plebs vero, pro ammiratione nimia lacrimis perfusa, verum Dei esse servum Nicholaum proclamat.

O virum per omnia laudabilem,<sup>5</sup> ad cuius continuum plebs non solum sua, verum etiam extranea confugit auxilium. O pastorem, suarum tutorem ovium: cuius caulas improbus veretur lupus ingredi, ovili dominico semper infestus. O patriae protectorem, qui suos famulos non solum cibo celesti, verum etiam hic alit refectione carnali. Qua propter, karissimi, huius tanti viri annua recolentes festa, etiam imitari satagite exempla. Ob hoc enim a nobis istius viri sancti et aliorum fidelium debent agi sollempnia, ut nobis in mentem veniat perpetua gloria, nulli terrenae rei comparanda<sup>6</sup>, quam suis sanctis preparavit altissimus. Quam sicut ait propheta, nec oculus videre, nec auris audire, nec cogitatio humana potuit praesumere, laetemur ergo sanctus in hac patroni nostri festivitate. Rogemus eum ut pro nobis imploret dominum, quatinus a nobis quodcumque distortum est, atque gibbosum seu maculosum eruens, ad recte vivendi semitas, nos semper in perpetuum erigat. Laetentur etiam oves ubicumque tanto commisse pastori, super quas ipse assiduas et pervigiles anglorum custodias impetravit ab ipso pastorum pastore summo Christo Jesu Domino nostro pro quibus et moretem ferre non distulit temporalem, ab eis saevissimi hostis ius tyrannicum auferens, mortemque perpetuam; qui cum patre et spiritu sancto in equalitate manens, vivit et regnat deus in aeterna saeculorum saecula, Amen.

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1. To the venerable father of the abbey of St. Nicholas, the glorious confessor of Christ, namely the lord abbot Natalis,<sup>7</sup> and to the most holy congregation entrusted to him, brother Joel,<sup>8</sup> a monk in the habit of (the abbey of) blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, which is called "of the cultivation", in Le Mans,<sup>9</sup> a sinner in life, (offers) what alone he can, his faithful devotion of humble obedience.

What was the reason why you transmitted to me your writings about the wonderful things of the blessed and glorious Nicholas as if for the purpose of correcting them, placing them after the venerable pillars of all knowledge, supported by the firmest solidity, of which the city of Angers is more worthy than<sup>10</sup> the ancient prudence of Aristotle of Athens, or the skill of the Academy of Socrates, or the cunning of Plato's Egyptian Memphis, was not clear to me, especially since it is not hidden from your sanctity how much our nations are engaged in the slaughter of wars among themselves, so much so that, mixed up in so many and so many evils, I can in no way concentrate on my vow in divine and spiritual tranquility.

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<sup>5</sup> The text as printed by the Bollandists breaks off here with their note "a long exhortation follows". I have transcribed the rest of the text from the same two manuscripts.

<sup>6</sup> Mss. "comperanda" with "per" abbreviated.

<sup>7</sup> Abbot Natalis I = Noël, abbot from 1080-1096.

<sup>8</sup> Joel, abbot of the abbey of St Peter de la Couture in Le Mans.

<sup>9</sup> Cenomannum, the Abbey of Saint-Pierre de la Couture, "de Cultura prope Cenomannum".

<sup>10</sup> "What follows until the beginning of chapter 3, is not found in cod. 12611, but only in 13772."

But since it is written, "Love overcomes all things," I could not refuse to you what you imposed, humbly hinting to you that I did not consider that some things, although regularly composed, but rather dull and less colourful, should be completely removed from the middle of them, and as if to add a new work on top of the old, but rather, because I thought it would not be disagreeable to you, I have shortened certain digressions which contributed less to the work, so as to touch upon them summarily and not to remove them entirely.

Watch well and soberly and keep the vigils of the night over your flock, so that in the true Nativity of the Good Shepherd the choir of angels may sing with great light and give glory to God in the highest and peace to the Lord Natalis on earth by the merit of good will.

2. The festival of the present day, instituted by our elders, dear brothers, took the name of the "Translation", because of the veneration of the relics of the sacred body of our glorious patron, the blessed Nicholas, which the venerable Geoffrey,<sup>11</sup> Count of Anjou, once brought and placed in this place. So the foundation of this church began thus. Fulk, most famous Count of Anjou,<sup>12</sup> after the rebellious barbarisms of his enemies had been extinguished by war many times, and after his brave exploits in military affairs, in which he had offended grievously against God, finally returned to himself and led to repentance, sought Jerusalem. As he was tending, he entered the sea to unfold his course more rapidly. After several days, therefore, having luckily had favourable winds, the ship was already rapidly approaching its destination, when suddenly the sky began to be covered with dark clouds, the light was darkened, and such a crash of wind and rain was heard that all who were present in that ship almost fainted for fear of death. The ship, tossed on all sides by the waves, was heading for almost the deepest part of the sea. The aforesaid count, greatly humbled by such a sudden and unusual event, was utterly ignorant of what could be said or done in such dread of death. However, the only refuge left for them to hope for was to implore the help of divine mercy. And when they had been shaken for a long time in this raging storm, and having made vows, they had prayed for the Lord's mercy, it was said by some who were present together in the ship, that in those regions there was a certain city, called Myra, in which there was the church of the blessed, gracious and worthy of God pontiff Nicholas, in which he himself had been chosen as bishop by the Lord, by whose most holy prayers and merits, even after the course of this life had been completed, some had experienced the escape from immediate destruction in the perils of the sea. When the worshipful count heard this, he began to solicit Nicholas, the holy confessor of the Lord, that by his holy prayers he might obtain for him from the Lord a calm and safe harbour: "Holy Nicholas," he said, "merciful and good shepherd, whom we have heard of as a merciful helper in such difficulties, pray to the Lord for us." If, through your intercession, He grants me the port that I hope for, as soon as I have returned to my own home and city, I will build a monastery for you, in which I will send men as servants to God and you." When he had said this, the calm immediately returned, and the darkness of clouds and winds and rains dissipated. Having thus obtained a favourable passage, as he had hoped, he arrived at the holy Jerusalem of the Lord, towards which he was aiming, by a successful voyage. Having therefore performed as many devout prayers as he could throughout the holy places where the Lord Jesus Christ had conversed with men in the flesh, he returned to the city of Angers, founded a monastery here in honour of St. Nicholas, and in it, as we have said before, reverently placed a certain portion of the holy relics mentioned above, putting in charge over the

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<sup>11</sup> Geoffrey II Martel, Count of Anjou from 1040-1060, son of Fulk III Nerra.

<sup>12</sup> Fulk III (970-1040).

place an abbot named Baldric, who afterwards chose a solitary life, and retired from there into the wilderness. Not long after, the aforesaid count, approaching his destined end, and desiring to completely blot out his sins, set out again for Jerusalem. When he returned thence, he died, still in the service of the holy pilgrimage, and was buried at the holy sepulchre, at Beaulieu, in the monastery<sup>13</sup> which he had built at his own expense.

3. When he died, his son Geoffrey succeeded him as count. He loved the monastery no less than our own father, as things later proved, when he himself added to it from his own income during his life, and reaching his last day, after a true confession of heart and mouth about our principal<sup>14</sup>, he became a monk in this place<sup>15</sup>, and is buried here.<sup>16</sup> He flourished with great acts of warfare, and Henry<sup>17</sup> the emperor of Germany, on account of his excellent reputation for energy and the many services he had honorably devoted to him, among other gifts, once gave him a portion of the relics of the aforesaid blessed and glorious Nicholas. Embracing these, the count with great joy and honour, gave a portion of them to a certain venerable abbot of that place, named Arraldus.<sup>18</sup> He, with no small procession and veneration, brought it all the way from the count's court itself up to the monastery, and duly placed it in this place to the praise and glory of the name of Christ, and to the veneration of the holy confessor Nicholas. From that time the institution of this day received from our predecessors, as we have said, the name of the translation, in which, as we have said above, the relics of St. Nicholas here are put into storage. In whom the divine grace so prevailed, that the wonderful signs of his works, which the Lord works through him everywhere according to the excellence of his name, testify that he lives even beyond the grave. Concerning his noble genealogy according to the dignity of the age, we are only silent here, in order to relate those things which have happened through him in our times, which are pleasing to the readers and clear, and the very novelty of the matter is more sweetly acceptable. The trustworthiness of this holy pontiff, manifested by his wonderful works, you may judge from what we wish to relate.

