

Hildegard of Le Mans, *Life of Queen Radegund*

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VITA SANCTAE RADEGUNDIS REGINAE, EDITA
A DOMNO HILDEBERTO CENOMANENSI
EPISCOPO

Prologus

1. Sapientis est metiri vires, nec aliquid ultra profiteri. Hanc mihi providentiam dilectio tua, charissime Seimane, excussit, quia malui ridiculus scriptor, quam tibi inobediens inveniri. Tuis nimirum exhortationibus Vitam beatissimae Radegundis ausus sum describere, cum dare operam studio non magis tarditas ingenili, quam pontificalis administrationis occupatio prohiberent. De ejus tamen gratia praesumens, qui linguas infantium facit disertas, ad Fortunati simul et Baudoniviae sanctimonialis scripta recurri quorum uterque praefatam prosecutus vitam, de pretioso apparatu pretiosa parum, sicut tibi videtur, fercula confecerunt. Eorum scriptis diligenter evolutis, Fortunatum sequi disposui, cui non minus ex vita, quam ex dignitate pontificis plurimum auctoritatis accedit. Quaedam tamen miracula, quorum Fortunatus quidem nullum attigit, sanctimonialis vero memoriae reperitur commendasse, superaddere disposui; nec tamen omnia, sed ea solummodo quae relatu digniora beatissimae mulieris et meritum declarant et praemium. Caetera nosse cupientem volumina Baudoniviae revolvere non taedebit. Tu itaque laboratum tibi consules opusculum, nec prius in aliorum manus incidet, quam tuo examine vel rejiciendum suppressi, vel approbatum publicis aspectibus offerri mereatur. Magna mihi rependes praemia, si subducas ab oculis hominum quidquid senseris eorum linguas formidare. Erit igitur non solum tui arbitrii, sed eorum etiam quos decreveris admittendos, vel correctum producere, vel penitus occultare vitiosum.

The Life of Queen Radegund, put forth by lord Hildegard Bishop of Le Mans

Prologue

1. The power of a wise man is to assess, not to profess anything further. Your love, most dear Seimanus, has elicited this observation from me because I preferred to be a ludicrous writer to being found disobedient to you. Indeed with your encouragement I dared to write a *vita* of the most blessed Radegund, when innate sluggishness as much as the occupation of pontifical administration prevented me from paying attention to it with eagerness. But, daring to do so with the grace of that one who makes eloquent the tongues of infants, I had recourse to the writings both of Fortunatus and of the nun Baudonivia, each of whom, having undertaken the aforementioned *vita*, prepared, as it seems to you, dishes that were not precious enough out of such precious ingredients. Once their writings had been diligently studied, I decided to follow Fortunatus, to whom he greatly approached by reason of his life as well as the dignity of [his] episcopal authority. However when it was discovered that certain miracles (of which Fortunatus had not mentioned even one) had been commended to the nun's memory, I was inclined to add them; however not all of them, but only the more worthy ones that, upon being recounted, revealed the merit and reward of this most blessed woman. It will not weary the one seeking to learn of the others to review the volumes of Baudonivia. You, therefore, will consider this labored volume for yourself (it will not first fall into the hands of others) whether, upon your examination, it deserves to be suppressed as something to be rejected or, approved, to be held up to the public gaze. You will compensate me with great rewards, if you take away from the eyes of men whatever you sense to challenge the speech of others. Therefore it will be not only be [a matter] of your judgment, but also of those whom you decide are to be permitted, either to produce a corrected version or to conceal this thoroughly unredeemable one.

CAPUT PRIMUM. Sanctae patria, regium genus, captivitas, educatio in Gallia et pia opera, quae usque ad nubilem aetatem exercuit

2. Sicut sacra Evangelii testatur auctoritas: «Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram (Matth. V, 4),» illam scilicet terram, quam Propheta suspirans: «Portio mea, inquit, Domine, sit in terra viventium (Psal. CXVIII, 57).» Hujus spe gloriosa et venerabilis regina beata Radegundis exsilio sui consolata molestias, dum temporalem dimisit haereditatem, meruit sempiternam. Ex natione Toringa, vultu elegans, natalibus insignis, moribus insignior fuisse praedicatur. Non nova illam nobilitas, sed a priscis derivata parentibus illustravit. Avus ejus nomine Bessinus, pater vero Berectarius regiam uterque attigit dignitatem. Ex his beata virgo sublimem ducens originem, multo clarius enituit virtutum facibus, quam fascibus dignitatum.

3. Porro cum jam cunas evasisset, et Francis irruentibus devastata regione Toringa, cum reliquis et ipsa captiva adduceretur, captivis [f. captivitatis] sorte praeda regi Clotario cessit, non magis ejus thalamo donatura conjugio, quam profutura moribus et exemplo. Hoc eventu puella patriam egressa Veromandis jussu regis deportatur in villa, cui Ateias nomen, aliquandiu nutrienda. Adhibentur ei honestissimae vitae et clarissimi custodes nominis, sub quibus ita litteraturam disceret, ne dedisceret honestatem; nec fuit arduum rudimentis illam liberalibus informari, cujus annos et sexum non minus acumen ingenii, quam castitatis insignia superabant. Praeludebat jam in virgine morosa quaedam senectus, et ascensiones in corde suo disponenti sola aetatis infirmitas obsistebat. Inter illos tamen temporis et sexus aculeos inexorabiliter abhorrebat pudoris dispendia, solam morum suspirans venustatem. Unde et inter caeteros virtutum proventus, quibus tenera fervebat infantia, subvenire pauperibus, ecclesias frequentare, ac divinis satagebat interesse officii.

Chapter one: the holy woman's homeland, her royal lineage, her captivity, her upbringing in Gaul, and the pious works that she executed before reaching the age of marriage.

2. As the holy authority of the gospel bears witness: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land” (Matthew 5:4); surely, that land regarding which the Prophet, sighing, says “O Lord, “may my portion be in the land of the living.”¹ With this glorious hope, the venerable queen St. Radegund assuaged the troubles of her exile; when she relinquished her temporal patrimony, she deserved an eternal one. From the nation of Thuringia, she is known to have been beautiful in appearance, distinguished in birth, and even more distinguished in her character. It was not new nobility that illuminated that one, but one derived from ancient ancestors. Her grandfather Bassin and indeed her father Berthechar both attained royal honor. Taking her sublime origin from these, the blessed virgin shown more brightly with the torches of virtues than with the badges of [earthly] dignities.

3. Previously, when she had just escaped the cradle and— with the region of Thuringia having been ravaged by invaders—and she herself was led away as a captive along with the others who were left, she fell by the lot of captivity to king Clothar as booty, not so much to be given to [his] conjugal bed as to be of profit for [his] behavior by [her] example. With this having come about, the girl, having departed from her country, was sent by order of the king to the people of Vermandois, to a villa named Athies, to be reared there for some time. Guardians of impeccable life and of outstanding lineage were assigned to her, under whom she would learn letters in such a way that she did not unlearn integrity. It was not difficult for her [illam] to be informed in the rudimentary liberal arts, the acumen of whose nature, along with the badge of her chastity overcame both her years and her sex. Already a certain moral maturity was at play in the virgin and only the weakness of her age stood in the way of her pre-disposing heart. Among those pangs of her age and sex, she relentlessly abhorred losses of shame, longing for the delights of good character alone. Whence, among the other products of virtues with which she surged in her tender childhood, she filled her time with caring for the poor, frequenting churches, and being present at the divine offices.

