

Anonymous

Vita S. Mevenni / Life of St Mewan

BHL 5944¹

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Introduction

St Mewan (Latin: S. Mevennus, French: Saint Méen) is a saint honoured in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, who seems to have lived in the early 6th century. His biography is transmitted to us in a hagiographical “Life”, listed in the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* as BHL 5944. This seems to be one of a cycle of “Lives”, written in the 10-11th century.² The narrative is fictional, or fictionalised, but it seems to contain a core of genuine historical information from the period. A few historical texts from Brittany from 816 onwards mention property belonging to the abbey of St Mewan.³ St Mewan is commemorated on 21 June.

The “Life” tells us that he was nobly born in Wales, and known as “Conaidus Mevennus”. Both these names are Welsh. With his relative St Samson he travelled to Brittany, where he founded a monastery at Gaël, the ancestor of the modern abbey of St Méen le Grand. Reference is made to the then Duke of Brittany, St Judicaël. The latter’s brother Haelonus violated the sanctuary and carried off a fugitive from the abbey, but St Mewan invoked the aid of God and the offender died soon after. After various miracles, he made a pilgrimage to Rome. On his return he stopped off in Angers, where he was persuaded to deal with a dragon plaguing the area. This he did, and reluctantly accepted an estate in the area. He built a second monastery there, which was named “Monopalium” and whose location is not quite certain. But he spent most of his time at Gaël. In his old age he was waited on by his godson St. Austol (or St Austell), who died seven days after him, and was buried in the same tomb with St Mewan.

The “Life” is preserved in full in a single late manuscript, in fact of the 16th century, Paris BNF lat. 9889, which also contains Lives of other Welsh saints. The “Life” of St Mewan is on fols. 109v-121r. Unfortunately this is not online. But the Latin text was printed from it by F. Plaine in 1889.⁴ Some other manuscripts contain an abbreviated version of the text.⁵

The work was studied by Gilbert Doble who devoted a volume of his “Cornish Saints” series to St Mewan and St Austol.⁶ The village of St Mewan in Cornwall is just outside the town of St Austell, where my grandfather had a farm in the early 20th century. But today the reference edition is the thesis of Ch. Poulain, which unfortunately I have been unable to consult.⁷ I believe that Dr Poulain has also produced a translation into French and into Breton, but this too has been inaccessible.

The draft translation in this file was made from the Plaine edition. To the best of my knowledge it is the only translation into English. A copy of Plaine’s Latin text is appended. His footnotes have in the main been incorporated into the English translation.

The BHL entry for St Mewan confuses him with St Majan or S. Maianus, one of the saints of

² A.-Y. Bourguès, “Le dossier littéraire des saints Judicaël, Méen et Léri” in: L. Lemoine, B. Merdrignac, *Corona Monastica: Moines bretons de Landévennec : histoire et mémoire celtiques*. Rennes (2004), 83-92.

³ A. Le Huërou, “De quand date la Vita S. Meuenni (BHL 5944)?”, *Britannia Monastica*, 2013, Mélanges offert au professeur Bernard Merdrignac, 17. halshs-01343276.

⁴ François Plaine, “Vita S. Mevenni,” *Analecta Bollandiana* 3 (1884), 141-158.

⁵ Listed by Le Huërou.

⁶ G. H. Doble, “Saint Mewan and Saint Austol,” in: *The Saints of Cornwall*, vol. 5: Saints of Mid-Cornwall (1970), 35-58.

⁷ Ch. Poulain, *Ms. B.N., lat. 9889. Obituaire de Saint-Méen. Vie de saint Méen, abbé et confesseur*. Mémoire de maîtrise d’histoire sous la direction de B. Merdrignac. Rennes:Université de Haute Bretagne (1995). Diss.

Languedoc. Two texts of that saint are therefore listed under St Mewan, BHL 5945 and BHL 5946. This confusion was made by F. Plaine, and is corrected in the 2001 issue of *Analecta Bollandiana*.⁸

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16th March 2024

⁸ J.-L. Lemaitre, "Majan et Méen: Remarques sur BHL 5944-46", *Analecta Bollandiana* 119 (2001), 339-343.

Translation

1. When the world was still enveloped in the erroneous darkness of corrupt paganism, and the image of God, seeming more like a creature than the Creator, was everywhere enslaved, namely worshipping idols, the almighty Father, no longer accepting the destruction of His own creation, put on the flesh of our frailty, which He did not hesitate to hand over to death for our redemption. So He illuminated His church by His saving advent, and cleansed it from the filth of long-established paganism through His ineffable love of mercy and His precious blood. When the ancient enemy beheld it shining with such brightness, grieving to lose justly what he had unjustly acquired, he brought forth every scheme of malice and strove to do away with the servants of God through various kinds of death. So he affixed some of them to closely-packed gallows, he killed others with hunger, he burned others alive with fire, and he tortured others with unspeakable torments. But the more his cruelty flared up, the more the increasing number of saints filled the earth. But when after so many inimical storms it pleased Almighty God that a clear day should dawn upon the church, the darts of the enemy having been repulsed, and that men distinguished by the light of faith should spring forth throughout the world, who, imitating the footsteps of Christ, would not hesitate to deliver themselves up to death.

2. Indeed among the fellowship of those protected by the shield of faith, as if radiating light, Conaidus Mewan⁹ shone forth. He was nobly born in overseas lands, and by the grace of the Lord, he exhibited a blameless childhood. He came from the district of Eryng¹⁰ in the district of Gwent, born of a father named Gerascenus. From the same district came the mother of St. Samson. From his early years, he surpassed the norms of childhood, and, with the growth of his body, his understanding also increased remarkably.¹¹ Then when he reached the peak of adolescence, he did not get involved in the useless pleasures of sensuality, but rather, as if already an old man in his heart, he continuously wore down the thresholds of the holy church. Accordingly, devoted to liberal studies, he quickly rose to such wisdom that he surpassed the most flourishing talents of many. He did not indulge in worldly pleasures, as is usual for in the age of youth, but seasoning his human understanding with salt, he constantly devoted himself to divine prayers. He thus possessed wise eloquence, modesty of mind, cheerfulness of countenance, prudence of heart, simplicity of mind, remarkable abstinence, humility above all. He therefore ascended to such a height of sanctity that, abandoning the pursuit of letters, he sustained poor pilgrims from his own possessions and cared for needy wanderers by bringing them into his home. And so, in order that he might be more fully supported on the wings¹² of both loves, as it is written in the Gospel¹³ he abandoned earthly things so that he might obtain heavenly ones. For he preferred voluntary poverty in this world to losing the reward of the saints in heaven.

⁹ Plaine: "These two names seem to refer to the region of Wales: Conaidus or Conanus is the same as 'Cynan.' Mevennus is the same as 'Marvan,' mentioned frequently in Welsh genealogies."

¹⁰ Lit. "Orcheus pagus". This was opaque to Plaine, but Doble identifies this with Eryng, a Welsh kingdom of the 5-7th century, in southern Herefordshire.

¹¹ Lit. "with a remarkable understanding."

¹² Is. 40:31.

¹³ Mt. 6:19.

3. For at that time the blessed Samson was the lord and master of all the faithful of that region, and the lives of others were directed by his command. Therefore, when he himself, as the principal master, left his parents and all his possessions behind, and travelled to Letavia, that is, Lesser Britain,¹⁴ the aforementioned servant of God was joined to his company. For he was a relative, not only by family, but also through being a neighbour and by affection. So, inflamed by a united love, the servants of God sought exile, so that as exiles they might be afflicted by greater hardships than those at home. They sought Letavia most of all, because it was either deserted and therefore they would live there more laboriously, or because at that time it was considered harsher through the savagery of its peoples than other regions.