4. It happened, therefore, during one of the solemnities, which we have mentioned above, that\*\* at the vigils of the holy man some sick and feeble men were lying down, among whom was a boy, named Briant,<sup>19</sup> who was almost crippled in the womb by the mother herself, that is to say, deprived of the service of all his limbs by his kidneys, and, born in certain district in Brittany<sup>20</sup> named Sanctus Briuntius<sup>21</sup>, he had been carried as far as the city of Angers. He lived the life of a pauper for a long time in this city, and he learned the psalms and hymns as best he could by constant meditation, and

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<sup>13</sup> He died in 1040 AD and is buried in the church of the Abbaye de la Sainte Trinité in Beaulieu lès Loches (referred to by Fulk as Belli Locus and dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre).

<sup>14</sup> I.e. St Nicholas.

<sup>15</sup> "Here cod. 12611 resumes."

<sup>16</sup> He died in 1060 AD.

<sup>17</sup> Henry III, Holy Roman Emperor from 1046-1056.

<sup>18</sup> An Arraldus, but not a clergyman, is mentioned in Bernard S. Bachrach, "Enforcement of the Forma Fidelitatis: The Techniques Used by Fulk Nerra, Count of the Angevins (987-1040)", *Speculum* 59 (1984), pp.796-819. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2846697>; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2846697>

<sup>19</sup> "Briuntius". An Old Breton name, meaning "free man", found after 1074, and Francised as Briant from the 12-14<sup>th</sup> century. See Dictionary of Medieval Names from European Sources (BMNES "Briant"). <https://dmnes.wordpress.com/2017/05/08/mystery-monday-briantbrianda/>

<sup>20</sup> "Britannia", here Brittany.

<sup>21</sup> "Sainte-Briant"? I have not been able to identify this place.



the rest as he could, being unskilled and crippled. A certain knight of Saintonge,<sup>22</sup> named Franco, seeing that he persevered in this kind of activity, lodged him in his house for a considerable time, providing him with some necessities sufficient for his subsistence. But the same Franco not long after was compelled by an urgent necessity to proceed as far as Saintonge, and he asked the abbot of Saint-Nicholas to order a place to be provided in the poor-house for the aforesaid cripple. The abbot, out of respect for the knight, and still more out of the instinct of divine love, most willingly ordered that his subsistence should be supplied. But when he became a young man, he spent his time in serving the rest of the poor who lived there as cheerfully as he could, and keeping a strict vigil in church, retaining in his capacious memory the psalms and hymns, he spent the night constantly in the service of God. And when he had grown accustomed to these ways, and it was already time for Almighty God to reward him with the fruits of his patience, keeping watch as usual at the vigils of the holy pontiff, he led the vigil all night in psalms and hymns, praying with a devout mind to our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy servant Nicholas for healing as much of the body as of the soul. While he persisted in this petition all night, it happened that while the twelfth reading was being read to the monks, as is the custom, the aforesaid Brient fell asleep before the crucified saint of the Lord. Suddenly, then, a wonderful and, so to speak, celestial noise was heard throughout the whole monastery. In the midst of this, a voice from above thundered, saying to Brient: "Get up." Immediately, repeating the same word again, it said: "Get up." He who was still heavy with sleep, still hoping to be summoned by those around him, as he told us afterwards, answered: "Who are you? But again the voice, calling him by name for the third time, said: "Get up, Brient; I am Nicholas." At this voice he immediately woke and got up, crying out and saying: "Saint Nicholas, help me." Hearing this, the men who were standing around, amazed at the unusual outcry, gathered, and saw him stand on his feet, who had never had feet but only the image of them. To whom he said: "Help me to go to the altar of my lord Nicholas, who has raised me up; for I do not know how to walk." Nor is it surprising that he was more ignorant of walking, who, being already more than fifteen years of age, had never stood on the feet which of course he did not have. Then those men, filled with wonder and joy, led him to the altar through the midst of a choir of psalm-singing monks. Then a great astonishment seized all the monks who saw these things. A group of psalm-singers sang again with joy mingled with tears: for it was appropriate that Nicholas the saint of God should renew his ancient miracles in our times; whence the choir of singers sang again: "From his sacred marble tomb oozes oil, anointed with which the blind are healed, hearing is restored to the deaf, and everyone who is weak is restored to health." When he was positioned before the altar, everyone eagerly pulled off his boots. But then we saw something wonderful, astonishing and unheard of in our age. For the bonds of the nerves with which he had previously been bound having been loosened, we saw that blood had burst forth, which, flowing down to the ground through his veins, made visible to all the sign of the healing that had happened in him. Then another thing happened. Namely it first began to infuse living warmth into the almost dead limbs, the flesh swelled, the calves and feet grew, the distorted and swollen soles were reduced to the shape of feet, at once maturing with arteries and nails. None of those who were there, who saw these things, could refrain from weeping; blessed be the name of the Lord, who works magnificently so much and so often through his servants for the praise and glory of his name. The abbot and the monks also congratulated him on the favours of their patron. The multitude, who saw this miracle, rejoiced exceedingly. In the morning, therefore, the people of Angers, hearing what had happened,

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<sup>22</sup> One of the historic provinces of France, centred on Saintes.

ran joyfully to see it. And when there was a large crowd of people who had assembled for this spectacle, one of the monks went to the altar, where the young man was still lying, and said to him thus: "Brient, if those things which you assert are true, that you have indeed received healing from the Lord through the merits of blessed Nicholas, stand straight on your feet, until this people, who have gathered here, see that it was not done by trickery, but by the divine Spirit." Then he rose up from the ground and went to the altar, carrying with him the stools and the baskets with which he had crawled before, and placed them on the altar. When the monks saw this, they praised the Lord and his servant Nicholas with both their hearts and their voices. But the multitude, overflowing with tears of admiration, proclaimed that Nicholas was the true servant of God.

O man praiseworthy in all things,<sup>23</sup> to whose continual help the people, not only His own, but also strangers, flee for refuge. O shepherd, guardian of His sheep: into whose sheepfold<sup>24</sup> the wicked wolf, ever hostile to the dominical flock, is afraid to enter. O protector of the country, who not only nourishes his servants with celestial food, but also nourishes them here with earthly refreshment. Wherefore, dear friends, commemorating the annual festivals of this great man, also strive to imitate his examples. For this reason, the solemnities of this holy man and of other faithful people must be celebrated by us, so that the eternal glory may be remembered by us, to which no earthly thing can be compared, which the Most High has prepared for his saints. Which, as the prophet said,<sup>25</sup> neither the eye could see, nor the ear could hear, nor human thought could presume to understand<sup>26</sup>, so let us rejoice in the saint on this festival of our patron. Let us ask him to implore the Lord for us, that, whatever has been twisted by us, and removing the misshapen or stained, to raise us always into the paths of right living forever. Let the sheep also rejoice wherever they have been entrusted to such a shepherd, over whom he has obtained a constant and watchful guard of angels from the very Shepherd of Shepherds, Christ Jesus our Lord, for whom also he did not hesitate to receive a temporal death, removing from them the tyrannical law of a most cruel enemy, and eternal death; who, remaining in equality with the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns as God forever and ever, Amen.

## 11. [BHL 6178] The miracles that took place in the monastery of St. Nicholas, Brauweiler, AD 1080-84.

Text: *Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters*, ed. G.H.Pertz, vol. 12 (1874), pp.192-200.

1. In hoc celebris monasterio Brunwilrensi, quod ad honorem omnipotentis Dei eiusque genitricis virginis Mariae et praecipue confessorum eius Nicholai atque Medardi episcoporum per generosissimum comitem palatinum Erenfridum seu Ezonem nuncupatum ac nobilissimam

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<sup>23</sup> The text as printed by the Bollandists breaks off here with their note "a long exhortation follows". I have transcribed the rest of the text from the same two manuscripts.

<sup>24</sup> Sing. or plural – DLMBS.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Cor. 2:9: "Sed sicut scriptum est: Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus iis qui diligunt illum." – "But, as it is written: The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him."