¹ A combination of Psalm 118:57: *Portio mea, Domine, dixi, custodire legem tuam* (“O Lord, my portion, I have said, I would keep thy law”); and Psalm 141:6: *Clamavi ad te,*

Domine; dixi: Tu es spes mea, portio mea in terra viventium (“I cried to thee, O Lord: I said: Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living”).

4. Erat etiam ejus consuetudinis aliquid semper de quotidiano sibi subtrahere edulio, et egenis largiores reliquias providere. Has diligenter coadunatas, abjecto fastu regio, puella collectis pauperibus erogabat. Commendabatur humilitate sedulitas, praemium devotione cumulabatur, cum ingenua virgo, lotis prius singulorum capitibus, eorum manibus aquam funderet, ipsa administraret cibaria, ne quid deesset alicui lumina circumferret. Dehinc Ecclesiam senili reverentia cum suis adibat coaetaneis, in qua et hymnum solveret, et suam Deo commendaret castitatem. Ac ne illius Evangelii: «Qui non bajulat crucem suam et sequitur me, non potest meus esse discipulus (Luc. XIV, 27),» aliquando subriperet oblivio, signum crucis jubebat anteferri, quod suus ei clericus ex lignis in hos usus compingere consueverat, et ipse deferre. Facta autem oratione, veste quidem emundabat pavementum, facitergio autem jacentem circa sacra pulverem reverenter excutiebat, evehens quidquid ibi sordis aut pulveris habitantium incuria reliquisset.

5. Haec fuere ludicra virginis; hos mores tenera illius induit infantia; benignus ei circa pauperes affectus, circa afflictos mira compassio. Procul ab ea mutabilis mulieris inconstantia, procul decor mutuatus. Nihil artis in vultu, nihil in sermone vanitatis. Incessus non industriae fuit, sed naturae. Raro mensae, raro cultui ejus aliquid supra necessitatem accessit; quod si quando contigit, conditioni delatum est, non satisfactum voluptati. Sic in deliciis delicias ignorans, nihil fuit honestati suspectum, nihil quod moribus defectum minaretur.

4. It was also her custom always to take [a little] something for herself from her daily food allotment and give the more fulsome leftovers to the needy. Once they had been diligently gathered, the girl, having cast aside royal scorn, distributed them to the assembled paupers. Her attentiveness was commended with humility and her reward was piled high with devotion, when that noble virgin—with the heads of every single [pauper] having been washed first—poured water over their hands, administered the food itself, and carried around lamps, lest anything be absent to anyone. Afterwards she, with mature reverence, went with others of the same age to church, so that she might both sing hymns and commend her chastity to God. And lest forgetfulness of that gospel “And whosoever doth not carry his cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:27)” creep in, she ordered the sign of the cross to be carried ahead—one that her cleric had been accustomed to fashion for her out of wood for such purposes and to carry himself. When her prayers had been performed, she even cleaned the floor with her own garment, and reverently removed the dust that was lying about the shrine with her handkerchief, removing there anything that was dirty or dusty that the carelessness of those dwelling there might have left behind.

5. These were the virgin’s amusements; her tender childhood clothing this behavior. She had a kind disposition toward paupers and marvelous compassion toward the afflicted. Far from her was the fickle inconstancy of women; and far from here was any borrowed embellishment. There was nothing contrived in her appearance, no vanity in her words. Her walk was not studied but natural. Seldom did she reach for anything of the table or of her refinement beyond what was necessary; and if it did ever happen, it was conferred for the sake of her nature, not for the satisfaction of any pleasure. Thus, unaware of any delights in luxuries, there was nothing suspicious about her decency, and nothing that might give indication of any defect in her morals.

6. Ea profecto, cum necdum nobiles annos attigisset, modicum jam putabat virginitatis praemium, nisi illud martyrii gloria cumularet. Quo dum pertingere tenerrima virgo desiderat, multa praeter, et propter iustitiam a domesticis pertulisse memoratur. Imminente autem tempore quo eam praedictus rex Clotarius conjugio sibi sociare disposuerat, nocte cum paucis ab Athies (*Athies en Vermandois*) aufugit, illam generis successionem alto declinans consilio, cujus conceptus infestatio est pudicitiae, partus vitae. Tandem virgo reperta Sussionis deducitur, ibi quidem mortali nuptura regi, sed gratiam non amissura sempiterni.

CAPUT II. Nuptiae ejus cum rege Clotario, et pia vita quam tempore conjugii in aula duxit.

7. Igitur sociata specie tenus terreno principi, nobilis regina coelestis coepit effici, plus quam terrena. Nuptiis enim in Domino celebratis, animus ejus non humana extollitur gloria, non voluptate frangitur, non illecebris inclinatur. Idem saeculi contemptus, eadem in regina permansit humilitas. De moribus ejus nihil sibi secreta conjugii, nihil imperium, nihil opes vindicarunt. Usus istorum reginae citra libuit, quam licuit. Denique haec tria instrumenta virtutum convertit, cum impatientiam viri castitatis exemplo temperaret, reis adesset potentia, pauperibus divitiis subveniret. Sic offencula morum sine offensione femina praeteriens, non sibi, sed regno, non voluptati vixit, sed virtuti.

6. Though she had not yet attained the age of marriage, she was already reckoning that the reward of virginity was a modest if she did not add to it with the glory of martyrdom. While this most tender virgin want[ed] to attain it, she is remembered to have endured many more beyond this from the members of her household "for righteousness' sake." (Matthew 5:10). When that time loomed, when the aforementioned King Clothar had arranged for her to be joined [to him] in marriage, she fled with a few [others] by night from [the villa of] Athies, declining, by a high[er] counsel, [her role in producing] that successor, the conception of which would be an assault on her purity, the offspring of life. At length, the virgin, upon being found, was escorted to Soissons to be married there to a mortal king, but not about to lose the grace of the perpetual [King].

Chapter II. Her marriage with King Clothar and the pious life that she led in the palace in the time of her marriage

7. Joined, as far as appearances are concerned, to an earthly prince, the noble queen began to be made more than celestial than terrestrial. With the wedding having been celebrated in the Lord, her soul was not lifted up with human glory, it was not broken by pleasure, and it was not diverted by enticements. The same contempt of the world, the same humility remained in the queen. With regard to her morals, no secrets of marriage, no authority, and no wealth could lay claim to her. The use of these things pleased the queen less than was allowed. In the end, she converted these three into instruments of virtues, when she tempered the impatience of her husband with the example of chastity, was present with her power on behalf of the accused, and assisted the poor with her riches. Thus surmounting the obstacles to her morals without offense, she lived not for herself, but for the kingdom; not for pleasure, but for virtue.

8. Fuit autem prima ejus a virginitate sua dispositio, ut quidquid sibi a tributis accessisset, quidquid lege donationis, totum necessitati deserviret egenorum. Eorum vero quae supererant partem quidem Ecclesiae, partem sibi cultus corporis vindicabat. Is etiam, si reginae conditionem attendas, usui potius famulatus est quam decori. Perscrutabatur sollicite quo in loco infirmi decumberent, quibus, aut quid deesset coenobitis, quam incolerent eremitae solitudinem. Quos istorum non potuit praesentia, multimodis benedictionibus visitavit. Aliis vestes ipsa consuit, aliis largiora transmisit alimenta. Quibus afflictis regina non adfuit? Quis inhorrui frigore, nec reginae velleribus est calefactus? Quis clamavit post reginam, nec exauditus abscessit? Quid a regina pauperi potius exortum est, quam libenter oblatum? Quem diem non judicavit perditum, quo pro perditis moribus non egerit? Quando cultu detenta est corporis, ne causis interesset orphanorum? Et quoniam legerat: «Labia sacerdotis custodiunt scientiam, quia Angelus Domini exercituum est (Mal. VII, 7),» sacerdotum doctrinis adesse, sacerdotum se orationibus commendare satagebat. Eorum nullus exactione gravabatur, nullus regiae licentia potestatis; nullus inops, nisi cujus inopiam regina misericors ignorasset. Nimirum cedere sibi credebatur ad iudicium, si regina divite, angeli Domini mendicarent.