4. Indeed, the favoured servants of God, that is to say, St Samson and Conaidus Mewan, crossing the sea with their monks successfully, as we have said, landed successfully in the area of Letavia. On their arrival, the country, shining with greater brightness, was glad, and once the cults of demons to which it was subject had been driven out, it rejoiced to receive the missing light. At any rate groups of both sexes flocked to their preaching, and once they had heard the word of God they returned to their homes. Then, when they were traveling through the country and flourishing with divine power so much as to bring help to all who were sick, a certain man, named Privatus, on meeting them, anxiously spoke to them about the health of his wife and daughter. One of them, the wife, was clearly a leper, and the other was afflicted with a demonic disorder. So the most holy men relieved them both by the most pious prayers, and restored them to their former health.

5. Therefore the entire populace, experiencing great joy, praised the Lord and duly gave their deserved thanks to the most holy men. Having accomplished very many other good deeds, they began to seek a place where they could serve the Lord. For, having been devoted in their prayers, they obtained from God that He would show them some delightful place, suitable for their needs. In fact, surrounded by marshy land, abundant in fish, it had moreover a rich abundance of small streams and living springs.¹⁵ Furthermore, the presence of the sea, not far distant, partly by marine trade and partly by the abundance of all kinds of fish, tends to enrich the inhabitants excessively. Its name, so they say, from a certain event is called Dol.¹⁶ Then these servants of God built a monastery on a prominent place of this island, and instructing all the locals in the way of truth, they brought them back to the Lord through the power of preaching. Later, however, there were losses there from the devil and gains to the Lord. Guests were received there, alms were given, strangers were sustained, and hearts were gladdened, so that also every kind of piety, assisting everyone, was maintained in all respects in all things.

6. However, when the aforementioned father Samson, along with his servants, was diligently building his basilica, thinking it best [to turn] to Count Guéroc¹⁷ to get assistance, he decided to send the blessed Conaidus to him. For he, above the rest, overflowing with great gifts of virtue, was remarkable for his abundant eloquence and learning. Therefore, seizing upon the journey as a servant of God, on a certain day, as evening fell, when he sought lodging in the region called

¹⁴ Brittany.

¹⁵ Plaine: "Things are the same in our day; the Dol region is marshy, but otherwise rich and fertile in crops."

¹⁶ Dol-de-Bretagne, from the Welsh "*dôl*" ("meadow"). It is about 5kms from the sea.

¹⁷ It seems that we are talking about Gueroc, or Waroch, the first count of the Veneti Gauls in Brittany (520-554?).

Transylva,¹⁸ in the village of Placatus, behold, there appeared before him a certain charitable man named Caduonus, whose charity was so overflowing that he himself wandered daily through the streets, seeking people to have as guests in the name of Christ. For he was not a deaf listener to the Gospel in which it is said: "What you did for one of the least of these, you did for me."¹⁹ And elsewhere, "All who come as guests are to be received as Christ."²⁰ And furthermore: "Let us do good to all, but especially to those who are of the household of faith."²¹ Therefore the aforesaid Caduonus, burning with the fire of this love, walked every day as far as the river Modon²² in order that he might deserve to receive God as his guest. When he recognized the blessed Conaidus as seeking lodging, he gladly received him, saying, "I give thanks to almighty God, who deigns always and now to visit me through his servants. If indeed," he said, "I have found favour in your eyes, my lord, turn aside with me to lodge this night. For I have plenty of straw and hay, and my house is spacious for dwelling." On hearing this, the blessed Mewan, giving thanks to God, accepted the hospitality and spent that night in the manner of monks.

7. The gracious host, indeed, giving a grand feast, exhibited charitable love to the servant of God. Therefore, on that night, led into the praises of God and speaking divine words to each other, the servant of God Caduonus, greatly captivated by the love of St. Conaidus, said: "I implore you, most pious servant of God, to dwell with us in these places, so that through you we may be able to be improved. For I have here broad and spacious land, deserted also, and suitable for divine worship, which I pray you to inhabit with me while I am alive, and, after my decease, thereafter to remain forever as my heir."²³ For I lack earthly heirs, and I long to obtain heavenly ones; and since indeed the Holy Spirit has led you here, I offer you this wider inheritance, that supported by your prayers, I may earn the right to go to heaven with you." Upon hearing this, St. Conaidus, not swayed by greed but full of love for the blessed man, accepted the donation, and, offering appropriate thanks to God, he briskly persevered on the journey that he had begun. Then the aforesaid count, receiving St. Mewan with honour, commended himself to his prayers, and having given him as many gifts as possible, dismissed him. Then when Saint Conaidus had returned to the aforementioned estate, the blessed Caduonus, desiring to commend himself to his prayers, said: "Wander and roam around this land, servant of God, everywhere, and see its extent, and having seen, you will consider it the more valuable. So take possession of this side of the river Modon and beyond it, and hold it in perpetuity; and so that you may claim the donation more assuredly, the small piece of land that I give you is called Transfosa." When this was completed, the servants of God entered into a perpetual covenant, and the blessed Caduonus entrusted himself entirely to the prayers of the servant of God. Then Conaidus Mewan returned to the place called Dol, and reported to St Samson all that had happened to him in an orderly way; who likewise, thanking the Lord for his deserved merits, judged the benevolent count worthy of a blessing, and blessed the servant of God Caduonus for his generous gift.

8. Shortly thereafter, the aforementioned Conaidus Mewan, preferring a more solitary life, by the

¹⁸ Plaine: In French: *Trécouët*.

¹⁹ Mt. 25:40.

²⁰ Regula S. Benedicti, cap. 53.

²¹ Gal. 6:10.

²² French: "Le Meu," a stream which flows into the Vilaine river.

²³ The monks who composed this life no doubt had their own property rights in mind.

advice of St Samson, sought permission from everyone and having received their blessing returned happily to the aforementioned estate. And since he was attached to the blessed Samson not only because he was family, but also because of his most fervent love and affection, he was encouraged by many prayers to return to him quite often. And because he recognized that he was a man of superior character, and enlightened by the grace of God, seeing him already shining with heavenly light and faithfully wanting to serve the Lord: "Depart," he said, "my brother, with God's blessing, and may the Lord, in whose presence we always stand, send His angel with you, and direct your works along the way, according to His will." To this, after giving him all that was necessary, and praying that he and his servants would prosper, he instructed them to serve the Lord all the days of their lives: "You are my family," he said again, "and you are my brothers; you belong to the Lord: may you always be attached to the Lord from the heart. Have peace among those at variance and humility among the proud. For nothing is more acceptable to God than peace, of which He Himself said: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'"²⁴

9. So, with the pastoral blessing and the permission of the brothers, the peace-loving Conaidus then set out. On his return, the aforementioned Caduonus, greatly rejoicing, praised the Lord and worked diligently to assist him in building cells and everything necessary with all kinds of resources. Indeed the place was deserted and only wild animals lived there. Then, one day, when he was looking for a suitable place for the basilica in the same forest, and found it overflowing with water reserved for all the rest, trusting in the Lord he obtained through his prayers that, in suitable places marked by the tip of his staff, a most vigorous spring would gush forth, from the waters of which not only men would be healed sometimes by virtue of their faith, but also animals would be cured of various kinds of sickness.²⁵ So from that event the inhabitants of that place gave him the name "Albus",²⁶ because thereafter they were found worthy to receive a healthy colour from there. Astonished by the novelty of this miracle, the entire population, converging from all sides, humbly brought their sick to him; some of whom were released from demons, while others were cured of various illnesses, and returned with the salvation of their souls. For wherever the saint was present, the grace of health/salvation abounded.