<sup>26</sup> Not an accusative+infinitive, but nominatives + implied potuit + infinitive. "to understand" is my addition.

venerandissimamque eius coniugem Mathildim constructum est, divinae maiestatis clementia multa quidem et magna miracula per merita beatissimi Nicholai episcopi, huius loci principalis patroni, palam ostendere dignata est, et quotidie operatur, ita ut quicumque debilis huc pro expetenda sanitates cum ferventi pietate accesserit, procul dubio consequatur, quicquid devotus petierit. Unde, ne quis tepida fide praesumat dubitare, auscultet et attendat miracula, quae dubiam mentem ad credendum possint excitare.

2. *De adolescente contracto mirifice sanato.* Adolescens quidam, nomine Ancelinus, festis diebus magis consuetus illicitis operibus atque venationibus intendere, quam ad ecclesiam more christiano pergere, quadam die dominica ex consuetudine, nescio quid operaturus, arrepta securi, mox ut ictum in lignum, quod de nemore tulerat, libravit, subito mentis pavore attactus et retro in terram actus, emortuis per ilia atque genua venis vitalibus, est contractus; atque multo deinceps tempore non, nisi aliis se in sella portantibus, est quoquam motatus. Hunc ergo suus dominus, palatinus comes Herimannus, in quadragesima, quae dominicae incarnationis 1080 attigit annum, cum coniuge Adelheyda veniens in Brunwilre causa orationis, sancto Nicholao sub ea servum obtulit conditione, ut eum a suae debilitatis salvaret passione. Vix interfluente trium mensium tempore, in nativitate sancti Ioannis Baptistae, positus ad gradus iuxta altare, fratribus iam ad nocturnos occupatis in divinae servitutis theomate, gressu ad deambulandum surrexit sospite.

3. *De puella ex pago Pyrna oriunda sanata.* Eodem tempore fuit quaedam virgo iuencula, Frouwechyn dicta, de Pyrna villa, quae sita est iuxta fluvium, qui dicitur Rura, cui ab ipso nativitatis exordio gressum abdicaverat, et unius innata debilitas et nimia cruris alterius imbecillitas. Ob quod cruceis baculis innixa tentabat incedere quacumque poterat motione, cum nimia tamen sui corporis defatigatione. Haec vero sui patris labore et studio multa sanctorum loca petens, et nullum salutis suae remedium experiens, vidit se in somniis altario sancti Nicholai assistere et, eidem manu abbatis imposita, sanitatem percipere. Erat dominica nox, cui praenotatur officium diurnale: "*Vocem iucunditatis annuntiate,*" quae est feria quarta ante ascensionem Domini, quia et cum illa suam voluit Dominus misericordiam magnificare, et suo in eius salute populo vocem iucunditatis annunciare. Pater ergo eius percepta visione, secunda feria iam instante, secum eam detulit, et sancti Nicholai patrocinio per manum abbatis obtulit. Prosternitur illa iuxta domnae Mathildis tumulum ad orationem, et fratres, letanias rogationum acturi, exeunt cum populo secundum morem: cum ecce! ut in reditu cum responsorio "Audiens Christi confessor" monasterium intrant, illa oblita bacillorum surgit et, velut ab aliquo accersita, intrepido ad altare gressu vadit, patre stupente et prae gaudio lachrimante. Ab universis accurritur, et in laudem Dei "Kyrie eleison" in caelum usque extollitur. Quae aliquamdiu ibidem permanens in gratiarum actione, sana revertitur ad propria cum magna suorum admiratione. Mira sunt quae dicuntur; nec ista tamen sufficiunt, sed signis signa adiciuntur, et virtutes virtutibus fulciuntur.

4. *De surdo et muto Oppenheim oriundo.* Tertio post hoc miraculum anno, qui erat dominicae incarnationis 1084, cum inclarisset beatorum apostolorum Philippi et Iacobi solemnitas, et a fratribus sacratissima missarum ageretur celebritas: quidam, ab exordio vitae surdus et mutus, reliquo populo sanctae crucis arae vicinior stabat. Quem superna pietas non minori gratia curabat, quam illum — ut in evangelio legitur — inter medios fines Decapoleos sanabat. Mox enim ut, praesente in suis verbis Domino, recitatur evangelium "*Non turbetur cor vestrum:*" circa tempora eius et meatum gutturis, noxiis venarum nodis, ac si ipsius Domini digitis, attactis et disruptis, pronus cadit in terram prae nimia sanguinis eruptione, seque circumstantes ipse iacens suae sanitatis percussit stupore vel

admiratione. Aestimantes enim, eum caduci morbi violentiam passum, cito arreptum eiciunt; sed citius, per ipsum cognita quam perceperat salute, secum intus recipiunt. Expleto autem eucharistiae misterio, vox exultationis et salutis tripudiat in populo. Finitaque — ut dictum erat — laude Dei, magno et mixto cum lachrimis gaudio percunctatus, quis, vel unde, vel quod ei nomen esset, nihil horum se scire professus est, nisi a quibus partibus visu signante venisset. Cui ob relaxationem venarum mentum ad sincipitis medium et occipitis vitta ligantes, et mollioribus cibis refocillantes, praecipunt, ad suos accelerare reversionem, ad se vero reportare nominis agnitionem. Sospes ergo ad integrum efficitur: proficiscitur: revertitur: nativitatis suae locum Oppenheim, villam inter Wormatiam et Moguntiam sitam, nuncupat; se vero Bertwinum appellatum enuntiat. Audis igitur infidelis haec, quicumque es, surdum hunc et mutum tam subito verba, quae temporis usu non didicit, protulisse: et contendis, ad subitum auditum subitam etiam loquelam sibi non provenisse? In terra positus ipse, quomodo obstruas in coelo fontem misericordiae? Antiquus ille parens noster, mox ut a rerum auctore spiraculum accepit vitae, maioresne moras — quaeso te — passus est ratiocinandi, quam et audiendi atque videndi? Nonne simul omne, quod vocavit animae viventis, ipsum est nomen eius? Transeo, quod ad nutum Dei in Babilonia subito confusum universae labium terrae, quod in apostolos omnium subito collatae sunt gentium linguae. Sed non transeo, quod asina Balaam humana subito locuta est voce. Dic, homo et non homo — "homo" enim, ut David ait, "cum in honore esset, quia non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus" — dic: aliena uti lingua potuit asina, et iste ad curam superni medici subito voce non debuit loqui sua? Quae humana sagacitate non vales investigare, tene fide: et cum apostolo noli altum sapere, sed time. Qui enim opera omnia nostra operatus est, dicit: "Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor." Igitur et hoc eius opus fuit, quod iste, simul ut audivit, et quae voluit loqui valuit, et sua singulis nomina rebus imposuit. Si cui vero mirum videtur, hunc sanctum ac Deo dignum locum tantis tam clarum ubique signis enituisse: magis eum miretur, secretorum etiam coelestium conscium fuisse.

5. *De quodam monacho monasterii Werdinensis, qui huc veniens quandam visionem mirandam habuit, et postea per latrones interfectus fuit: super cuius sepulchrum quidam caecus visum recepit.* Processu temporis, eodem scilicet anno, quo haec praedicta facta sunt, beatissimae Barbarae virginis festivitate in vigiliis beatissimi confessoris Christi Nicholai advesperascente, contigit fratrem, cui nomen erat Gerunch, de monasterio sancti Liutgeri tardius quam infra monasterium recipi posset, eundem venerabilem locum adisse, et ob hoc ad sui cuiusdam propinqui hospitium divertisse. Omnis ergo ei humanitas hac de causa maior exhibetur, grata quies fessis itinere membris impertitur. Sed noctis medio — ut sibi visum est — omnibus ex alto monasterii campanis simul sonantibus, somno stratoque excitur: et mox solito suavior concentus velut matutinos hymnos decantantium, auditur. Itaque sensim tecta domus est egressus; sed nescio, dignosne an non dignos ad hoc caeleste arcanum haberet accessus: quia, quo per viae spatium sancto erat loco propinquior, eo idem ille concentus diductior factus est et obscurior. Nihil enim iam in porta subsistens monasterii, quod solide caperet, nisi "*Alleluia*" ter in fine dici audiebat. Utrum autem haec celare an alicui revelare consultius fuerit, nescitur. Sed quod posthac in hac vita non amplius quam 40 dies substiterit, certissime scitur. Nam ab illo, quod erat in Brunwilre, sanctitatis fastigio, vel ab illo, quod audierat angelici cantus iubilo, vel ab Ierusalem descendens in Iericho, Idibus Ianuarii quadam in silva a latronibus est occisus. Sed non multo post ad eius sepulchrum per euangelicum Samaritanum quasi semivivo cuidam caeco donatus est visus, ut in cura corporis alterius alterius animam se curasse probaret Dominus: quia — ut ipse ait — "*plus est anima quam corpus.*" Nam et hoc supernae dispensationi congruebat, ut post auditam caelestem harmoniam citata mors per rivum cruoris

maculas ablueret vitae prioris: quatenus illorum, qui in sanguine Agni dealbatas habent stolas, admixtus consortio, "*Alleluia*," quod ad momentum caelitus decantari audierat in templo etiam isto manu facto, et ipse perpetuo decantet in templo illo non manu facto, cuius — ut ait apostolus — "*artifex et conditor est Deus*," et non homo. Siquidem et ille supradictorum dierum quadragenarius numerus propter legis decalogum et quattuor euangelia magnorum in se continet sacramentorum perfectionem, quae non perficiuntur, nisi per magnum praesentis vitae laborem: ut in illa sempiternae requiei vita quaeque fidelis anima, eiusdem laboris consummans decursionem, illud apostoli ad suam exclamat consolationem: "*Bonum certamen certavi, de reliquo reposita est mihi corona iustitiae*."