8. It was her primary inclination after virginity that whatever might come in the way of tribute or from the law of donation, she would devote all of it to the needs of the destitute. Truly, of those [resources] that exceeded the portion [owed to] the church, she claimed part for herself for the refinement of the body. If you were to consider the condition of the queen [it would be obvious that] this portion served want rather than adornment. In that place where the infirm lay, she anxiously searched for what might be lacking for the monks so that they might cultivate the solitude of the hermit. Of these ones, those who was not able [to visit] in person, she visited with [her] many blessings. For some she herself sewed clothes and for others she sent over generous [amounts] of food. For which afflicted ones was the queen not present? Who trembled in the cold and was not warmed by the queen's fleeces? Who called for the queen and left without being heard? What came forth from the queen to the pauper that was not freely offered? What day did she not judge to be lost, on which she did not act on behalf of those with lost morals? When was she detained by the refinement of [her] body, so that she was not present for the concerns of orphans? And because she had read: "the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge... because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts" [Malachi 2:7], she went out of her way to be present for the teachings of the priests and to commend herself to the prayers of the priests. No one of them was burdened with [any] exaction or with the prerogatives of royal power; no one of them was needy, except when the merciful queen was ignorant of the need. Without a doubt, she believed she would be handed over to judgment, if these angels of the lord were to [have to] beg from a rich queen.

9. Porro inter tanta virtutum praeconia, Atteiam domum instituens, hospitio eam pauperum dicavit feminarum; disposuit et ministros, quorum diligentia, ne quid deesset pauperibus, procuraret. Innumera ibi vestimentorum mutatoria, et aptus tam vivis quam defunctis apparatus. Aliquid opibus misericordiae regina deesse credebat, nisi quorum famulabatur vitae, famularetur etiam sepulturae. Ad praefatam domum saepius ingressa, ministrare discumbentibus, decumbentibus assidere, scaturientem ex ulceribus infirmorum saniem linteis abstergere, et ipsa lavare ulcera consueverat. Inclinabatur etiam ad abluenda debilium capita salutiferis decoctionibus, et unguentis ea demulcens quae et horrenda visu, et tactu formidanda judicares. Quibus autem necessarium erat diligentius obsequium, balnea eis regina pedissequa praeparabat, multa patienter ex infirmo sustinens incommoda, quae nauseam cuilibet ancillulae suscitarent. Egressis inde, pocula ex consuetudine offerebat, quos solutos balneis sumpta potio confortaret.

9. In the midst of such proclamations of virtues, she, preparing the Athies house, dedicated it as a hospice for the poor women; and she appointed attendants whose diligence took care that nothing would be lacking to the paupers. There there were countless changes of clothes and supplies suitable for the living as well as the dead. The queen believed something to be missing from the riches of mercy, unless she who attended to their life also might attend to their burial. Frequently walking to the aforementioned house, she was accustomed to minister to these guests, to watch over the ones lying there, and to scrub away with pieces of linen the pus that was oozing out of the sores of the sick, and clean the sores themselves. She also leaned over to clean the heads of the weak with healing concoctions, and soothing with ointments [heads] that you would judge as being both horrible to see and dreadful to touch. But for those whom a more careful sort of service was necessary, the queen-servant prepared baths for them, patiently suffering many disagreeable things from the sick, things that would have evoked nausea from any of her handmaids. To those leaving [the baths], she customarily offered cups, so that the consumed beverage might strengthen those released from the baths.

10. His regina instans officii, malebat in obsoleta domo servire pauperibus, quam in palatio dominari. Quod si ea quae cura maritu gerebant nosse desideras, ita morigerata est conjugii, ne displiceret Creatori Thalami ejus officinae pudoris, et ignarum turpitudinis ac flagitii domicilium. Ibi non conventus juvenum, non infesta virtuti colloquia. Famulae castimoniam potius exemplis docebantur, quam flagellis. Earum vita, tanquam sinu illius mores suos regina peperisset. Sudabat in manu reginae psalterium, et quousque illud in lacrymis et gemitu decantasset, cibum regina sumere differebat. Ad mensam vero accedens, exaudire naturam consueverat, non exaudire voluptatem. Nam quia deliciarum experientiam delictorum noverat esse confinium, aquam vino, legumina regiis dapibus praeferebat. Legumina fidelis famulus ei praesentabat occultius, quibus praesumptis, jejunium potius solvere videbatur, quam propulsare inedia. Dicitur non potest quoties a mensis jejuna surrexerit, arbitrata Christo fieri injuriam, si Christi pauperibus nondum pransis, prandere regina praesumeret. Occasione quoque accepta, post buccellam panis, mensam saepius deseruit, vel hymnum Deo, vel debitum pauperibus exhibitura famulatum.

10. Eager to perform these duties, the queen preferred to serve the poor in that delapidated house [Athies] rather than to rule in the palace. But if you want to know the things that she bore in care for her husband, she gratified her spouse in this way lest she be displeasing to the Creator of her marriage, to the workshop of propriety, [hers was] a residence ignorant of turpitude and disgrace. In that place there was no gathering of youths nor conversation dangerous to virtue. The maid-servants were taught chastity by example rather than by blows. [With regard to] the life of these [maid-servants], the queen give birth, as it were, to their morals in the bosom of her husband. The psalter perspired in the hand of the queen and she put off taking food for as long as she chanted in tears and with sighs. Indeed, when approaching the table, it was her custom to heed nature, not pleasure. For, because she knew the experience of delights to be the neighborhood of sinners, she preferred water to wine and beans to royal feasts. A faithful servant secretly handed her beans which, upon being consumed, she seemed to end her fast rather than ward off hunger. It is impossible to say how often she, fasting, rose from the table, believing an injury had been done to Christ if she as queen dared to eat when the paupers of Christ had not yet done so. When an opportunity presented itself, she, after [eating only] a morsel of bread, often left the table ready to produce a hymn to God or fulfill some obligation to the poor.

11. Nam de consortio tori quid loquar? Ad quod ipsa semper ideo accessit, ut maritum lucrifaceret, non ut lenocinantem expleret voluptatem. Quippe ne Satanarum maritum tentaret, marito debitum solvit, non exegit. In quo si quidquam, vel ejus gratia, vel voluptatis admistione peccatum est, statim non lacrymis tantum, sed et multo corporis cruciatu delere properavit. Fingens enim causam qua surgeret, hispidum pavimento superponebat cilicium, cui nuda tandiu inhaerebat, quousque percussis frigore medullis, pene spiritum exhalaret. Sic regina pariter et conjugio deferens, et pudorem conservans, nec maritum reverentia defraudavit, nec libidine bonum minuit nuptiarum. Fuere qui dicerent monacham potius ascitam regi uxorem, quam laicam. Ipse etiam rex propositum pietatis aegro ferens animo, uxorem simulatae religionis arguebat, adjiciens illam nuptiis minime convenire severitatem, mollius et uxorem viro, et virum uxori licere morigerari. Quibus Christi filia nequaquam a sacro revocata proposito, regis amaritudinem blandis sermonibus indulcabat.