10. Moreover, as we have already said, he had found a suitable place. First, he began to build cells and small cottages, where it would be possible for the first time to live according to the rule of monks. Then, having surveyed all the surrounding areas, he chose a place more open than the others, where he consecrated an oratory to the Lord in honour of St. John the Baptist. There, devoting himself for several days to vigils and prayer, he offered a sacrifice of praise, namely himself, to the Lord. Then, once the fame of such a great father was heard throughout every province of the region, noble men and women brought their sons from all sides to the service of God to the most holy man. Indeed, as the number of disciples increased, he built a larger monastery, where he taught the regular life of monks to many people, and being a most devout father, he gathered them as sons. However the servants of God laboured obediently and afterwards their material possessions increased so much that, with the Lord rewarding them now, they obtained not only

²⁴ Mt. 5:9.

²⁵ Plaine: That fountain still exists near the chapel erected in honour of St. Mewan.

²⁶ This means "White", but also "Fair", i.e. "Health." Plaine: Today this name has been abolished and it is now known as Fontaine-St-Méen.

support for their bodies, but also profit for their souls from their generous almsgiving. Moreover, resolutely driving away idleness, the enemy of the soul, they raised themselves against themselves, abounding in the gifts of the virtues, and diligently carried the cross of the Lord. For they preferred to be tormented by hardships than to burn perpetually in the flames of hell. In short, although they flourished in virtues and were enriched by an abundance of goods, none of them yielded to the allurements of pleasure, but fixing their minds' sight entirely on the Lord, they considered present blessings as if behind them, but always placed future blessings before them. Therefore they eagerly endured the yoke of Christ, which is exceedingly pleasant to the faithful, and, compensating with a willing heart, bore its exceedingly light burden.

11. Indeed, the servants of God flourished by the increase of so many blessings, until Judicael himself, the leader of the Bretons, as will be explained later,²⁷ commended himself to their prayers and afterwards became one of their monks. He also brought a great quantity of gold and silver for the work of the monastery, and supplied much to adorn it. And with the advice of St. Mewan, he built many monasteries throughout his own country, and repaired those which were abandoned. He also fed the poor; he administered justice to the people with discernment; and diligently improved the divine worship in the church. Therefore Conaidus, a true worshiper of God, always tending to the better, did not want to go to his country alone; but he strove to invite others with him from wherever he could, according to what is written, "Let him who hears say, 'Come!'"²⁸

12. And since we have touched upon something of his life, honesty, and behaviour, let us now speak of his miracles, preserving the truth. Therefore, among other things, we consider a significant miracle that should be remembered, that God wanted to be made known through him. Now the most pious ruler Judicael had a brother, named Haelonus, who lived near the holy monastery. Although of the same flesh and blood, he did not in any way share his brother's virtues. His cruelty overflowed into such brutality that, for a minor offense, he cast one of his servants into prison, to be condemned to death as soon as possible. While he, stuck in a dark pit, was distressed by the cruel bondage of chains, the aforementioned Conaidus, overheard him by chance while visiting a certain cell of a brother. Indeed, the most pious disciple of God, with a compassionate heart, when he knew the misery of the suffering wretch, put aside his fear and began humbly to petition Count Haelonus on behalf of the wretched man. But he, irreverently rejecting the presence of such a father, considered his petitions as nothing, and arrogantly dismissed him. When therefore the blessed Conaidus saw that the impious man was not swayed either by gifts or prayers, he turned to He who scorns no-one who trusts in Him. Indeed, burning with the ardour of charity, he was tormenting himself with fastings and prayers for the wretched man, that God, the restorer of all, would deliver the wretched man from so much anguish. So as the saint continued in prayer, the fetters broke and the doors opened, and at once the prisoner was freed, and fleeing to the monastery, he prostrated himself at the saint's feet. He gave thanks to the Lord and to his faithful servant.

13. Then, when the cruel Haelonus learned of the flight of the wretched man, he urged his servants to pursue the fugitive as quickly as possible, and ordered him to be confined again. While they were searching for the fugitive at the saint's house, showing great reverence to the father, they said, "Our

²⁷ No such explanation is found in the text, however.

²⁸ Rev. 22:17.

Lord, a man hot with indignation, has commanded us to pursue this prisoner, and to bring him back to him when caught." Hearing this, the servant of God confined the wretched man in the oratory, saying, "According to the testimony of what is written,²⁹ it is not lawful to forcibly remove anyone from a church, even if he is deserving of a capital punishment. Therefore, let it be confirmed by the examination of a trial whether he was unjustly confined." Then, when the servants returned, the furious Haelonus met them and they reported to him how they had acted. Enraged by their words, he said, "Let us go to the monastery, and take our fugitive from it." Then, filled with pride, defying the saint with insults, he violently broke into the monastery, smashed the doors, and wretchedly dragged the miserable captive out of there. Accordingly, despairing of the struggle and of petitions to men, the saint turned to divine assistance. After finishing his prayer, he announced that Haelonus would die after three days. Then the arrogant invader, while withdrawing with puffed-up disdain, boasting with pride of his deed, was immediately struck by divine vengeance. For while the savage man, urging on his horse with spurs, was riding swiftly on the wide road, it fell down immediately by the vengeance of God, his thigh was broken, and he was deprived of the function of the rest of his limbs. Soon, led by penitence, he humbly asked with tears to return the fugitive to the saint, and to earnestly pray that he would come to visit him. When the matter was at length known, the blessed Conaidus, moved by mercy, offered a prayer for him and did not refuse him to come and visit him. Then, having made his confession and received absolution, he received the viaticum of the Lord's body, and after three days, as the saint had foretold, he died. Let tyrants, invaders of churches, hear this and fear, and let them refrain from inflicting disgrace upon the just. For, as St. Gregory says, fear must be shown to holy men, because they are the temples of God, and He who is not lacking in strength to inflict punishment is truly present in their hearts.³⁰ Then the servants rebuilt the oratory that he had damaged, and from their possessions, they offered considerable gifts for the construction of the monastery. Many, on hearing of this vengeance, feared God more thoroughly, and afterwards they did not dare to invade the church's property, and they even hastened to restore what they had invaded. So the correction and condemnation of one wicked man was advantageous in many ways, through which many, who were until then scoffers, came to know more fully the power of the Lord, afterwards feared and glorified the God who gave such power to men.

14. It also seems that it must be remembered that another miracle was similarly wrought recently by the faithful Lord. For while at harvest time, the deer and other wild beasts were destroying the crops of the servants of God, having broken through the hedges, not only by eating the crops but also by trampling them down every day, the servants returned to the blessed Conaidus and reported the following: "We labour in vain, Lord Father, because we cannot protect the crops. For, having formed a herd, the deer and the wild boar,³¹ rushing in at all hours, are leaping over the fences of the monastery, and whatever we sow, they consume with a hungry mouth. Night-watchmen and cunning net-traps should be arranged in a circle, so that we may be able to save the fruit of our labour." When he heard this, the blessed servant of God, motivated by charitable love, said, "Do not, my children, do not be sad, seeing the judgment of God. As it pleased the Lord, so it happened:

²⁹ Plaine: Cf. the first canon of the first council of Orleans (511). Mansi, tom. VIII, p. 350.

³⁰ Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, book 2, ch. 31.

³¹ The Latin is "aprorum", but this must be a misreading for "apros". Possibly the final "os" has been misread as the abbreviation for "orum"?

let it be so. For He Himself will provide protection for his servants, just as he wills; they will be protected as he pleases. Therefore trust in the Lord completely, and do good, He who will also provide us with the necessities of both kinds.³² For he who gives life to the body, knows better how it should be protected." And so, amid the quiet grumbling of the servants, very early in the morning the wise father, having finished his prayers, armed with the sign of the Holy Trinity, went out to see how his crops were being ravaged. Finding them heavily damaged, and finding groups of wild beasts of all kinds on every side, he stood up, and trusting in the Lord, he humbly said, "In the name of the Lord, whom all things obey, whose creation you are, I command you to withdraw from here from now on, and do not dare to nullify the labours of the monks any longer, but now arrange to seek out instead your predestined food in the wilderness." At these words, the beasts, as if obeying a command, immediately fled and returned to their habitations, wandering through the wilderness as usual. Moreover, they abandoned the crops of the monks after that, as if they were surrounded by a circuit of iron walls.