6. *De muliere contracta per eundem sanctum episcopum patrocinantem sanata, quae fuit de pago Bolenheim oriunda.* Ceterum ut ad seriem miraculorum texendam redeamus: allegoriarum nodos non dico resolvere laboremus, sed ne quidem attingere tentemus. Igitur sequentium ex ordine temporum adveniente quadragesima, cum iam primae hebdomadae feria instaret sexta, quaedam mulier contracta de villa Bolenheim, ad expetenda sancti Nicholai suffragia karro advecta, oratione profusa sine mora gaudia desideratae sospitatis est adepta. Haec Adelheydt dicebatur, quod latine nobilitas interpretatur. Quae quantum ad se pertinet per infirmitatem contractionis et invalida et ignobilis erat; sed beati viri incomparabilis virtutum nobilitas interpretationem sui nominis melius sibi cum salute corporis restituebat.

7. *De homine a suspendio liberato, quod contigit in Moresdorp.* Benedicta Domini de loco suo gloria, qui suum glorificavit famulum aetatis memoria. Incarnati quippe verbi anno 1084, indictione septima quaedam matrona de Moresdorp villa, Seburch nomine, rebus suis furto sibi sublatis indoluit non minime. Quae nesciens tegere dolorem, non erubuit dolori miscere furorem, mancipio suo, cui nomen Hericho, crimen imponens per suspicionem. Negans, in vulgi iudicium producitur, a quo flagris correptus, nec confessus, suspendio addicitur. Divinam igitur supplex post acceptam sententiam, conversus ad pii nostri oratorium patroni Nicholai, invocat clementiam: ut, si umquam succurrisset innocenti ipsius per merita, et sibi subvenire insonti hac in poena dignaretur indebita. Et ille quidem constans fide sic peroravit et spe; sed vulgo — ut est cupidum et praeproperum ad huiusmodi — confusis clamante vocibus ut suspendatur, revinctis manibus, velata facie opus triste consummatur. Sed quid nos, persequendo tristia, subsequutura moramur gaudia? Omnibus digressis cor — quia manus et ora nequibat — in anchoram fidei speique suae erigendo figebat: quoniam, ut infulatum, canitie decoratum praecidere sibi funem aspiciebat, protinus ad terram decedit; sine laesura constitit, viribus receptis ad basilicam sui venit liberatoris cum vinculis suae testibus liberationis. Quis haec audiens prae gaudio lachrimis non manavit, quis non in laudem Dei Nicholaique corde et voce proclamavit? Cuius etiam ipsa, de qua egimus, matrona auxit gloriam. Imo Nicholai nominis etimologia, qua celice sonat, firmavit populi victoriam, dum cognovit eum iniecti immunem criminis, peste superata, terra caeloque teste. Eius namque videre perhorruit exitium, quem comprobavit innoxium. Quem etiam protinus, suo liberum dominio, ereptoris sui perpetuo mancipavit servitio. Idem postea septem in hac transegit vita hiemes felicissime, totidem salvatori suo nummos quotannis pendens devotissime.

8. *De iuvene a debilitate gressus sanato, qui fuit oriundus de pago Sinteren ad monasterii nostri dominium spectante.* Tu etiam, Gyselberte, beneficia experte nostri pii hierarchae, in crucis virtute sacrae, testis procede, tibi quid provenerit ede! *Gyselbertus*. Planius edicam: sensu, verbis benedicam in servo Dominum Deum, quia suam magnificavit misericordiam mecum, ut crucis

triumphus victoriosissimae et Nicolaus pius glorificaretur in me. Providentia Dei inscrutabili infirmitati submissus sum lamentabili, quae, diebus augmenta capiens et mensibus, infesto me pressit dominio per anni spatium totius. Ossa in me siccabantur, medullae torquebantur, arentibus in venis nervi contrahebantur: donec, pedibus ad nates concrenentibus, incessus mihi denegaretur penitus. Miseriam videas duram: humanam scilicet naturam non, velut animal rationale, erectum pergere, sed, ut irrationale, humo demissum repere; huic triste mundo spectaculum, meis miserum notis miraculum; utpote qui mallent se mihi debita funeris exolvere, quam in vivo tantam cadavere calamitatem vidisse. Hos dolor, hos plangor torquet, me taedia, languor; cum subito medicus de summis prospexit clementissimus, patientis misertus et compatientium gemitibus. Qui quomodo obdormierat in navi, tempestate periclitabamur in mari: at nos evigilavit, imo, fidem in nobis attendens, nos ad se excitavit. Nam Adelberoni, Synterensis villae, unde oriundus sum, civi; hinc cuidam mulieri, deinde visum est horomate consimili et mihi, quia, si cum oblationibus ad monasterii portarer Brunwilrensis menia, optatae reportaturus essem salutis munia. Quo in asino perlatus sexta feria, qua celebris sanctae recolitur crucis memoria, atque ante sacram in ecclesiae introitu collocatus aram, sensi paulatim plantas mihi reformari proprioque loco recompaginari. Exin domum relatus, perque duas de die in diem septimanas melioratus, iam tertia locum sexta feria sanctum per me adii, et perfectae restitutus sanitati, redii. Et in virtute sanctae crucis consecutus beneficia, per clementissimi Nicholai praesulis merita, vestrae denuntio unanimitati, laudem et gloriam et magnificentiam summae decantans Trinitati. Vos ea, mandando litteris, vestris committite posteris, ut in ore personet omnium gratiarum actio Deo Deorum, cuius regnum et imperium sine fine permanet in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

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1. In this famous monastery of Brauweiler, which was built in honour of Almighty God and of his mother the virgin Mary, and especially [in honour] of his confessors, the bishops Nicholas and Medard, by the most generous count palatine Erenfridus or Ezon,<sup>27</sup> and his most noble and venerable spouse Mathilde, the mercy of the divine majesty performed many and great miracles through the merits of the most blessed bishop Nicholas, the principal patron of this place, and he works every day, so that any weak person who come here to seek healing with fervent piety will without a doubt obtain whatever the devotee asks for. Wherefore, in order that no one with lukewarm faith may presume to doubt, let him listen and pay attention to the miracles, which may cause a doubtful mind to believe.

2. *Concerning a crippled teenager miraculously cured.* A certain young man, named Ancelinus, who was more accustomed to engage in illicit activities and hunting on holidays than to go to church in the Christian manner, one Sunday as usual – I do not know what he was going to do – took an axe, just as he struck a blow on a piece of wood which he had taken from the forest, suddenly struck with terror of mind, and thrown back to the ground, paralysed in the vital veins through his legs and knees, he was crippled, and for a long time afterwards he was not moved anywhere except by others carrying him on a saddle. So his lord Herimannus, Count Palatine,<sup>28</sup> during Lent in the year 1080 of

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<sup>27</sup> Erenfried or Herenfried, ca. 908-970, afterwards known as Ezo or Ezzo. Identified in the Brunwilrensis Monasterii Fundatio. Buried at Braunweiler. Husband of Mathide, daughter of Otto the Great.

<sup>28</sup> Herman I, called "Pusillus" or "the slender", son of the Ehrenfried in chapter 1. He died in 996.

our Lord's incarnation, when his wife Adelheyda came to Braunweiler for prayer, offered him to Saint Nicholas as a servant, on condition that he saved him from his infirmity and suffering. Three months later, on the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, having been placed on the steps near the altar, after the brothers had already engaged at night in the business of the divine service, he got up safe and sound to walk about.