11. What might I say about [their] union in bed? She herself always approached [the bed] so that she might win over her husband not so that she might satisfy pandering pleasures. Naturally, lest Satan tempt her husband, she fulfilled her debt to him; she did not drive him out [of bed]. In [the midst of] which, if there was any kind of sin, either [having it] for its sake or with some mixing in of pleasure, she immediately hastened to delete it not so much with tears as with great torment of her body. Inventing a reason by which she might get up [out of bed], she put a rough rug on the floor, to which she clung naked for a long time, to the point that, with her marrow pierced with cold, she nearly gave up her spirit. Thus the queen, both deferring to her husband and preserving her decency, neither defrauded her husband out of piety nor diminished the good of marriage with passion. There were those who said that a nun had been associated to the king as a wife rather than a lay woman. [The king], bearing [her] proposal of piety with a sick spirit, charged his wife of simulating religion, adding that such severity was not fitting for a marriage, and that it was permitted for a wife to be more gently indulgent toward her husband, and for a husband to be the same way toward his wife. This daughter of Christ, by no means recalled from her sacred proposal, sweetened the bitterness of the king with soft words.

12. Porro Quadragesimali tempore, diutius sacri insistens vigiliis, tormenta tormentis cumulabat, quibus erudita caro, spiritui servire cogeretur. Pallebant ora jejuniis, et artus hispido vulnerati cilicio, requiem inter tormenta nesciebant. Erat illi quaedam monacha familiaris, devotione pariter et nomine Pia, quae ei occulte praefatum mittere indumentum consueverat, quo semper interius inhaerente, desuper amictu regio Christi filia tegebatur. Fuit autem ejus consuetudinis, eo praecipue tempore, vicinas sanctorum circumire memorias, providere diligenter ne vel ornamentis ecclesiae, vel ecclesiarum ministri sumptibus indigerent. Satagebat etiam singulis altaribus proferre luminaria, quae propriis ipsa manibus recuperare ferebatur. Hora vero qua sacrificia sacerdos immolabat, Dominicae passionis memoriam quadam mentis passione pertransiens, contriti spiritus gratum Deo cremabat holocaustum. Tantis enim coelum pulsabat suspiriis, tanto lacrymarum torrente rigabatur, ac si Judaeorum manibus Christum rursus teneri, rursus videretur crucifigi.

12. In the time of Lent, persisting even longer in the vigils of the sacred [season], she piled up torments on torments, by which her flesh was educated, so that it might be compelled to serve her spirit. Her face paled with fasts, and her body, wounded by her rough clothing, knew no rest between torments. There was a certain nun, who was familiar to her, Pia in name as well as devotion, who was accustomed to secretly sending her the aforementioned garment. With it always clinging [to her] inside, the daughter of Christ was covered with royal garments outside. It was also her custom, especially in that time [of year], to go around the nearby shrines of the saints, and to provide diligently for them lest the churches be lacking in ornaments or the ministers of the churches be lacking in resources. She occupied herself providing lamps for every single altar, which she herself, it was reported, restored with her own hands. In the hour in which the priest offered the sacrifices, reviewing with a certain passion of [her] mind the memory of the passion of the Lord, she set fire to the pleasing holocaust to God of her contrite spirit. She pounded on heaven with such sighs, and she was dampened with such a torrent of tears, it was as if Christ was being held again in the hands of the Jews and seemed to be crucified again.

13. Expleto autem salutari officio, non prius ad palatium revertebatur, quam pia curiositate circumcirca jacentes infirmos, paucis comitata, visitaret. Illa non temporis importunitatem causari noverat, non pluviis aut nivibus detineri. Nullis omnino movebatur incommodis, dummodo commodis pauperum deserviret. Aliis regina, sed humilis, abluit capita, nonnullis balnea temperavit. Quibus aut nullus, aut durior lectus aderat, his apposito stramine vel plumis, mollior parabatur. Talibus diem claudebat studiis, sera nocte reditura. Porro dum ea, tam beatis occupata negotiis, prolixiores moras innecteret, missis a rege nuntiis, qui promptius eam reverti commonerent, regem sedere ad mensam, proceres exspectare, regiae jussioni pauperum praetulit famulatum, nolens ante regredi quam quod coeperat explevisset. Quod rex audiens, et graviter tulisse memoratur, et ultra quam decuit increpasse reginam tardius revertentem. Idem tamen postea poenitens, veniam supplex exoravit, se ipsum constanter accusans, quod Spiritum sanctum contristaverit, et ejus templum contristare praesumpsisset. Addidit etiam largiora precibus munera, quae velut in redemptionem maritalis excessus, fidelis et devota Deo uxor pauperibus erogaret. Quo facto, ita regis indignatio quievit, ut ipse de tanta devotione conjugis, et Deo gratias ageret, et quo abundantius necessitati subveniret egenorum, largiores expensas ei juberet praeparari.

13. Once this salvific office had been performed, she did not return to the palace before she, accompanied by a few others, visited, with pious curiosity, the sick ones who were laying round about. She knew not to make excuses for unfavorableness of the weather, nor to be detained by rains or snows. By no means was she disturbed by any annoyances, provided that she was serving the needs of the paupers. For some this queen—but a humble one—washed heads and for a few she prepared baths. For those whom either no bed or only a very hard one was available, one was prepared for them that was softer, with appropriate straw or feathers. She ended the day in such pursuits, ready to return [to them] late at night. When she, so occupied with such holy activities, devised even longer delays—with messengers having been sent from the king so that they might warn her to return promptly, to join the king at the table and to await the nobles—she prioritized service of the poor over the royal command, not wanting to go back until she finished what she had begun. Hearing this, it is recounted that the king took it badly and rebuked the queen more than was appropriate when she returned later. However afterwards, feeling sorry, he, as a suppliant, pleaded for [her] indulgence, constantly blaming himself because he saddened the Holy Spirit and dared to sadden [Radegund], its temple. He added to his prayers lavish gifts, which, as if in redemption of her marital excess, she, the faithful and devoted wife to God, gave them away to the poor. Once this was done, the indignation of the king quieted to the point that he himself, with regard for the great devotion of his wife, gave thanks to God and assist more abundantly with the needs of the poor, ordering more lavish expenditures to be arranged for that purpose.

14. Adventantibus autem ad palatium Christi sacerdotibus, et prout exigebat imminens causa, regium implorantibus auxilium, tanto exultabat gaudio, ac si ipsam Christi constaret adesse praesentiam. Hos honore quo docuit susceptos, et loquentes audivit devotius, et discumbentibus humiliter ministravit. Nec erat promptum discerni utrum Martham potius exhiberet quam Mariam. Omnium causis aderat, omnium gravaminibus gravari se querebatur; nulli ejus benedictio, nulli postulatum defuit auxilium. Hoc solum quod in eorum transibat obsequium, propriis usibus assignatum fatebatur. Ejus circa eos sedulitati nihil domus dispensatio, nihil regni negotia detrahebant. Discedentes vero flens prosequabatur, et orans ut ibi sui memores fieri dignarentur, ubi Patri Filius immolatur.

15. Nec minor ei circa reos adfuit sollicitudo, qui propriis sceleribus, vel in carcerem, vel ad supplicium trahebantur. Pro eorum salute cursitabat, per singulos universis supplicabat, frequenter commemorans rei sanguinis oportere misereri, cum pro reis etiam sanguis fuerit effusus Redemptoris. Ac ne pietatis conatus in irritum duceretur, non ante cessabat blandimentis animum mulcere principis, quam qui sententiam protulerat justitiae, proferret misericordiae. In hac autem damnatorum solutione, tantam Christus ei gratiam contulit, ut ad nomen ejus obserati paterent carceres, ferri vincula solverentur, exirent illaesi, quibus censura curiae mortem dictaverat, aut tormenta.