15. For so the Lord was willing to bind the jaws of the wild beasts with his muzzle and bridle, who sometimes permits men who are not coming near him to each go astray through crooked paths as well as to end their lives. For God, the ruler of all, who desires that every man shall be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, sometimes shows by means of unreasonable creatures how he should be feared by men. For God had entrusted all created things to the judgement of man, before he sinned, so that, being the master and lord of all things, he should rule over all. For he whom he had created in his image, he was appointing to be lord over all and better than all. But because, listening to diabolical deceptions instead, he despised the commandments of the Lord, when he wanted to exalt himself by himself, he fell away from that high position to a great extent. For he who was entirely good, having been made by a good maker, began to be almost entirely evil, through diabolical suggestion. Indeed, with the head corrupted, all created things immediately appeared corrupted. For the horrid wrath of wolves broke out to ravage the lambs, and the violence of lions flared up against the less strong. Indeed not only did they afterwards endeavour to destroy the labours of man, but also to injure men themselves, and even to kill some of them. Man by himself would have had no further benefit of virtue, except that the incarnate Creator himself had descended with him, having become God and man. Through whose overflowing grace man is so restored to faithfulness that all created things are also forced to obey his commands. But so that we don't seem to make too long a digression, let us return to the story.

16. Not long after this time had passed, the aforementioned servant of God, always striving for the better, went to Rome, so that he would deserve the help of the prayers of the apostles. Then, as he was returning through the city of Angers, and all the evidence of his good example was inspiring everyone, as his fame spread, all the inhabitants, not only of the city, but also all the country folk from every nearby area, quickly came to him. Indeed, with a remarkable love, they longed to approach the presence of such a great father. Therefore, hearing his most holy teachings, they implored him earnestly to stay there even for a few days and teach them the way of truth. Of course he agreed to their requests, and stayed there, and avoiding the contamination of every kind of disease, he endeavoured to restore everyone to health. When a certain holy woman, residing in the

³² I.e. of body and soul.

aforementioned city, saw this, she prostrated herself at the feet of the saint and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, whose doctrine you proclaim, O man of God, help me, your handmaiden. For I have a estate, suitable and fitting for dwelling in, which I have forsaken because of the terror of a serpent of remarkable size. This not only suffocates humans with its fire-vomited gas and stench but also burns up every animal with its venomous stings." Hearing this, the servant of God was moved by charitable love and inquired where that estate was located. The holy woman said, "Between S. Florent-le-Vieux, and Clermont, within the diocese of Nantes." So the blessed disciple of God, rising early in the morning, having accepted guides, proceeded to the place where the aforesaid serpent, a terrible monster, lay; but the frightened guides, staying well back, with uplifted hands carefully pointed out where they hoped it would be. Then the man of the Lord, going forward fearlessly, approached the serpent. Trusting in the Lord, he boldly attacked it. For he put his stole³³ around its neck, and, tying it to a curved stick, dragging it after him like a domestic dog, he cast it into the river Loire in the name of Jesus Christ, saying, "Never again shall you harm people, nor shall you be able to inflict harm on anyone by burning from now on." And so, by the power of the Lord, the great serpent was cast out, and the blessed servant of God was received with honour and merit.

17. Then all the people, coming from every place, hastened to meet the holy man, and praising the Lord, asked him for forgiveness with prayers and vows. Then they presented many gifts to him, all of which the faithful steward distributed to the poor. Many, however, inflamed with divine fervour, began to earnestly implore him to accept some of their lands, and that he would not refuse to live among them as long as he lived. The nun especially, whose estate he had freed from the aforementioned serpent, asked more eagerly than the others, that he would accept that piece of land and establish a church on it. And when she could not otherwise persuade him to this, she prayed him to receive this as the price of the stole, which he had lost on the neck of the serpent. The servant of God, led by the flood of prayers, received the land, with God's consent, and built an oratory, and small houses for dwelling, upon it; whence afterwards it received the name of "Monopalium", as the inhabitants referred to it, to whom it became known through tradition.³⁴

18. And at that place the blessed servant of God became famous with virtues and miracles, and he brought crowds of the weak, and invalids, to their former health. However he stayed more frequently in the former monastery. Yet he diligently tended both sheepfolds, so that, having driven out the snares of the wolves, the flock of monks always peacefully increased. But when he was present with one in body, he was not absent from the others in mind. For in the same way the shepherd guarded his sheep so that they would not be secretly snatched away from him by the ancient wolf. Therefore, without any interval of time, he persevered in prayer, and he laboured faithfully so that gains would accrue to the souls entrusted to the Lord. What else? And so he showed such a degree of vigilance towards underlings as no one could adequately explain by the office of the voice or the plectrum of the tongue. He showed himself humbler and lesser than

³³ In Ducange's lexicon this passage is the unique source for this otherwise unknown Latin word, "monopalium."

³⁴ The location of the new priory seems uncertain. Plaine suggests the priory of Saint-Méen du Cellier; Grandet the abbey of Saint-Florent de Saumur. Ogden notes that the otherwise unknown Latin word "monopalium" is perhaps used in order to furnish a reason for this strange name.

everyone else on earth, and on that account he shone brilliantly, like most famous chalcedony,³⁵ in the Jerusalem of the heavenly kingdom.

19. And since we have mentioned some aspects of his life and miracles as best we could, let us auspiciously address how he departed from this world. Indeed, he foresaw his own death long before, and as it approached, he made sure to fortify himself on all sides with heavenly instructions. Now when, already old and full of days, sitting in the monastery he had previously founded, he felt some infirmity, he called the brothers together, and openly declared the disintegration of his own body, and he made clear with charitable words what they ought to do, and how they should fight harder against the machinations of the ancient serpent. After he had imparted these and similar things to all those entrusted to him, he suddenly began to be deprived of the strength of his body. On seeing this, a certain priest named Austol, his godson, who served him humbly in the monastery, struck with compassionate grief, said, "Father, to whom do you leave me, your forsaken servant? Into whose hands will you leave your godson for protection? Who will protect the weak sheep from the jaws of wolves when the shepherd is taken away? For it would have been better for me to have been buried by your hands before you departed and returned to your God with your most pious prayers, whom you have taught the true doctrine with the sweetest teachings." To whom his very affectionate godfather, responding with friendly voice, said while shedding tears, "Work, my beloved godson, and diligently fulfil the duty entrusted to you; for, by the mercy of God, after the course of seven days you will join me in the glory of the heavenly life. Indeed, the fervour of mutual charity is by no means dissolved; but as much as love has prevailed thus far, so it will always prevail, and even more." Then, after the father said these things to all those listening, with God guiding the hour of time, he blessedly departed to heaven on June 21.³⁶ As he departed, the angels rejoiced and the saints exulted before God; but the mournful and sorrowful congregation of the monks and the assembly of the whole population, stood moved with exceeding sorrow. For the heavenly hosts accompanied him eagerly to the kingdom, but the earthly crowd followed him, weeping and wailing, to the tomb. For at the passing of such a father, joy filled those above, but exceeding sorrow filled those below.