3. *Concerning a girl from the village of Pyrna who was healed.* At the same time there was a certain young maiden, called Frouwechyn, from the town of Pyrna, which is situated by the river called Rura, whose ability to walk had been lost from the very beginning of her birth, through both the congenital debility of one leg, and the excessive weakness of the other. Because of this, leaning on the cross sticks, she tried to walk with whatever motion she could, but with excessive exhaustion of her body. Indeed, by the labour and diligence of her father, on visiting many holy places, and experiencing no remedy for her health, she saw in her dreams that she was attending the altar of St. Nicholas, and that she received healing after the laying on of hands for the same by the abbot. It was Sunday night, to which is assigned the daily office: "Proclaim the voice of joy,"<sup>29</sup> which is the Wednesday before the ascension of the Lord, because even with that the Lord wanted to magnify His mercy, and to announce the voice of joy to his people in their salvation.<sup>30</sup> Her father, therefore, on receiving the vision, on the second day of the week, took her with him, and presented her to the protection of St. Nicholas through the hand of the abbot. She prostrated herself next to the tomb of Lady Mathilde to pray, and the brothers, having recited the litany of petitions, went out with the people according to custom; when, behold! as they were entering the monastery on their return with the response "The confessor of Christ, on hearing..."<sup>31</sup> she forgot about her sticks, and arose, and, as if awakened by someone, went with fearless steps to the altar, to her father's astonishment and tears of joy. She was acclaimed by all, and in praise of God the "Kyrie eleison" was lifted up to heaven. After remaining there for some time in thanksgiving, she returned in good health to her own home, to the great astonishment of her people. Wonderful are these things which are said; nor are these yet sufficient, but signs are added to signs, and virtues are supported by virtues.

4. *Concerning a deaf and dumb man of Oppenheim.* In the third year after this miracle, which was the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 1084, when the solemnity of the blessed apostles Philip and James was celebrated, and the most sacred masses were celebrated by the brethren, a certain man, deaf and dumb from the beginning of his life, stood nearer to the altar of the holy cross than everyone else. Whom the heavenly piety cared for with no less grace, than he, as we read in the Gospel, who was healed among the middle regions of the Decapolis. For immediately, the Lord being present in his words when the gospel was recited: "Let not your heart be troubled,"<sup>32</sup> the noxious knots of veins around his temples and the passage of his throat were attacked and broken, as if by the Lord's own fingers, and he fell prostrate on the ground from an excessive rush of blood, and it struck those standing around him, lying there, with astonishment or wonder at his health. For thinking that he had suffered a stroke of epilepsy, they quickly seized him and removed him; but then, having learned through him what healing he had received, they took him inside with them. And when the mystery of the eucharist was finished, his cry of exultation and salvation rejoiced

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<sup>29</sup> Isaiah 48:20, "Vocem jucunditatis" is the Introit for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter.

<sup>30</sup> There is a pun on "salvation" and "healing" here.

<sup>31</sup> Also taken from the legend of St Nicholas.

<sup>32</sup> John 14:1.

among the people. And when the praise of God had finished, as has been said, and with great joy mingled with tears he was questioned as to who he was, or where he came from, or what his name was, he professed to know nothing of these things, except indicating with a gesture from what parts he had come. On account of the relaxation of the veins, they tied ribbons from the chin to the side and back of the head, and refreshing themselves with softer food, they ordered him to hurry his return to his own people, and to bring back to himself knowledge of his name. Safe and sound, therefore, he was made whole. He went forth, and returned. He named the place of his birth as Oppenheim, a town situated between Worms and Mainz, but he declared that he was called Bertwin. Therefore hear these things, O unbelievers,<sup>33</sup> whoever you are, that this deaf and dumb man has thus suddenly uttered words which he has not learned by the use of time: and do you contend that, after the sudden return of hearing, a sudden return speech also did not come to him? Being placed on earth, how can you block the fountain of mercy in heaven? That ancient parent of ours, as soon as he received the breath of life from the author of all things, did he, I pray thee, suffer greater delays in reasoning than in hearing and seeing? At the same time, is not everything with a living soul that he named, is that not its name? I pass over that, at the beckoning of God in Babylon the lips of the whole earth were suddenly confused, while in the apostles all the tongues of the nations were suddenly joined together. But I do not pass over the fact that Balaam's donkey suddenly spoke with a human voice. Speak, man and not man – for "man", as David says<sup>34</sup>, "when he was in honour, because he did not understand, he was compared to foolish beasts" - speak: a donkey could use another's tongue, and should this man not suddenly speak with his own voice under the care of the heavenly physician? What you are not able to investigate with human understanding, hold on to by faith, and with the apostle "do not be proud, but fear."<sup>35</sup> For he who has worked all our works says, "My father is working until now, and I am working."<sup>36</sup> And so this was his work, that he, at the same time as he heard, was also able to say what he wanted, and put his own names to everything. If indeed it seems wonderful to anyone, that this place, holy and worthy of God, should be so well-known everywhere for such wonders, let him be even more in awe that he is privy to the secrets of the heavens.

5. *Concerning a certain monk of the monastery of Werden<sup>37</sup>, who, coming hither, had a strange vision, and afterwards was killed by robbers, on whose grave a blind man received his sight.* In the course of time, namely, in the same year in which these aforesaid events happened, on the eve of the feast of the most blessed virgin Barbara, on the eve of the vigil of Nicholas the most blessed confessor of Christ, it happened that a brother, whose name was Gerunch,<sup>38</sup> from the monastery of Saint Liutgeri,<sup>39</sup> came to the same venerable place later than he could be received into the monastery, and for this reason he diverted himself to the hospitality of a relative of his.

Therefore every kindness was shown to him, the greater for this reason, and a welcome repose was imparted to limbs wearied from the journey. But in the middle of the night – as he thought – all the bells rang together from the height of the monastery, and he was roused from his sleep, and soon a

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<sup>33</sup> The text probably should read "infideles".

<sup>34</sup> Ps.48:21.

<sup>35</sup> Rom. 11:20.

<sup>36</sup> John 5:17-18.

<sup>37</sup> A wealthy abbey in the Rhineland.

<sup>38</sup> Gerung, or Gerungus. A German name.

<sup>39</sup> St Ludger's Abbey, Kloster St. Luger.



sweeter harmony than usual was heard, as if they were singing the morning hymns. And so he cautiously went out of the roofed house, but I do not know whether he was considered worthy or unworthy to have access to this celestial mystery, because, the shorter the distance of the road was to the holy place, the more distant and obscure the same harmony became. For now he was standing at the gate of the monastery there was nothing that he could make out definitely, unless he heard "Alleluia" said three times at the end. But whether it was deliberately more to conceal these things or to reveal them to anyone, is not known. But it is known with certainty that after this he did not remain in this life more than 40 days. For from him who was at Brauweiler, the pinnacle of sanctity, or from him who had heard the angelic song of joy, or on going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,<sup>40</sup> on the Ides of January<sup>41</sup> this "certain man"<sup>42</sup> was killed in the forest by robbers.<sup>43</sup>

But not long after, at his grave, through the evangelical Samaritan, sight was given to a certain blind man as if he were half alive, so that the Lord could prove that in caring for the body of one, He cared for the soul of another, because - as he himself says - "the soul is more than the body."<sup>44</sup> For this too was in accordance with the divine dispensation, so that after hearing the heavenly harmony mentioned, his death in a stream of blood washed away the stains of the previous life, inasmuch as he has been joined to the company of those who have robes whitened in the blood of the Lamb, the "Alleluia," which for a moment he had heard being sung in a celestial way in that temple also made with hands, and he himself will sing forever in that temple not made with hands, of which - as the Apostle says - "the artificer and the creator is God,"<sup>45</sup> and not man. Indeed, the above-mentioned number of forty days, because of the law of the decalogues and the four great gospels, contains in itself the perfection of the sacraments, which are not fulfilled except through great labour in the present life, so that in that life of eternal rest every faithful soul, having finished a journey of the same labour, cries out to the apostle for his consolation, "I have fought the good fight, and for the rest a crown of justice has been laid up for me"<sup>46</sup>.