14. With priests of Christ arriving at the palace and pleading—just as each pressing cause demanded—for royal assistance, she exulted with such joy, as if it were certain that Christ's very presence was there. In His honor she instructed them as she received them, she listened devoutly to them as they spoke, and she ministered humbly to them as they sat down to eat. It was not easy to determine whether she presented herself more as Martha or as Mary [Luke 10:38-42]. She was present for everyone's cause, and protested [as if] she was burdened with everyone's troubles. Neither a blessing nor any requested assistance was absent from anyone. Only that which went toward their service did she declare to have been designated for proper use. No stewardship of the house nor any affairs of the kingdom took away from her attentiveness toward these ones. Upon their departure, she followed them weeping, praying that they might deign to remember her there, whenever the Son of the Father is sacrificed.

15. No less present for her was her was her solicitude toward convicts, who, as a result of their own sins, were dragged either to jail or [to some other] punishment. For the sake of their salvation, she rushed here and there, and one at a time she beseeched on behalf of them all, often recalling that it was appropriate to be merciful with regard to a case of blood [violence], given that the blood of the Redeemer was shed also for the accused. And lest this effort of piety be thought to be futile, she did not cease softening the soul of the prince with blandishments until he who had brought forth a sentence of justice, might produce one of mercy. In that loosing of the condemned, Christ conferred such grace on her that closed jailed were opened in her name, chains of iron were dissolved, and those to whom the censure of the court had prescribed death or torments left uninjured.

16. Cum enim in villa quae Perona nominatur, matura securitate perambularet, rei qui in proximo carcere damnatione tenebantur addicti, clamare coeperunt ut eis regina subvenire dignaretur. Quo audito, quidnam esse, et quare clamaretur, Christi filia diligenter inquirat. Mentiuntur custodes carceris adesse pauperum multitudinem, et eos alimoniam postulare. Credidit regina ministris, et quam peti simulant, clamantibus elemosyna destinatur; qua rei accepta, ne ulterius clamarent minis et verberibus custodum coerciti, siluerunt. Meruerunt tamen exaudiri, devotius animo clamantes quam verbo. Sequenti enim nocte, dum regina solitis insisteret orationibus, nutu divino, reseratus carcer patuit, disrupta sunt vincula, egrediuntur incolumes qui poenis servabantur et morti. Et ne tanto viderentur ingrati beneficio, beatae mulieris genibus advoluti, gratias agunt, sacris ejus meritis ereptos de vinculis se publice praedicantes.

17. Divulgato autem miraculo, filia Christi non illa erigitur gloria, sed ad ejus relationem, profusis rubore vultibus, indignam se testabatur, pro qua Dominus suis servis praefatum dignatus esset impendere beneficium. In humilitate ergo persistens, teneros artus multiplicatis atterebat disciplinis, circa pauperes et Ecclesias Christi tanto facta diffusior, quanto jam de mercede securior. Unde cum in festis diebus, prout reginae conditio merebatur, auratis uteretur indumentis, et a circumstantibus puellis laudaretur, ex alto suspirans, indignam se tali veste deplorabat, eamque statim exuens, cujuslibet ecclesiae cultui dedicabat et honori. Praeterea si quid ei gemmarum accessisset, si quid purpurae, si quid cultus pretiosi, totum sacris altaribus, aut ecclesiasticis assignabat ornamentis.

16. While she was walking with appropriate security in a villa which is called Perona, the convicts who were being held in the nearby prison, bound by their condemnation, began to cry out so that the queen might deign to assist them. This having been heard, the daughter of Christ inquired diligently what it might be and why she was being called for. The prison guards pretended that a multitude of paupers was there, asking them for alms. The queen believed these attendants and what they pretended was being asked, and alms were directed to the ones calling out. This being received, the convicts, coerced by the threats and lashes of the guards lest they call out any more, grew quiet. But they deserved to be heard, calling out more devoutly with their souls than with their words. The following night, when the queen was applying herself to her accustomed prayers, by divine command, the prison, unbarred, opened up, the chains were broken, and those who had been subject to punishments and death went forth unharmed. And lest they be seem ungrateful for such a favor, falling to their knees of the blessed woman, gave thanks, proclaiming publically that they had been rescued from their chains by her sacred merits.

17. When the miracle had been divulged, the daughter of Christ was not built up by that glory; instead she, upon its recounting, with her cheeks flushed with red, bore witness that she was unworthy, she, on behalf of whom the Lord deigned to dispense the aforementioned favor for his servants. Persevering in humility, she wore down her tender body with increased disciplines. Toward paupers and the churches of Christ she was made as expansive as she was already secure with regard to [her] reward. And so on feast days when, as the situation of queen merited, she wore golden garments and was being praised by the young women standing around, she, sighing from deep within, deplored herself as being unworthy of such garments. Taking them off at once, she dedicated them to the worship and honor of whatever church. Thereafter, if anything were to come to her in the way of gems, anything purple, anything of pretious refinement, she assigned it all to the sacred altars or as church ornaments.

CAPUT III. Monastica sanctae professio, liberalitas erga ecclesias, fundatio parthenonis Pictaviensis, ex quo rex eam ad conjugium retrahere frustra nititur.

18. Ascendit autem **eo usque** reginae propositum, ut abjectis insignibus potestatis, et conculcata mundi gloria, pauperem Christum pauper sequi peroptaret. Quod ut implere mereretur, ad beatum profecta Medardum, sanctimonialis ab eo et vestem expetiit et benedictionem. Cujus petitioni nequaquam pontifex acquiescens: «Non patitur, inquit, sacra lex conjugii, ut uxore simul et marito superstite legitimarum solvantur foedera nuptiarum.» Instat beata mulier, et largiore fletu verecundam perfusa faciem, velari se deprecatur. Fit tumultus in ecclesia, votisque reginae concordi sententia clerus resistit et populus. Eam sacris altaribus se ingerentem proceres retrahunt, pontifici ne reginae manus praesumeret imponere constanter inhibentes. Quae cum videret tam primates quam plebem suis obniti consiliis, sacrarium ingreditur, et animo in novum confirmato propositum capiti suo religionis habitum imposuit. Dehinc ad pontificem regressa: «Requirat, inquit, Dominus Deus animam meam de manu tua, si magis regem hominum quam Regem timueris angelorum.» His auditis, ei manus imposuit, non magis ejus obsecratione perterritus, quam constantia superatus.

Chapter III. The monastic profession of the holy woman, [her] liberality toward churches, [and] the foundation of the parthenon² of Poitiers, from which the king tried in vain to bring her back to her marriage.

18. The *propositum*³ of the queen ascended to the point that, with the trappings of power having been cast aside and the glory of the world trampled, she would much rather follow the pauper Christ as a pauper. So that she might deserve to carry this out, she, having set out for blessed [bishop] Medard [of Noyon], requested from him the habit and blessing of a nun. By no means acquiescing to her request, the bishop said: “the sacred law of marriage does not allow the bonds of legitimate marriage to be dissolved while the wife and husband are both still living.” The blessed woman, drenched with abundant weeping, insisted and begged that her modest face be veiled. A tumult arose in the church, and the clergy and the people resisted the vows of the queen with a unanimous feeling. The nobles drew her back, as she threw herself on the sacred altars, firmly inhibiting the bishop lest he dare lay his hand upon the queen. When she saw that noblemen as well as common people were opposed [to her] in their counsels, she entered the shrine and, with her soul strengthened in her new *propositum*, placed the habit of a nun over her [own] head. Then, having returned to the bishop, she said: “May the Lord God require my soul from your hand, if you fear the king of men more than the King of angels.” With these [words] having been heard, he placed his hand on her, as terrified by her entreaty as he was overcome by her constancy.