20. The aforementioned Austol, obedient to the advice of the most holy father, as he had been commanded, ministered faithfully to all his brethren in obedience. For he zealously rendered service to God and men, and scorning the imminence of death, he ardently thirsted for the kingdoms of heaven. Indeed, having completed the little course of seven days, just as his godfather had told, he received the reward which God has promised to his faithful. For on the seventh day, which is the 28 June³⁷, after celebrating mass, he went alone³⁷ to the church as he was accustomed to, and there, unknown to the others, having already completed his fast three days before, falling asleep peacefully, he died. Later, when the brothers arrived, they found him already dead, but his body was still warm. Immediately remembering their mutual devotion, they therefore went to see the tomb of St. Mewan. Finding the fragrant jewel of his body lying on the right-hand side above the left, and believing that this was entirely from God, they admirably buried the blessed godson with the blessed godfather. It was therefore obvious through the dead bones how great was his love and

³⁵ A precious stone.

³⁶ Lit. "the eleventh day before the Kalends of July."

³⁷ Lit. "fourth of the Kalends of July".

the charity which covers a multitude of sins. On earth indeed these caused him difficulties,³⁸ but it is revealed that there is a reward for these in heaven, through that shepherd who is trusted to preside over the shepherds, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

³⁸ Forced to paraphrase. Lit. "For which indeed on earth there was a cause of struggling."

Latin Text

1. Cum adhuc mundus pravae gentilitatis erroneis tenebris involveretur et imago Dei similis potius creaturae quam Creatori, videlicet idola colens, passim famularetur, omnipotens Pater, non diutius suam perire facturam ferens, carnem nostrae fragilitatis induit; quam pro nostra redemptione morti tradere non dubitavit. Ecclesiam ergo suam salutari illustravit adventu et ab squalore vetustae gentilitatis inenarrabili pietatis amore pretioso sanguine tersit. Quam cum veteris hostis tanta claritate fulgentem inspiceret, dolens amittere juste quod injuste acquisierat, omne machinamentum malitiae protulit et famulos Dei diversis mortium generibus interimere certavit. Quorum itaque nonnullos crebris affixit patibulis, alios fame peremit, alios ignibus percremavit, alios inenarrabilibus tormentorum poenis excruciauit. Sed quo amplius ejus crudelitas exarsit, eo amplius sanctorum numerus crescens orbem terrarum implevit. Cum autem post tot turbines inimici, placuit omnipotenti Deo ut Ecclesiae serenus illucesceret dies, repulsis inimici jaculationibus, per omnem mundum exiliere viri luce fidei insignes; qui Christi imitantes vestigia seipsos morti tradere non dubitarent.

2. Intra quorum equidem consortium, clypeo fidei protectus, velut radians lux Conaidus effulsit Mevennus. Qui transmarinis locis nobiliter natus, Domini concedente gratia immaculatam demonstravit infantiam. Orcheus autem pagus in Guenta provincia hunc protulit, terris generatum patre nomine Gerasceno. Ex qua eadem provincia sancti Sansonis mater exitit nata. Qui primum in puerilibus annis puerilia jura transcendit, et cum corporis quantitate miro sensus intellectu simul excrevit. Cum jam porro in adolescentiae coalesceret apice, non infructuosis lasciviae voluptatibus adhaerebat, sed quasi jam senex animo, sanctae ecclesiae limina assidue terebat. Traditus siquidem liberalibus studiis, ad tantam sapientiam breviter effertur ut multorum florentissima superaret ingenia. Nequaquam mundanis oblectamentis, sicuti puerilis solet aetas, insistebat, sed humanum sensum sale condiens, divinis orationibus assidue vacabat. Inerat itaque ei sapiens facundia, modestia mentis, vultus hilaritas, prudentia cordis, mentis simplicitas, mira abstinentia, humilitas super omnia. Ad tantum igitur sanctitatis culmen ascendit ut, postpositis litterarum studiis, pauperes peregrinos ex propriis substantiis sustentaret et egenos vagosque domum introducens curaret. Et ut utriusque caritatis alis plenius fulciretur, sicut in Evangelio habetur, terrena deseruit, quatinus coelestia valeret adipisci. Maluit enim spontaneam paupertatem in seculo, quam amittere remunerationem sanctorum in coelo.

3. Illo siquidem tempore beatus Sanson cunctorum illius regionis fidelium dominus et magister erat, et ad illius nutum ceterorum vita tendebat. Dum ipse igitur capitalis magister, postpositis parentibus omnisque substantiae copiis, Letaviam, id est Minorem Britanniam, petierit, praedictus Dei famulus ejus contuberniis adjunctus est. Inerat namque propinquus non solum genere sed etiam vicinio et caritate. Uno igitur amore succensi famuli Dei, exilium petierunt, ut a propriis exules majoribus angustiis angerentur. Letaviam maxime cupientes quaesierunt, vel quia deserta erat et ideo ibi laboriosius viverent, vel gentium feritate crudelior ceteris regionibus tunc temporis haberetur.

4. Praelibati siquidem Dei famuli, videlicet sanctus Sanson et Conaidus Mevennus, cum suis monachis mare prospere transeuntes, sicuti diximus, Letaviae partibus feliciter applicuerunt. Quorum adventu majori claritate fulgens patria laetatur, daemonumque cultibus, quibus subdita

erat, expulsis, amissum gaudet recipere lumen. Ad eorum utique praedicationem utriusque sexus agmina confluebant, verbique divini percepto semine ad propria remeabant. Cum jam denique patriam peragrantes divina virtute adeo florerent ut cunctis languentibus opem ferrent, quidam vir, Privatus nomine, illis occurrens, uxoris et filiae sanitatem diligenter exquirebat. Quarum una, uxor videlicet, leprosa, altera daemoniaco laborabat incommodo. Utrasque igitur sanctissimi viri piissimis orationibus relevatas pristinae sanitati reddiderunt.

5. Omnis itaque populus gaudium magnum exercens, Dominum collaudabat meritasque grates sanctissimis viris merito referebat. Patratis quoque aliis quampluribus bonis, locum ubi Domini servitium facerent quaerere coeperunt. Dediti siquidem orationibus impetraverunt ut quamdam delectabilem villam eis ostenderet Deus, eorum necessitatibus opportunam. Palustri namque territorio circumdata, piscibus affatim, ceterum rivulis et fontibus vivis excellentissima pollet. Ad hoc maris essentia, non longe distans, partim navigio partim omnimodorum piscium copiis, incolas hujus nimium ditare solet. Cujus nomen, ut aiunt, a quodam eventu Dolis dicitur. Hi hujus autem insulse eminentiori loco monasterium fecerunt famuli Dei, et indigenas omnes viam veritatis edocentes, per potentiam praedicationis Domino reddiderunt. Postea vero ibi diabolo detrimenta, Domino lucre fiebant. Hospites ibi recipiebantur, eleemosynae dabantur, peregrini sustentabantur, mentes etiam laetificabantur, quin etiam omnimoda pietas, omnibus subveniens, omnia in omnibus habebatur.

6. Cum autem praedictus pater Sanson, cum suis famulis, attentius suam basilicam erigeret, optimum esse ratus [recurrere]³⁹ ad Guerocum comitem, ut ad hoc sibi auxilium ferret, beatum Conaidum transmittersse decrevit. Ipse enim prae ceteris magnis virtutum donis exuberans, affluentis eloquentiae doctrina insignis erat. Arrepto siquidem itinere Dei famulus, cum quadam die, jam vespere facto, in pago Placato, qui Transylva dicebatur, hospitium quaerere vellet, ecce illi occurrens quidam vir caritativus, nomine Caduonus, cujus caritas tanto redundabat ut ipse quotidie per vias discurrendo, quaereret tales quos pro Christi nomine haberet hospites. Non enim surdus auditor Evangelii erat in quo : "Quod uni ex minimis meis fecistis, mihi fecistis". Et alibi, omnes supervenientes hospites tanquam Christus suscipiendi sunt. Et amplius: "Operemur bonum ad omnes, sed maxime ad domesticos fidei". Hujus igitur amoris igne succensus praedictus Gaduonus, usque ad Modonem fluvium quotidie deambulabat, ut Deum hospitem mereretur accipere. Qui cum beatum Conaidum hospitari quaerentem agnoverit, libenter eum recepit, dicens: "Gratias omnipotenti Deo refero, qui semper et nunc per servos suos me visitare dignatur. Si equidem," inquit, "inveni gratiam in oculis tuis, domine mi, declina mecum hac nocte hospitatum. Palearum quippe et feni plurimum habeo et est mihi spatiosa domus ad manendum." Quo audito, beatus Mevensus Deo gratias agens, hospitium recepit atque monachorum more illa nocte se habuit.