6. *Concerning a crippled woman, healed by the same patron saint bishop, who was a native of the village of Bolenheim.* Moreover, in order to return to assembling a series of miracles, I do not say that we will try to unravel the knots of the allegories, but that we will not even try to attempt it. Therefore, when the fortieth of the following seasons arrived, when it was already Friday of the first week, a certain crippled woman from the town of Bolenheim was brought in a cart to seek the assistance of St. Nicholas, and by profuse prayer without delay she obtained the joys of the desired expectation. She was called Adelheydt,<sup>47</sup> which means "nobility" in Latin. Who, so far as pertains to herself, was both weak and ignoble through the infirmity of being crippled; but the incomparable nobility of the blessed man's virtues restored the meaning of her name to her together with the health of her body.

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<sup>40</sup> Lk. 10:35.

<sup>41</sup> 13 January, 1085.

<sup>42</sup> "quodam" referring back to the first sentence "quodam monacho".

<sup>43</sup> The use of "ab" and "vel" in this sentence is unfamiliar.

<sup>44</sup> Mt. 6:25.

<sup>45</sup> Heb. 11:10.

<sup>46</sup> 2 Tim. 4:7-8, via Gregorian chant.

<sup>47</sup> i.e. Adelaide.

7. *Concerning a man freed from hanging, which happened in Moresdorp.* Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place,<sup>\*\*48</sup> who glorified his servant in the memory of this age. For in the year 1084 of the incarnation of the Word, in the seventh indiction, a certain matron of the village of Moresdorp, named Seburch, whose property had been taken away from her by theft, was not a little upset. She, not knowing how to conceal her pain, was not ashamed to mix her fury with her pain, by laying the blame on her servant, whose name was Herichus,<sup>49</sup> through suspicion. On denying it, he was brought before the public court and flogged, without confessing, and was sentenced to hang. The suppliant, therefore, after having accepted the divine sentence, turned to the oratory of our pious patron Nicholas, and prayed for his mercy, that if he had ever come to the rescue of the innocent by his merits, he would deign to assist him, an innocent man, facing this unjust punishment. And he indeed, being steadfast in faith and hope, concluded thus; but the common people—who are rash and precipitate in such things—were shouting with confused cries and voices that he should be hanged, and with bound hands, and with a veiled face, the job was sadly carried out. But why do we, in going through the sorrows, delay the following joys? Taking leave of all, he fixed his heart — because his hands and mouth were unable — on looking up to the anchor of his faith and hope; because when he perceived that the rope, vested and adorned with white, was trimmed for him, he immediately fell to the ground;<sup>50</sup> he stood unharmed, and having regained his strength he came to the basilica of his deliverer with the bonds of his deliverance. Who, on hearing these things, did not shed tears of joy, who did not proclaim the praise of God and Nicholas with heart and voice? Among them also was that matron, of whom we have spoken, which increased the glory. In fact the etymology of the name Nicholas, which has a sound like a bell, means the victory of the people, as long as he knew him to be not guilty of the crime, overcome by destruction, as earth and heaven testified. For he was horrified to see the destruction of one whom he found harmless. He also immediately, free from his domain, transferred him to the perpetual service of his deliverer.<sup>51</sup> After this he spent seven winters in this life very happily, devoutly paying the same amount of money to his saviour every year.

8. Concerning a young man walking, cured of weakness in a remarkable way, who came from the area of Sinteren<sup>52</sup> to the domain of our monastery. You too, Gyselbert, having experienced the benefits of our pious hierarch in the holy power of the cross, proceed as a witness, say what happened to you!

*Gyselbert:* Let me speak more clearly: in sense, in words, I will bless the Lord God in his servant, because he has magnified his mercy towards me, so that the triumph of the most victorious cross and Nicholas the pious may be glorified in me. By the inscrutable providence of God I was subjected to a lamentable infirmity, which, increasing for days and months, oppressed me by its violent dominion for the whole of a year. The bones in me were dried up, the marrow was twisted, the sinews in the blood-vessels were parched, until, my feet being swollen up like my buttocks, walking was completely denied to me. You may see my cruel misery, namely that my human nature was unable to walk upright like a rational creature, but like an irrational creature to crawl grovelling on the ground; a spectacle to this sad world, a wretched wonder to my acquaintances, namely those

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<sup>48</sup> Ez. 3:12.

<sup>49</sup> I.e. Erich.

<sup>50</sup> The rope perhaps broke.

<sup>51</sup> I.e. as a monk.

<sup>52</sup> I have not been able to identify the German place name.

who would rather have paid my funeral expenses than to have seen such a calamity in a living corpse. I am tormented by pain, I am weary, I am languishing, when suddenly the most merciful physician looked down from above, having compassion on the patient and the weeping of those who sympathized. Who, just as he had fallen asleep in the ship, we were in danger of a storm at sea, but he awakened us, nay, paying attention to the faith in us, he awakened us to himself. For I am a citizen of Adelberonum, a town of Sinteren, from where I came; from here to a certain woman and then a similar vision came to me, that, if I were to carry vessels<sup>53</sup> with offerings to the monastery of Brauweiler, I should be carrying out the requirements for the desired healing.<sup>54</sup> As I was carried on a donkey on the Friday on which the memorial of the cross is celebrated, and placed before the holy altar at the entrance of the church, I gradually felt that my feet were being reformed for me and replaced in their proper place. After being brought home, and for two weeks getting better from day to day, in the third I went to the holy place on the Friday by myself, and having been restored to perfect health, I returned. And having obtained these blessings in the power of the holy cross, through the merits of the most merciful bishop Nicholas, I declare them in agreement with you, singing the praise and glory and greatness of the supreme Trinity. Deliver these things to your posterity by committing them to writing, so that the thanksgiving of all to the God of Gods, whose kingdom and dominion continues without end, may be in the mouth of everyone. Amen.

## 17. [BHL 6209] A Miracle

### Recension A<sup>55</sup> - BNF lat. 5368 version

Text: *Catalogus codicum Parisiensi*, tom. 2, item 34, pp.430-431. From BNF lat. 5368, fol. 59r-60r. Written by a certain monk of Bec. 14<sup>th</sup> century. Regarded by the Bollandists as the earlier recension of the two.

Note: a "historia" is a liturgical narrative chanted instead of psalms at mattins, esp. on the saint's day. (DMLBS). A liturgical chant. Cf. H. Parkes, "The Medieval Chants for Ste Foy Considered through the Prism of Their Nocturnal Performance," in: *Arts* 12 (2023), 188. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts12050188>

Cluniacensi coenobio subest quaedam cella quae dicitur Caritas, in qua primum praepositus constitutus est vir nobilis et religiosus, nomine Girardus, qui regimen ejusdem ecclesiae tenuit plus quam triginta annos; sub quo nimium crevit ipsa eadem cella, ita ut sub se haberet alias cellas. Inter alia vero quae possedit fidelium donatione, data est quaedam possessio, quae Crux dicitur, in terra Brigiensi, a quodam illustri viro. Ad quam possessionem venerandus Girardus statim transmisit quam plurimos monachos, praeponens eis religiosum virum quendam et ferventem in ordine suo. Ubi dum essent, supervenit festivitas beatissimi ac gloriosissimi confessoris Christi Nicholai. Tum fratres requisierunt priorem si historiam de festivitate, quae est propria, decantarent. Quibus ille respondit : "Non, quia apud Cluniacum non cantatur." Et illi e contra: "Domnus noster Girardus prior facit eam cantare in domo nostra de Caritate; et quod in domo nostra cantatur, nos debemus cantare."

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<sup>53</sup> "menia" does not seem to appear in any dictionary, but the sense may be vessels or containers of some kind.

<sup>54</sup> The meaning of the Latin is unclear here.

<sup>55</sup> The labels A and B for the two recensions were assigned by Dr Mary Caldwell in her forthcoming publication.