² A parthenon in this context is either a monastery for noble daughters or one dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

³ *Propositum* in this context refers to the holy way of life that she had vowed to pursue.

19. Beata itaque Radegundis, arduam ingressa viam, divitias et regios apparatus, qui illi ex hoc mari magno et spatioso feliciter egressae remanserant, pauperibus et ecclesiis larga manu distribuit. Mox enim ubi reginam penitus abjecit, indumenta quibus coronata utebatur Dominicae mensae supposuit, scilicet, acceptum Deo et plenum gratiae holocaustum. Zonam quoque auream, et armillas et inanes, omnia pretiosis insignita margaritis, confregisse et pauperibus distribuere memoratur. Inde progressa et ingressa cujusdam sancti cellulam, tapetibus, vittis, fibulis et manicis intexto gravidis auro sacra oneravit et honoravit altaria. Deinde non minora diversis distribuit coenobiis, quorum opinio sub reverendis patribus, scilicet Dadone venerabili, sanctoque Gundulfo, consummata et insignis habebatur. Inde Turonum felici navigio delata, quantum se officiosam circa beati Martini sepulcrum praestiterit, quanta lacrymarum obtulerit holocausta, quibus suspiriis coelum pulsaverit, vix animus comprehendere, vix lingua sufficit explicare. Testata sunt ejus devotionem, non magis oblata singulis altaribus ornamenta, quam profundi gemitus, et humidum lacrymis pavimentum.

19. Having set out on an arduous path, blessed Radagund distributed to paupers and churches with her generous hand the riches and royal accoutrements that had remained to her once she happily set out on that great and expansive sea. Where she thoroughly cast aside [her status as] queen, she placed on the altar the garments that she wore when she was crowned: that is to say, a [form of] burnt offering accepted by God and full of grace. She is also remembered for breaking up and distributing to the poor her gold belt, her bracelets and earrings, and everything that was marked with precious pearls. Having gone forth from there and entered the little cell of a certain saint, she honored and loaded the sacred altars with carpets, ribbons, brooches, and sleeves heavy with braided gold. Then she distributed no insignificant things to various monasteries, whose reputation under abbots worthy of respect—that is to say, [under] the venerable Dado⁴ and holy Gundulf⁵—was held to be distinguished and consummate. Brought to Tours by means of an auspicious ship, she distinguished herself as so attentive to the sepulchre of St. Martin,⁶ and offered so many burnt offerings of her tears, and beat [so hard] on heaven with her sighs, that the mind can scarcely comprehend it and the tongue can hardly explain it. The ornaments offered to each altar, the profound sighs, and the floor wet with tears bore equal witness to her devotion.

⁴ St. Audoin, a.k.a. Dado of Rouen (d. 686).

⁵ Venantius Fortunatus refers to Radugund visiting “the retreat of holy Gundulf, later Bishop of Metz.” *Vita Radegundae* 13.

⁶ St. Martin of Tours (d. 397)

20. Facta autem oratione Caudatam (*Cande*) pervenit, ibi quoque Dominicae mensae locupletes offerens apparatus, ubi gloriosissimus Christi confessor et pontifex Martinus beatum coelo reddidit spiritum. Erat haud procul inde villa quaedam Suedas (vulgo *Saiz*) nomine, quae ei lege donationis accesserat, ad quam cum beata sanctimonialis declinasset, et aliquot diebus in ea moraretur, delatum est ad aures ejus regem velle eam revocare ad palatium, graviter conqueri tantae mulieris consilio et sapientia desolatam esse regni majestatem. His auditis, Deo devota mulier intremuit, totaque ad Deum conversa, ne saecularibus illecebris rursus eam pateretur involvi, nocte ac die fletu profusa deprecatur. Disposuit etiam teneros artus gravioribus atteri suppliciis, ut si parum prece proficeret cruciatu saltem votorum mereretur effectum.

21. Erat tunc temporis in castro Cainone (*Chinon*) vir justus et timoratus, nomine Joannes, quem gravissimo reclusum ergastulo conspicuum religio fecerat et famosum. Huic non *modici pretiosum felte aureum*, gemmis et margaritis mirabiliter ornatum, in quo erant aureorum mille solidi, quod adhuc illi supererat ex regalibus ornamentis, beata Radegundis per fideles nuntios transmisit, orans et orari pro se, et incunctanter sibi aperiri, si quid de praefata regis dispositione vel certo disceret nuntio vel spiritu praevideret. Quibus auditis, vir Dei proximam noctem in vigiliis et orationibus expendit. Mane autem facto, quae sibi divina innotuere elementia illi propere nuntiavit, scilicet regi minime permissum ut rursus eam suo assignaret conjugio, licet hoc multiplici nisu perficere conaretur. Vestem quoque cilicinam, qua rebellis caro graviore disciplina frangeretur, Christi filiae, sicut ipsa postulaverat, destinavit.

20. Once this prayer was completed, she arrived at Candé,⁷ there, too, offering rich trappings for that altar where that most glorious confessor of Christ and bishop, Martin, gave up his spirit to heaven. There was not far away a certain villa named Saix, which had come to her by the law of donation, to which the blessed nun turned to go and dwelled in it for some days. It was brought to her ears that the king wanted to recall her to the palace, deeply lamenting that the majesty of the kingdom was left without the counsel and wisdom of such a woman. Upon hearing this, this woman, devoted to God, trembled and, turning completely to God, prayed day and night with a flood of tears that he not allow her to be involved in worldly allurements again. She arranged for her tender body to be worn down by harsher punishments, so that if she were to accomplish little with prayer, at least she would merit the fulfillment of her vows by means of torture.

21. There was at that time in the *castrum* of Chinon⁸ a just and God-fearing man named John, whom religion had made illustrious and famous as a recluse in a most dreadful dungeon.⁹ The blessed Radegund sent to him through faithful messengers a precious gold *felte* of no small [value],¹⁰ wonderfully ornate with gems and pearls, in which there were a thousand solidi of gold pieces—which still remained to her from her royal adornments—begging that he both pray on her behalf and reveal to her without hesitation, if he should learn, by means of a messenger or spirit, the disposition of the king with regard to the aforementioned matter. These things having been heard, the man of God spent the next night in vigils and prayers. When morning dawned, he quickly announced what the divine elements had made known to him; namely, that it was not permitted to the king that he assign her again to marriage, although he might attempt to make this happen with various efforts. He also sent a hair shirt to the daughter of Christ—just as she had requested—by which [her] rebel flesh might be broken with harsher discipline.

⁷ 30 miles east of Tours.

⁸ 20 miles southwest of Tours.

⁹ A hermit named John of Chinon is mentioned in Gregory, *Glory of the Confessors*, 23.

¹⁰ Baudonivia: *adhuc de regali secum habens ornamento felte fusum ex auro...*

22. Suscepto igitur et munere et nuntio, beata sanctimonialis Deo gratias agens Pictaviis laeta discessit. Nec mora litteris ad regem destinatis, juxta praefatae moenia civitatis fieri sibi oratorium postulavit; exauditum est ejus votum, et jubente rege Pientius eo tempore Pictavensis episcopus, et dux Ostrapius monasterium brevi tempore consummarunt; suscepta in eo virginum multitudo centesimi fructus praemium doctrinis beatissimae sanctimonialis adeptae est et exemplis. Sub praefati quippe loci abbatissa, quae ex ejus electione gubernaculum suscepit animarum, sic illa vivere studuit, ut humilior omnibus, omnibus abjectior haberetur. Omnibus obsequio quidem subesse, sanctimonia vero praeesse decertabat.