7. Benignus siquidem hospes, grande convivium faciens, caritativum amorem famulo Dei exhibuit. Nocte igitur illa in Dei laudibus ducta divinisque sermonibus ad invicem prolatis, famulus Dei Caduonus amore sancti Conaidi valde captus, ait: "Obsecro, piissime famule Dei, ut in istis locis nobiscum habites, quatinus per te meliorari valeamus. Habeo enim hic latam terram et spatiosam, desertam quoque et divino cultui aptam, quam mecum me vivente precor inhabites, et post meum decessum inde mihi heres perpetualiter existas. Carnalibus equidem heredibus careo, coelestes adipisci desidero; et quoniam quidem te Spiritus sanctus huc advexit, hanc largior tibi hereditatem,

³⁹ vox suppleta ad sensum faciendum.

ut, tuis orationibus fultus, tecum habere merear coelestem." Quo audito sanctus Conaidus, non tamen cupidine captus, sed amore beati viri succensus, donationem accepit, meritasque grates Deo referens coeptam viam alacriter tenuit. Praedictus autem comes sanctum Mevennum honorabiliter suscipiens, suis se orationibus commendavit, donisque quamplurimis datis eum dimisit. Regresso siquidem ad praedictum fundum sancto Conaido, beatus Caduonus volens se ejus precibus commendare, dixit: "Perambula et gyra circa istam terram, famule Dei, passim, et illius quantum⁴⁰ videas, visamque pretiosiore habere. Cis enim fluvium Modonem et ultra eam posside, jureque perpetuo tene; et ut certius donationem agnoscas, terrula quam tibi do Transfosa nominatur." Quo peracto, perpetuum pepigere foedus famuli Dei, totumque se beatus Caduonus famuli Dei precibus commendavit. Regressus inde Conaidus Mevennus ad locum Dolis, quodcumque ei acciderat sancto Sansoni per ordinem retulit: qui etiam Domino meritas grates rependens, comitem benignum dignum benedictione decrevit et famulum Dei Caduonum pro largito munere benedixit.

8. Exinde autem non multo tempore decurso, praedictus Conaidus Mevennus magis solitariam diligens vitam, per sancti Sansonis consilium licentiam ab omnibus quaesivit et ad praedictum praedium benedictione percepta feliciter remeavit. Et quoniam non tantum sanguinis propinquitate sed etiam ferventissimo dilectionis amore beato Sansoni adhaereret, multis cohortabatur precibus ut ad eum saepius rediret. Et quia cognoverit eum virum altioris ingenii, et gratia Dei illuminatum, conspiciens illum jam coelesti lumine radiantem Domino fideliter velle servire: "Proficiscere," inquit, "frater, cum Dei benedictione, et Dominus, in cujus conspectu semper assistimus, mittat angelum suum tecum, et dirigat opera tua per viam, secundum voluntatem suam." Ad hoc, postquam omnia quae necessaria erant dederit, imprecans⁴¹ ei et famulis ejus prospera, Domino omnibus diebus vitae suae deservire praecepit: "Carnes," inquit iterum, "et fratres mei estis; Domino estis: Domino semper ex corde adhaerere valeatis. Habete pacem vos inter discordes et inter superbos humilitatem. Nihil enim Deo acceptabilius pace, de qua ipse dixit: Beati pacifici, quoniam ipsi filii Dei vocabuntur."

9. Itaque cum pastoralis benedictione et licentia fratrum, pacificus tandem Conaidus profectus est. Quo regrediente, praefatus Caduonus valde exultans Dominum laudat, et ad aedificandum cellulas et omnia quae necessaria erant omnimodis adminiculationibus eum adjuvare laborat. Desertus quippe locus erat et ferarum habitatio tantum. Quadam denique die, cum in eodem saltu basilicae locum aptum quaereret, et excepta aqua ceteris omnibus affluentem reperiret, confisus in Domino orationibus suis obtinuit ut in congruis locis cuspide baculi defixi fons vivacissimus emanaret, ex cujus aquis non solum homines aliquando merito fidei sanarentur, sed et pecora diversis morborum generibus curarentur. Ab illo siquidem eventu habitatores loci istius Album ei nomen dederunt, quia tunc albedinem sanitatis inde recipi mererentur. Hujus igitur miraculi novitate percussus, omnis populus, ad eum undique confluens, suos infirmos humiliter offerebat; quorum alii a daemonibus liberabantur, alii a diversis languoribus curati cum salute redibant animarum. Ubicumque enim sanctus aderat, sospitatis gratia redundabat.

10. Quin etiam, ut praefati sumus, idoneum habebat repertum locum. Cellulas et parva tuguria

⁴⁰ Sic.

⁴¹ Intellige "apprecans".

primum aedificare coepit, ubi monachorum ritu primum conversari valeret. Deinde, circumspicis undique locis, apertiore ceteris elegit, ubi in honore sancti Joannis Baptistae oratorium Domino consecravit. Ibi, non paucis diebus vigiliis et orationi insistens, sacrificium laudis, seipsum videlicet, Domino mactavit. Audita denique fama tanti patris per omnem provinciam regionis, nobiles viri et mulieres ad servitium Dei sanctissimo viro undique suos filios afferebant. Crescente quidem discipulorum numero, majus monasterium construxit, ubi regularem vitam monachorum multos doceret, atque, piissimus pater existens, sicuti filios adunaret. Postea vero, obedienter famulis Dei laborantibus, tanta possessio rerum excrevit, quatinus, jamjam remunerante Domino, non solum subsidia corporum sed et eleemosynarum largitione fructum inde caperent animarum. Otiositatem porro, inimicam animae, obnixae propellentes, seipsos contra se erigebant, donisque virtutum exuberantes, crucem Domini diligenter ferebant. Malebant enim angustiis excruciaci quam perpetualiter infernorum flammis incendi. Denique, quamvis virtutibus florerent et rerum affluentia ditarentur, nullus eorum delectationis blanditiis succumbebat, sed in Domino penitus mentis oculum defigentes, bona praesentia quasi post tergum, futura vero semper ante se praeponerent. Jugum igitur Christi, quod fidelibus nimis est suave, cupide tolerabant, et onus ejus nimium leve compensantes libenti animo ferebant.

11. Tantorum siquidem bonorum incrementis famuli Dei floruerunt, quatinus ipse Britonum dux Judicaelus, sicuti post declarabitur, illorum orationibus se commendaret et eorum monachus postea existeret. Qui etiam ad opus monasterii plurimam auri et argenti copiam detulit, et ad ornandum multa ministravit. Consilioque sancti Mevenni, multa per patriam monasteria construxit, atque deserta reparavit. Pauperes etiam pavit; justitiam cum discretione in populo ministravit; divinum cultum in ecclesia diligenter excoluit. Veridicus igitur Dei cultor Conaidus semper ad melius tendens non solus ire volebat ad patriam; sed alios undecumque locorum poterat secum invitare satagebat, juxta quod scriptum est: "Qui audit, dicat: Veni".