Siquidem idem Girardus, a juventute sua illectus in amore sancti, cum ad prioratum venisset, fecit festivitatem ipsius sancti per se et per suos subjectos magnifice celebrari et propriam historiam decantari. Ad quorum verba respondit prior contumaciter et dixit: "Nonne vos estis monachi Cluniacenses?" Illi responderunt cum humilitate se esse. Et ille: "Quod in vestra ecclesia cantatur cantate, et nil amplius." Altera die iterum interpellaverunt eum de supradicta re. Qui iratus interdixit eis ne ulterius de hac re eum requirerent. Sed illi perseverantes in petitione sua, tertia vice eum suppliciter exoraverunt ut eis concederet decantare historiam. Ille nimium iratus contra eos, vehementer verbis contumeliosis coepit eos arguere, eo quod ausi fuerint contra suum interdictum de hac re eum repetere; insuper et scopa fecit eos vapulari pro hac culpa. Nocte vera subsequente, cum se sopori dedisset, ecce beatus Nicholaus ante eum cum virga stetit, sicque eum est affatus: "Tu fecisti monachos tuos verberari causa mei. Videbis quid inde tibi eveniet. Canta." Tunc ipse sanctus coepit antiphonam, quae sic incipit "O Christi pietas." Ille vero cum nollet subsequendo cantare, coepit eum vehementer verberare, more consueto magistri puero volenti discere litteras. Quid multa? Tamdiu quippe verberando et discendo decantavit ei antiphonam usquequo ille memoriter eam decantaret ex integro. At monachi qui circum jacebant, cum eum audissent quasi deplorando cantare supradictam antiphonam, surgentes de cubilibus suis, circumsteterunt lectulo illius cum luminaribus. Et videntes eum se nimium defricantem, simulque decantantem antiphonam, vehementer obstupuerunt, quam maxime credentes aliquid secretum inesse, quod non videbant, per hoc quod oculis cernebant. Nullus tamen ausus est eum evigilare, magnopere exspectantes finem rei. Cum vero bene et memoriter ille per se ipsum decantasset totam antiphonam, evigilavit; vidensque fratres astare coram se cum luminaribus, nihilque volens eis tunc dicere, signi significatione jussit ut ad strata sua redirent, et ipse quod reliquum noctis fuit insomnem duxit eum timore et dolore. Mane autem facto, cum hora loquendi venisset et omnes in unum convenissent, dixit illis: "Indulgeat vobis, fratres, Deus, quod me fecistis tam acriter verberari hac nocte. Ite, decantate historiam sicut petistis. Nam velim nolim concedere me oportet, ne iterum verberer sicut hac nocte vapulavi, et forsitan multo plus. Expertus enim sum hac nocte quia durum est contra stimulum calcitrare." Tum illi cum immensis precibus rogare coeperunt ut eis narraret quid vidisset et quid passus fuisset. Ille vero precibus eorum acquiescens, narravit eis omnia per ordinem sicut supra digestum est. Et probamentum verbis adiciens, expoliavit se coram cunctis, ostendens dorsum suum verberibus dilaceratum. Tunc illi videntes haec, in laudes Dei et sui piissimi confessoris Nicholai diutius cum lacrimis demorati sunt, celebrantes ejus festivitatem cum omni gaudio et laetitia, decantantes historiam sicut petierant. Festivitate transacta, perrexit prior cum aliquibus fratribus ad priorem suum Girardum, et veniens ante eum, prostravit se ad pedes ejus. Cui prior: "Quid petis?" Ille ait: "Peto a vestra gratia ut a prioratu isto me liberetis." Et prior Girardus: "Qua causa?" Et ille: "Quia fratres nostri me acriter fecerunt verberari a quodam." Ad haec nimium commotus prior Girardus dixit: "Et quis ausus fuit tantam inordinationem facere?" Ad quod monachi qui venerunt responderunt: "Domne prior, noli perturbari, usque dum scias quis eum verberaverit et qua causa." Prior Girardus, videns eos nil timoris habere, ut sapiens vir, intellegens aliquod secretum esse, jussit priori ut coram omnibus ediceret quis eum verberavit et qua causa. Et ille: "Sanctus," inquit, "Nicholaus verberavit me. Causa quae fuerit dicam." Tunc coepit coram omnibus narrare rem gestam. Prior Girardus, admirans novitatem rei, non poterat credere, sed existimabat fabulosum esse quod audiebat. Tum prior ille: "Et scias, domne prior, quia verum est quod audisti, probatione ostendam tibi." Tum coram illo et omnibus qui adstabant expoliavit se, et ostendit dorsum et scapulas nimium livientes verberare. Videns hoc prior Girardus, prae gaudio coepit flere, et in laudem omnipotentis Dei et sui piissimi confessoris Nicholai erumpens, coepit decantare antiphonam "O

Christi pietas." Deinde jussit ut per omnes cellas sibi subjectas supradictam historiam decantarent, habens deinceps in maximam venerationem memoriam ipsius sancti, quamvis et antea plurimum habuisset.

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Under the authority of the abbey of Cluny there is a certain cell<sup>56</sup> called Charitas,<sup>57</sup> in which a noble and religious man named Girard, who held the government of the same church for more than thirty years, was first put in charge; under whom this same cell increased so much that it had other cells under it. But among other things which he possessed by the donation of the faithful, a certain possession called Crux in the territory of Burgundy<sup>58</sup> was given by a certain illustrious man. The venerable Girard immediately sent as many monks as possible to this property, placing over them a certain man, fervent and religious, in his order. While they were there, the time arrived of the festival of the most blessed and glorious confessor of Christ, Nicholas. Then the brothers asked the prior if they could sing the "historia" which is specified for the festival. To whom he replied, "No, because it is not sung at Cluny." And they on the other hand, "Our Lord Girard the Prior has it sung in our house of Charity; and we must sing that which is sung in our house." Indeed the same Girard, chosen from his youth by the love of the saint, when he had come to be prior, caused the festival of the saint to be celebrated magnificently by himself and his subjects, and the appropriate "historia" to be sung. To whose words the prior answered defiantly and said, "Are you not Cluniac monks?" They answered with humility that they were. He replied: "Sing what is sung in your church, and nothing more." The next day, they again disturbed him about the aforesaid matter. He was angry and forbade them to ask him any further about this matter. But they, persevering in their request, implored him a third time to grant them permission to sing the "historia". He, being exceedingly angry with them, began to blame them angrily with insulting words, because, contrary to his prohibition on this matter, they had dared to repeat this; moreover, he caused them to be beaten with a broom for this fault.

On the very next night, when he had gone to sleep, behold, blessed Nicholas stood before him with a staff, and addressed him this: "You have caused your monks to be beaten for my sake. You will see what will happen to you. Sing." Then the saint himself began the antiphon, which begins thus: "O the mercy of Christ." But when he would not sing the next line, he began to beat him violently, in the customary manner of a master with a boy who wishes to learn letters.

What more is there to say? For a long time, then, beating and learning, he sang the antiphon to him until he could sing it from memory in its entirety. But the monks who were lying nearby, when they heard him sing the aforesaid antiphon as if lamenting, rose from their beds and stood around his bed with lamps. And when they saw him rubbing himself excessively, and at the same time singing an antiphon, they were greatly amazed, believing as much as possible that there was something hidden involved, which they did not see, by what they saw with their eyes. However, no one dared to wake him, eagerly awaiting the end of the event.

But when he had sung the whole antiphon by himself well and by heart, he awoke; and seeing the brothers standing before him with lights, and not wanting to say anything to them at that time, he ordered them by a sign to return to their beds, and he himself, who was sleepless for the rest of the night, spent it in fear and pain.

Then in the morning, when the hour for speaking had come and they had all come together, he said

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<sup>56</sup> A "cell", i.e. a priory.

<sup>57</sup> The Cluniac priory of Sainte-Croix-Notre-Dame in La Charité-sur-Loire, on the Loire in Burgundy.

<sup>58</sup> Sainte-Croix. "Brigiensi" is perhaps a mistake for Burgundiensi, i.e. Burgundy.

to them: "May God have mercy on you, brothers, because you caused me to be beaten so severely this night." Go, sing the "historia" as you asked. For whether I wish it or not, I must concede, so that I will not be beaten again as I was beaten to-night, and perhaps much more. For I have been tested this night because it is hard to kick against the spur."

Then they began to ask him with immense prayers that he would tell them what he had seen and what he had suffered. And he, agreeing to their prayers, told them everything in order as it was arranged above. And to prove his words, he stripped himself in front of all, showing his back torn with lashes. Then they, seeing these things, lingered longer with tears in the praises of God and of their most pious confessor Nicholas, celebrating his festival with all joy and gladness, singing the "historia" just as they had sought.