23. Sed quoniam pie vivere volentes persecutionem necesse est patiantur, ad desideratum susceptae navigationis portum beatae mulieri quiete non licuit pervenire. Quod enim ipsa dudum formidaverat, rex quorundam consiliis facturum se disposuit, scilicet ut a sacris illam abstraheret officinis, et vinculum renodaret nuptiarum. Ut igitur impie perageret quod sacrilega mente conceperat, assumpto secum filio suo Sigeberto, sanctoque Germano Parisiensi episcopo, Pictavium proficisci decrevit. Cum autem jam Turonum pervenisset, et hujusmodi rumor totam peragrasset provinciam, sanctimonialis illa praefato pontifici plenos . . . apices destinavit, orans ne pateretur susceptae contemplationis requiem molestiis aliquibus infestari; fieri non posse ut ipsa regem hominum Regi praeferret angelorum.

22. Having received the gift [of the hair shirt] and the news, the blessed nun, giving thanks to God, withdrew to Poitiers happy. Without delay, with letters sent to the king, she asked that an oratory be made for her adjacent to the fortifications of the same city. Her wish having been heard and with the king commanding it, Pientius, the bishop of Poitiers at that time, and Duke Ostrapius finished the monastery in short period of time. Upon being received into it, a multitude of virgins obtained the reward of the hundredfold fruit¹¹ by the teachings and examples of the most blessed nun. Indeed under the abbess of the aforementioned place—who received the governance of souls as a result of here election—[Radegund] was eager to live [in such a way that] she would be regarded as more humble and more abject than all the others. She strove to be subordinant to all in service, but preeminent in holiness.

23. But since it is necessary for those wanting to live piously that they suffer persecution,¹² it was not permitted to the blessed woman to come quietly to the desired harbor of the voyage she had undertaken. What she had previously dreaded, the king disposed himself to do, in accordance with the advice of certain ones; that is to say, that she be taken away from her sacred offices and be bound again by the chain of marriage. So that he might impiously carry out what he had conceived in his sacrilegious mind, he decided to set out for Tours, taking his son Sigebert and the holy Bishop Germanus of Paris with him.¹³ When he had already arrived at Tours, and a rumor to this effect had spread over the entire province, that nun sent letters full [of . . .] to the aforementioned bishop, praying that he now allow the repose of contemplation that she had undertaken to be vexed by certain disturbances; that it not be possible for her to give preference to a king of men over the King of angels.

¹¹ Matthew 13:8; Augustine interpreted this as referring to the comparative rewards of virgins (a hundred-fold), widows (sixty-fold), and married women (thirty-fold). Augustine, *de virginitate* 44ff.

¹² Matthew 5:10: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

¹³ Bishop Germanus of Paris (d. 576).

24. Decursis episcopus litteris, pedibus regis advolvitur, implorat ut a suo desistat proposito, manus a consecrata Christo absteat; impendat Spiritui sancto reverentiam, qui in vase fragili propriam fecerat mansionem. Exauditur pontifex interpellans, et quia vim paverat, non erubuit delictum confiteri. Supplicat ad veniam potestas, et cuius conjugium non meruit, ejus precibus adjuvari deprecatur. Ne quis autem deinceps in eosdem conatus regem praevis excitaret consiliis, gravis illos depopulata est ultio, quorum persuasionibus eam rex ad nuptiale debitum disposuerat revocare. Qualem enim blasphemus et infelix Arius proprii furoris exitum invenit, talem illi visceribus egestis divinam experti sunt indignationem.

CAPUT IV. *Austera sanctae abstinencia, dira corporis afflictatio, aliaeque virtutes monasticae, quibus tunc votissimum Pictavii fulsit.*

25. Exinde sanctissima mulier omnem metum projiciens, cursum feliciter consummavit, fidem servavit, repositam sibi a Domino Deo coronam justitiae exspectans. Fuit autem ejus intentio se ipsam constanter affligere, pauperibus indefesse famulari, legem conventus inoffense custodire. In tot affectus una et mulier divisa, sic in singulis tota fuit, ut videretur unicuique curam praestare singularem. Ex eo enim die quo palatii gloriam penitus abdicavit, de parcissimo quo sustentabatur edulio bonam sibi studuit adimere portionem. Extunc nullam coquorum peritiam, nullum gulae novit irritamentum. Extunc etiam communes aspernata delicias, necessitati legumine consuluit et herbis; talibus quoque mensis nullum olei, nullum salis accessit condimentum. Adfuit ei et panis, sed hordaceus, sed quem coxit. Hic in die semel sumptus jejunium solvit, non removet esuriam. Sitim, quam nimia panis accendit ariditas, vel aquae mulsae, vel piratii haustu mitigavit. Nam vini, seu cervisiae nullam fecit omnino mentionem. Pectus [**Lectus? but not neuter**] ejus induratum cineribus, et injecto desuper cilicio, crucem spondebat non quietem.

24. The bishop, having hurriedly read the letters, lay prostrate at the king's feet, imploring that he desist from his intention, that he keep away from one who was consecrated to Christ; that he give reverence to the Holy Spirit, who had made its own home in this fragile vessel. The objecting bishop was heeded, and because [the king] feared [the bishop's] power, he was not ashamed to confess his sin. Strength begged for forgiveness and he whose marriage was not worthy, prayed to be assisted by [the bishop's] prayers. Lest anyone thereafter encourage the king to undertake the same efforts in accordance with that prior counsel, grave retribution despoiled those by whose persuasion the king had decided to recall [Radegund] to her nuptial obligation. In the same way that the blasphemus and wretched Arius found an escape from his own madness, so those ones [who advised the king] experienced divine indignation with [their] bowels discharged.¹⁴

Chapter IV. The austere abstinence of the holy woman, the dire affliction of [her] body, and the other monastic virtues with which the consecrated one of Poitiers shone at that time.

25. After that, this most holy woman, throwing away all her fear, consummated her path happily and preserved her faith, awaiting the crown of justice set aside for her by the Lord God. It was her intention to afflict herself constantly, to serve the poor tirelessly, and to protect the laws of the convent without any hindrance. Divided between so many loves, this one woman was [nonetheless] complete in [her attentiveness] to individuals, so that she might seem to be bestowing special care on every single one. From that day when she completely abdicated the glory of the palace, she was eager to deprive herself of the good parts of that most meager food by which she was sustained. From then on, she knew no skill of the cooks nor any temptation toward gluttony. From then on, having spurned common delights, she attended to her needs with legumes and herbs. During such meals she stayed away from oil and salt as enhancements. Bread was present to her, but [only] barley [bread], which she [herself] cooked. This [barley bread], eaten once a day broke her fast but did nothing to remove her hunger. She mitigated her thirst, which the excessive dryness of the bread kindled, either with milky water of a draught of *piratius*.¹⁵ Of wine or beer, she made no mention at all. Her breast [**bed?**] made hard by ashes, with a rough cloth thrown over her,¹⁶ she dedicated [herself] to the cross not to peace.

¹⁴ "Starting in the 360s CE, numerous late ancient sources began to report that Arius' death was the result of explosive gastrointestinal problems he suffered in the city of Constantinople while he was attempting to negotiate admittance to the church there." Ellen Muehlberger, "The Legend of Arius' Death: Imagination, Space and Filth in Late Ancient Historiography,"

Past & Present 227 (2015), 3.

¹⁵ *Piratius* may be a pear-based drink. Pear in Latin is *pirus*.

¹⁶ A reference to sackcloth and ashes, symbolic of penance.