12. Et quoniam de vita et honestate et conversatione illius aliqua perstrinximus, de miraculis amodo salva veritate loquamur. Memorandum igitur inter alia censemus insigne miraculum quod Deus per illum voluit esse notificatum. Erat utique piissimo duci Judicaelo quidam frater, Haelonus nomine, prope monasterium sancti inhabitans, qui, quamvis de carnali sanguine, nequaquam fratri moribus inhaerebat. Cujus crudelitas tanta redundabat immanitate, ut quemdam famulum suum pro leviori scelere carceralibus locis includeret, morti quam citius adjudicandum. Qui dum immersus obscuriori barathro vinculorum duris nexibus angustiaretur, et immoderatis vocibus suam miseriam deploraret, audivit illum praelibatus Conaidus, dum forte quamdam fratris cellulam visitaret. Compatienti siquidem animo piissimus Dei alumnus cum cognovisset miseriam dolentis miseri, postposito timore, Haelonum comitem causa miseri humiliter precari coepit. At ille, tanti patris praesentiam irreverenter respuens, imprecationes⁴² ejus nihilo reputavit eumque sicuti superbus a se exire compulit. Cum videret itaque beatus Conaidus neque donis neque precibus impium flecti, convertitur ad illum qui nullum spernit in se confidentem. Caritativo siquidem succensus ardore, jejuniis et orationibus pro misero seipsum excruciebat, quatinus omnium reparator Deus a tantis angoribus miserum liberaret. Dum igitur sanctus in oratione perseveraret, ruptis nexibus apertisque claustris statim solvitur inclusus, et ad monasterium fugiens, pedibus sancti provolvitur. Domino

⁴² Pro preces.

suoque servo fideli gratias referebat.

13. Cognita denique crudelis Haelonus miseri fuga, servos quam citius compulit fugitivum insequi et ut iterum includeretur monuit. Qui etiam, dum apud sanctum reperirent fugitivum, tanto patri reverentiam exhibentes, dixerunt: "Dominus noster, homo de indignatione fervidus, nos hunc captivum insequi jussit et ad se comprehensum reducere." Quo audito, famulus Dei miserum oratorio inclusit, dicens: "Ab ecclesia, scriptura teste nullum licet abstrahere, etiamsi capitali sententia dignus extiterit. Examinatione ergo iudicii comprobetur utrum injuste tenebatur inclusus." Revertentibus itaque servis occurrit furiosus Haelonus, et qualiter egerant retulerunt. Quibus dictis accensus: "Eamus," inquit, "ad monasterium nostrumque fugitivum ei auferamus." Superbia denique plenus, sanctum conviciis provocans, monasterium violenter irrumpit, fractisque claustris captivum miserum miserabiliter inde extraxit. Facta siquidem desperatione certaminis atque humanarum precum, ad divinum solatium sese contulit sanctus. Finita autem oratione, mortem Haeloni post triduum venturam nuntiavit. Malignus denique praesumptor, dum tumido fastu recedens, suum factum ostendendo jactaret, divina statim ultione percutitur. Dum enim calcaribus equum incitans, viam percurreret efferus amplam, vindice Deo statim labitur, coxam fractus ceterorumque membrorum officio destitutus. Mox vero poenitentia ductus, humiliter rogabat cum lacrimis fugitivum sancto reddere, et, ut ad eum visitandum veniret diligenter orare. Cognita tandem re, beatus Conaidus misericordia motus, orationem pro illo fudit, eumque visitatum venire non recusavit. Data denique confessione et accepta absolutione, viaticum Dominici corporis accepit, et post triduum, sicuti sanctus praedixerat, mortem obiit. Audiant hoc tyranni, ecclesiarum pervasores, et timeant et improprium justis inferre recusent. Exhibendus est enim, ut ait S. Gregorius, timor sanctis hominibus, quia templa Dei sunt et veraciter in eorum cordibus praesens est qui ad inferendam ultionem invalidus non est. Deinde famuli illius oratorium restruxerunt quod fregerat, et ad monasterium construendum de ejus facultatibus non modica donaria obtulerunt. Hanc vindictam multi audientes, perfectius Deum timuerunt, ecclesiaeque res invadere postea non audentes, ac etiam invasas reddere festinarunt. Multis igitur modis profuit correptio atque damnatio unius impii, per quam multi, adhuc increduli, virtutem Domini plenius cognoscentes, postea timuerunt et glorificaverunt Deum, qui dedit potestatem talem hominibus.

14. Memorandum esse videtur et aliud miraculum per Dominum fidelem proximo tempore similiter factum. Dum enim aristarum tempore, famulorum Dei culturas cervorum ceterarumque ferarum agmina, ruptis sepibus, non solum manducando sed et conculcando quotidie, devastarent, regredientes famuli beato Conaido talia retulerunt: "Incassum laboramus, domine pater, quia messes tutari non possumus. Agmine enim, facto cervi et aprorum conventus sepes aliquando irrumpentes, transiliunt, et quodcumque seminamus, acerba fauce consumunt. Excubiae et insidiosa retinacula per gyrum construi deberent, quatinus tanti laboris fructum salvum habere valeremus." Quo audito, beatus Dei famulus, caritativo amore inflexus, ait: "Nolite, filii mei, nolite contristari, videntes iudicium Dei. Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est: fiat. Ipse enim providebit custodiam servis suis, sicuti voluerit; tutabitur eis quod placuerit. Omnino igitur in Domino sperate, et facite bonum, qui nobis etiam utriusque rei necessaria ministrabit. Qui enim vitam corpori tribuit, melius scit qualiter debeat eam tutari." Tacito itaque murmure famulorum, valde mane prudens pater, peractis orationibus, signaculo sanctae Trinitatis armatus, exiit visum qualiter illius messes vastarent. Quas valde attritas inveniens, omnigenarumque ferarum phalanges undique inveniens, stetit, et in

Domino confisus humiliter dixit: "In nomine Domini, cui obediunt omnia, cujus creatum estis, praecipio, hinc amodo recedatis; nec amplius monachorum labores adnullare audeatis, sed vestrum praedestinatum cibum jam magis quaerere per desertum curetis." Ad hanc itaque vocem bestiolae quasi obediens, statim fugerunt, atque solito more per deserta vagantes in suis sedibus redierunt. Porro culturas monachorum ita postea dimiserunt, ac si ferreis muris per gyrum munirentur.

15. Ita autem Dominus in camo et freno suo maxillas ferarum constringere voluit, qui aliquando homines non appropinquantes sibi per prava quaeque oberrare necnon et vitam finire permittit. Gubernator enim omnium Deus, qui omnes desiderat salvare et ad agnitionem veritatis venire, aliquando per irrationabilia monstrat qualiter ab hominibus timeri debeat. Ad arbitrium equidem hominis omnia creata, antequam peccaret, commiserat Deus, quatinus magister et dominus omnium existens omnibus dominaretur. Quem enim ad imaginem conditum habebat, super omnia dominum et meliorem cunctis esse disponebat. Sed quia, diabolicis figmentis magis obediens, Domini praecepta contempsit, cum seipsum per se voluit exaltare, ab illa celsitudine magna ex parte dilapsus est. Qui enim omnino bonus erat conditus a bono conditore, pene totus coepit esse malus, diabolica suggestionem. Vitiato siquidem capite, statim cuncta creata vitiata apparuerunt. Horrida namque luporum ira in agnos saevire erepuit, leonumque violentia in minus validos exarsit. Quin etiam non solum postea labores hominis devastare, sed et ipsos homines nocere, aliquos etiam perimere certaverunt. Nullum amplius virtutis emolumentum per seipsum habuisset homo, nisi ipse Creator incarnatus secum descendisset, Deus et homo factus. Cujus etiam gratia redundante, adeo fidelis restauratur homo, ut etiam moderante Deo illius jussis obtemperare cogantur cuncta creata. Sed ne valde prolixiorum facere videamur digressionem, ad historiam redeamus.