Once the festival was over, the prior went with some brothers to his prior Girard, and coming before him, prostrated himself at his feet. To whom the prior said: "What do you ask?" He said: "I beg of your grace to release me from this priorate." And prior Girard: "For what reason?" And he: "Because our brothers have caused me to be severely beaten by something." The prior Girardus, greatly moved by these things, said: "And who has dared to make such a disorder?" To which the monks who came in answered: "Lord prior, do not be disturbed until you know who beat him and for what reason." Prior Girardus, seeing that they were without fear, like a wise man, understanding that there was some secret, ordered the prior to declare in front of everyone who had beaten him and for what reason. And he said: "St. Nicholas beat me. I will tell you what happened." Then he began to tell what had happened before everyone.

Prior Girard, marvelling at the novelty of the matter, could not believe it, but thought that what he heard was a fable. Then the prior said: "And so you may know, Lord Prior, that what you have heard is true, I will show you a proof." Then in the presence of him and of all who stood by, he stripped himself, and showed that his back and shoulders were beaten excessively. Seeing this, Prior Girardus began to weep for joy, and bursting into the praise of Almighty God and his most pious confessor Nicholas, he began to sing the antiphon "O Christ's mercy." Then he ordered that the aforesaid "historia" should be chanted throughout all the cells subject to him, having henceforth the memory of the saint himself in the greatest possible veneration, although he had previously done so very much.

### **Recension B – BNF lat. 5284 version**

Text: *Catalogus codicum Parisiensi*. tome 1, p.510-11, #26. From: Paris BNF Lat. 5284. Item 26. ff. 136v-149v. End of 13<sup>th</sup> c.

Inter innumera virtutum insignia, quibus beatus Nicolaus inter spiritaes patres velut inter astra fulgida caeli lucifer luminis singularis effulsit, nostris quoque temporibus, quantum sibi devote famulantibus favere, quantum suo famulatu obtrectantibus indignari, consuevit, ostendere dignatus est. Qualiter autem res gesta contigerit, paucis explicare curabo. Cum nova sancti Nicolai historia de vita et miraculis ejus, scripta quidem per hominem sed homini divinitus inspirata, jam per totam paene latinitatem pro ejus dulcedinis immensitate in Christi ecclesiis longe lateque devotissime cantaretur, in quadam cella quae Crux nominatur, Sanctae Mariae de Caritate subjecta, pro pigritia habitantium necdum fuerat incohata. Tandem die una ejusdem loci seniores ante domnum Ytherium, suum videlicet priorem, pariter convenerunt, humiliter postulantes ut eis beati Nicolai psallendi responsoria licentiam daret. Ille vero eorum petitionibus nullatenus adquiescens, respondit omnino fore incongruum in tali negotio morem pristinum quibuslibet novitatibus immutandum. At illi patris duritiam contuentes, hujuscemodi coeperunt urgere sermonibus: "Cur, pater, audire filios

contemnis? Cur, cum sancti Nicolai historia, spiritalis mellis dulcedine plena, tota jam paene orbe celebris [sit], non cantetur a nobis? Cur aliis in tanta sollemnitate epulantibus, nos a tam spiritualis convivii refectioe pateris esse jejunos? Cur universis ferme ecclesiis hac nova exultatione jubilantibus, haec sola modo muta silebit?"

Cum his et similibus valde commotus prior, in tali fertur erupisse blasphemia: "Recedite, fratres: numquam enim vobis licentia a me concedetur ut relicto pristino usu nova saecularium cantica clericorum, immo jocularia quaedam, in ecclesia cui jubente Deo deservio ullatenus admittantur." Quibus auditis, nimio pro sua repulsa rubore perfusi, reniti non valentes ulterius discipuli quieverunt, ac superveniente festivitate vespertinam matutinalemque synaxim, non sine quadam tristitia, veluti consueverant peregerunt. Peractis vero vigiliis, ad propria strata sunt quiescendi gratia regressi. Cumque prior se in lectulo sicut ceteri collocasset, ecce beatus Nicolaus ei visibiliter terribilis valde apparuit, ipsumque pro sua obstinatione atque superbia verbis severissimis increpavit, atque per capillos a lecto abstrahens, dormitorii pavimento collisit; incipiensque antiphonam "O pastor aeterne," per singulas notae differentias, virgis quas manu tenebat, gravissimos ictus supra dorsum patientis ingeminans, per ordinem morose canendo, ad finem usque perduxit. Is autem tantis flagris et tam insolita visione turbatus, clamare confusis vocibus coepit, suisque clamoribus ante se fratres protinus adunavit. Quem prostratum solo cernentes, quid viderit quidve passus fuerit sollicite requirebant. At ille, utpote amens effectus, nullum sciscitantibus valuit dare responsum. Sublatus autem fratrum manibus, in cellam infirmantium deportatur, multisque diebus correptus languore gravissimo custoditur. Ad postremum, divina miseratione et beati Nicolai interventione salvatus, congregatis fratribus ait: "Ecce, filii carissimi, quoniam vobis oboedire contempsi, duras pro cordis mei duritia poenas exsolvi. Amodo non solum quod petebatis granter annuo, verum quoad vixero ad canendam tanti patris historiam promptissimus atque paratissimus ero."

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Amid the countless signs of the virtues, through which Blessed Nicholas shone forth among the spiritual fathers like a singular light-bringer among the shining stars of heaven, he deigned to show in our times also, how much he is accustomed to favour those devotedly serving him, and to resent those disparaging his service. However I will undertake to explain in a few words how the events came to pass.

When the new "historia" of Saint Nicholas, concerning his life and miracles, written indeed by a man but divinely inspired for mankind, was already being sung with devotion throughout almost all of the Latin [world] in the churches of Christ for the immensity of its sweetness, in a certain cell\*\* called [St] Crux, subject to [the priory of] St Mary of Charitas,<sup>59</sup> it had not yet been begun because of the laziness of the inhabitants.

Finally, one day the elders of the same place came together before their lord Ytherius, their prior, humbly requesting that he grant them permission to chant the "responsoria"<sup>60</sup> of Blessed Nicholas. But he did not at all acquiesce to their requests, and he replied that it would be entirely inappropriate to change the original practice in such a way with any novelties. They, perceiving the strictness of the father, began to press him with such words: "Why, father, do you scorn to listen to

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<sup>59</sup> Sainte-Croix-Notre-Dame, today La Charité-sur-Loire, in Burgundy.

<sup>60</sup> "responsoria" – a chant or anthem sung after the reading.

your sons? Why, when the “historia” of St Nicholas, full of the sweetness of spiritual honey, is already celebrated throughout almost the whole world, is it not sung by us? Why, while others are feasting in such solemnity, do you suffer it that we are fasting from such a spiritual banquet? Why, while nearly all the churches are rejoicing with this new exaltation, will this one alone remain silent?”

Hearing these and similar words, the prior, greatly annoyed, is said to have broken out in this blasphemy: "Withdraw, brothers, for never shall I grant permission to you to introduce into the church, where I serve God at His command, these new songs, or rather jocularities, by worldly clerics." Upon hearing this, overwhelmed with excessive shame for their rebuff, the followers could not persist further and remained quiet, and with the coming of the festival, they completed the evening and morning assembly, not without a certain sadness, in the same way as usual. And when the vigils were over, they returned to their beds to rest. And when the prior had laid himself down in bed like the others, behold, Blessed Nicholas appeared to him in a visibly terrifying way, and he rebuked him with the severest words for his obstinacy and pride, and seizing him by the hair, dragged him out of bed and cast him to the floor of the dormitory; and beginning the antiphon "O eternal shepherd," he led him through until the end, striking repeatedly with each distinct change of note very painful strokes<sup>61</sup> upon the back of the suffering man with the rods he held in his hand, singing slowly [the verses] in order until the end.

Then he, agitated by such lashings and such an unaccustomed vision, began to cry out in confused words, and this, with his cries, immediately brought his brothers before him. Seeing him prostrate on the ground, they anxiously asked what he had seen or what he had suffered. But he, as if made mad, was unable to give any answer to their questioning. Then, lifted up by the hands of his brothers, he was carried into the infirmary cell and, was kept there, overcome by severe sickness, for many days. At last, saved by divine mercy and the intervention of Blessed Nicholas, he said to the gathered brothers: "Behold, my beloved sons, because I disdained to obey you, I have paid harsh penalties for the hardness of my heart. From now on, not only do I gladly grant what you requested, but as long as I live, I will be most eager and ready to sing the “historia” of such a great father."

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<sup>61</sup> “ictus” – a blow, a stroke, but also a musical beat, and also a musical measure.