16. Non multo postea tempore transacto, praelibatus Dei famulus, semper ad melius tendens, Romam petiit, quatinus apostolorum orationibus mereretur adjuvari. Cum denique per Andegavensem civitatem rediret, omneque boni exempli documentum cunctis inferret, discurrere ejus fama, omnes non solum civitatis incolae sed ex omni vicinio cuncti etiam ruricolae citius affuerunt. Miro siquidem amore cupiebant tanti patris adire praesentiam. Audientes itaque sanctissima illius monita, suppliciter implorarunt ut vel per aliquot dies ibi maneret, viamque veritatis eos edoceret. Quorum utique petitionibus annuens, inibi commorabatur, omnigenorumque morborum spurcitas evitans, salutem cuncta reddere satagebat. Quod ut vidit quaedam sanctimonialis, praedictam inhabitans civitatem, pedibus sancti provoluta, dixit: "In nomine Jesu Christi, cujus doctrina profers, o homo Dei, succurre mihi ancillae tuae. Habeo enim praedium habile et idoneum ad manendum, quod terrore cujusdam serpentis mirae magnitudinis dereliqui. Qui etiam ignivomo vapore atque foetore non solum homines suffocat, sed et cuncta animalia venenosis aculeis inflammat." Quo audito, famulus Dei caritativo amore flectitur, et ubi illud praedium habetur, inquisivit. Cui sanctimonialis ait: "Inter Sanctum Florentium et Clarum Montem, infra Namneticam diocesim." Mane itaque surgens beatus Dei alumnus, acceptis ductoribus perguit ad locum ubi ille antedictus serpens jacebat, horribile monstrum; sed ductores pavidi longe remanentes, elevata manu diversorium bene designaverunt ubi illum fore sperabant. Vir autem Domini intrepidus pergens, serpentem adiit. In Domino confisus, hunc audacter invasit. Monopalium enim suum illius circumdedit collo, baculique curvitate adnexa, veluti domesticum canem post se eum trahens, in nomine Jesu Christi in flumine Ligeris eum praecipitavit, dicens: "Nunquam magis hominibus noceas, nec alicui adustionis damnum amodo inferre valeas." Ita enim Domini virtute magnus serpens

expulsus est, et beatus Dei famulus honorifice merito susceptus est.

17. Deinde omnis populus undecumque adveniens, sancto viro citius occurrit, Dominumque collaudans, supplicationibus, votis veniam ab eo postulavit. Multa denique ei xenia contulerunt; quae cuncta fidelis dispensator pauperibus erogavit. Multi autem divino fervore succensi, diligenter implorare coeperunt ut de illorum terris acciperet et cum illis dum viveret, manere non refutaret. Illa praecipue monialis cujus fundum a praefato serpente liberaverat, ceteris avidius imprecabatur, quatinus illam terrulam acciperet ecclesiamque in ea fundaret. Et cum aliter ad hoc eum inclinare nequiret, in pretio monopolii hanc recipere orabat, quod in serpentis collo dimissum habebat. Tractus Dei famulus inundantia precum, terram, volente Deo, recepit, atque oratorium et aediculas ad manendum in ea fundavit: unde postea Monopalium nomen accepit, sicuti referebant incolae, quibus per successionem innotuit.

18. Claruit autem et ibi beatus Dei famulus virtutibus et signis, invalidasque languentium catervas pristinae restituit sanitati. Attamen in priori monasterio morabatur frequentius. Utrumque tamen ita vigilanter excolebat ovile, quatinus semper expulsis insidiis luporum pacifice semper augetur grex monachorum. Cum vero praesentialiter istis aderat corpore, nec tamen illis defuit mente. Proinde siquidem oves suas custodiebat⁴³ pastor excitus ne ab antiquo lupo sibi furtim subriperentur. Sine igitur temporis intervallo in oratione perseverabat, et ut de commissis animabus Domino lucra fierent fideliter elaborabat. Quid plura? Tantaе itaque vigilantiae erga subjectos extitit quantae nemo vocis officio vel linguae plectro digne poterit explicare. Humiliorem et cunctis minorem sese in terris exhibuit: idcirco clarissimus Calcedon splendet coloratus in Hierusalem coelestis regni.

19. Et quoniam de vita et miraculis aliqua pro posse perstrinximus, qualiter ex hoc mundo migravit feliciter adeamus. Obitum siquidem suum longe ante praescivit, et eo appropinquante coelestibus institutis undique se muniri amplius curavit. Cum autem jam senex et plenus dierum, in monasterio prius fundato sedens, aliquid infirmitatis sentiret, convocatis fratribus in unum, proprii corporis dissolutionem aperte declaravit, ostenditque caritativis loquelis quid agere deberent, qualiterque contra antiqui serpentis machinamenta intentius pugnarent. Haec et his similia postquam sibi commissis omnibus intimasset, viribus corporis coepit derepente destitui. Quo viso Austolus quidam presbyter, ejus filiulus, qui ei in monasterio serviebat humiliter, compatiendi dolore percussus ait: "Cui, pater, me tuum famulum desolatum relinquis? In quorum manibus tuum filiolum tutandum deseris? Quis a morsibus luporum, sublato pastore, infirmam tutabitur ovem? Expediisset enim melius me sepultum fuisse tuis manibus antequam migrasses tuisque Deo redditum piissimis orationibus, quem veram docuisti doctrinam dulcissimis eruditionibus." Cui perpius patrinus admodum flenti amica voce respondit: "Operare, dilecte mi filiule, atque diligenter officium tibi commissum perfice; quoniam, miserante Deo, post septem dierum cursum mecum adibis gloriam coelestis vitae. Caritatis siquidem fervor intermutuae nullatenus solvitur; sed quanto hucusque amor valuit, tanto semper et majori valebit." Postquam autem talia cunctis audientibus orsus est pater, moderante Deo temporis horam, beatus undecimo Kalendas Julii feliciter migravit ad coelum. Quo migrante, laetantur angeli et Deo exultant sancti; sed moerens et tristis congregatio monachorum, omnisque populorum conventus, nimio dolore permotus extitit. Coelestia namque agmina hunc

⁴³ hanc vocem supplevimus, quia deesse videbatur in apographo.

alacriter comitantur ad regnum, sed terrestris turba flens et ejulans prosequitur ad tumulum. In transmigracione itaque tanti patris hos laetitia cumulavit, sed illos admodum moestitia replevit.

20. Praedictus autem Austolus, sanctissimi patris obtemperans monitis, sicuti jussum fuerat, cunctis obediendo fratribus fideliter ministrabat. Alacriter enim Deo et hominibus servitium exhibebat, mortisque compendium parvipendens coelorum regna ardenter sitiebat. Transactis siquidem septem dierum curriculis, sicuti docuerat patrinus, praemium quod Deus promisit suis fidelibus, accepit⁴⁴. Septimo namque die, quod est quarto Kalendas Julii, expletis missarum solemnibus, ad ecclesiam sicuti solebat solitarii perrexit, ibique, ceteris ignorantibus, triduo ante jejunio expleto, in pace obdormiens requievit. Advenientes denique fratres invenerunt illum jam mortuum, sed adhuc corpore calidum. Qui statim recordantes mutuae dilectionis eorum, sancti Mevanni sepulcrum proinde inviserunt. Cujus corporis odoriferam gemmam in dextra parte super sinistrum latus jacentem reperientes, divinitus totum hoc esse credentes, miro ordine cum beato patrino beatum filiolum sepelierunt. Patuit itaque per mortua ossa quantum valuit hujus amor atque peccatorum multitudinem operiens caritas. Quibus siquidem fuit in terris una causa certaminis, illis esse monstratur in coelis una retributio praemii, per eum pastorem qui pastoribus praesse creditur, Jesum Christum, qui vivit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.

⁴⁴ vox suppleta.