26. Sane et cum tot et tam gravibus suppliciis vix tenera mulieris membra sufficerent, diebus tamen Quadragesimae mulier addidit ad poenam, Dominus ad coronam. Toto siquidem tempore illo, praeter Dominicam diem, ab omni pane penitus abstinuit. Toto tempore illo, tenui refectioe radicum sustentata est et herbarum. Earum austeritatem nulla salis aut olei temperavit adjectio. Per idem tempus, ardorem sitis tactu simplicis aquae mitigavit. Ea enim solis diebus praefatae refectiois, et tam parce sumebatur, ut laceratis ariditate labiis, pristinam cantandi psalmos amitteret facultatem; ab illorum tamen modulatione nullo desistens incommodo, cursum, prout poterat explere, non cessabat. Inter haec praepudicia carnis et tortores cruciatus, continuata oratione noctem saepe duxit insomnem. Comes ejus vigiliis uber fletus, et coelestium meditatio gaudiorum. Ad haec illa quodam volatu mentis ascendens, ita rebus intererat hominum, ut et rebus interesset angelorum; gustabat et videbat quam suavis sit Dominus, suspirabat et dicebat: «Misericordiae [*Vulg. sapientiae*] ejus non est numerus (Psal. CXLVI, 5).»

26. And truly when her tender limbs scarcely withstood such numerous and great tortures, the woman added to the pain (and the Lord to her crown) during the days of Lent. During that entire season, except on Sunday, she abstained completely from all bread. During that whole season she was sustained by a scanty meal of roots and herbs. No addition of salt or oil tempered the austerity [of these dishes]. Over that same time, she mitigated the ardor of thirst with a touch of plain water. On those particular days of aforementioned refreshment [i.e., on Sundays], it [the water] was consumed so sparingly that she lost her former ability to sing the psalms due to the dryness of her torn lips. Not desisting from singing [the psalms] for any inconvenience, she cease from [singing] the series [of psalms], insofar as she was capable of finishing it. In the midst of these prejudgments of [her own] flesh and the torturers of [her own] suffering, she often spent sleepless nights in continual prayer. Her companions in these vigils were copious weeping and the meditation of celestial joys. She ascended to these things with a certain flight of the mind, so that she might be as present among the affairs of the angels as she was among the affairs of men as. She experienced and saw how sweet the Lord could be, and sighed and said: “Of his mercy there is no number.” (Psalm 146:5).¹⁷

¹⁷ Psalm 146:5: “Great is our Lord, and great is his power: and of his wisdom there is no number.” Here *misericaordiae* is substituted for *sapientiae*.

27. Et quoniam spiritu quoque docebatur, quia qui plus laborat, plus mercedis accipiet, jejuniorum atque vigiliarum laboribus novum carnis addidit cruciatum. Facta enim ad poenas ingeniosa, laminam de auricalco sibi fabricari praecepit. Hanc ignibus calefactam teneris membris altius imprimere consuevit, ne [f. ut], si quid voluptate deliquisset, cruciatu sequente purgaretur. Hoc tormentum carni saepius infixit, hostiliter persecuta se ipsam, quia, fortasse cum nollet, placuerat ad culpam. Una quoque Quadragesimarum, cum ad promerendam Domini gratiam praedicti labores minus sibi sufficere viderentur, brachia simul et collum ferreis astrinxit circulis, reliquum corpus triplici catena circumcingens. Solum ferri pondus grave supplicium, sed gravius altior carnis incisio. Ea ferro superducta, secretum tulit et sine teste martyrium. Transierat jam Quadragesimalis observatio, cum ferrum profundius inclusum suprema coegit educi necessitas. Hoc igitur vix educto, tantum sanguinis ex lacero corpore defluxit, ut exhaustis vitali substantia praecordiis, pene spiritum exhalaret. Sic illa se ipsam de die in diem persequens, sibi vixit ad supplicium, reliquis ad exemplum.

27. And because she was also taught by the spirit that the one who labors more will receive more wages, she added to the labors of her fasts and vigils new tortures of the flesh. Made clever when it came to pain, she ordered a plate of brass to be made for herself. She was accustomed to press it, once it had been made hot in the fire, deeply into her members so that, if anything caused her to sin in terms of pleasure, it might be purged by the torture that followed. She often applied this torment to her flesh, persecuting herself in a hostile manner, because it might have been that, even though she did not wish it, she had been pleased to a sinful degree. On one of the forty [days of Lent], when the aforementioned labors seemed to her less than sufficient for earning the Lord's grace, she simultaneously bound her arms and neck with iron rings and girded the rest of her body with triple chains. The weight of the iron alone was a serious punishment, but even more serious was the deep cutting of her skin. Covered over with iron, she bore this secret martyrdom and did so without any witnesses. The observance of Lent had already passed when supreme necessity compelled the iron, which had sunken in more deeply, to be taken off. With it having barely been removed, so much blood flowed out from her torn body that, with her breast exhausted of this vital substance, she almost breathed out her spirit. Thus she, persecuting herself day after day, lived as a punishment to herself, and as an example to the rest.

28. Alia deinde Quadragesima, aliud adversum fatigata toties membra tormenti genus innovavit. Aeneum quippe vas ardenti plenum carbone sibi praecipiens apponi, familiares egredi jubet, obserat cellulam, cilicio exuitur, et femina supra feminam fortis, armatur ad poenam. Parum sibi videbatur cor contritum quotidie Deo offerre, nisi et carnem in spontaneum cremaret holocaustum. Praeparato ergo ad crucem animo, in ignem se projicit; carbo quaeritur ardentior, et versatis desuper artubus, cutem et carnem quaesitum rumpit et penetrat incendium. Mora in igne longior, tenerum corpus altiori vulnere persequitur. Candens aes advolvitur membris, intima fervore consumuntur. Agitur no[n] quid incombustum remaneat, tanquam si ipsa partibus incombustis invideret. Adjicitur cruciatui, velut alter cruciatus, ipsa combustae carnis incuria. Latere credidit gloriosam femina victoriam, sed putrefacta caro secretum fetore prodidit martyrium; sanguis quoque toto defluens corpore, quod lingua tacuit indicavit.

29. Quis audeat Radegundi praemium derogare martyrii? Quis gladium, quis percussorem defuisse fabuletur? Quis ibi martyrium neget, ubi tortor est femina, instrumentum flamma, Christus causa? Si percussorem quaeras, nemo alteri crudelior quam ipsa sibi. Si gladium, quot carbones, tot gladios invenies. Si causam, Christum lucrari conabatur. Sentiant alii quod voluerint, ego affirmare non verebor Radegundim, hispido vulneratam cilicio, continuis afflictam jejuniis, ferri pondere maceratam, carbonibus et candenti ustulatam aere, praemium martyris et meruisse in terris, et in coelis obtinere.

28. During another Lent, she thought up another kind of torment against her often exhausted members. Ordering a bronze vessel full of burning coal to be set before her, she commanded the members of her household to leave, barred [the door of] the cell, took off her rough garment, and this woman, strong beyond [the ordinary] woman, armed herself for pain. It seemed insufficient to offer her contrite heart to God every day if she did not burn her flesh as a spontaneous offering. With her soul prepared for the cross, she threw herself down into the fire. The hottest coal was sought after and, with her arms turning over them, the fire that she sought after broke and penetrated her skin and flesh. The longer delay in the fire, the deeper the wound with which she persecuted her tender body. The gleaming bronze is turned toward her limbs, which are consumed with the deepest heat. It is done so that nothing may remain that is not consumed, as if she herself begrudged the unburned parts. The very neglect of her burned flesh was added to the torture, as another form of torture. The woman believed her glorious victory to be hidden, but the putrified flesh betrayed with its stench her secret martyrdom, and the blood flowing out of her entire body indicated what her tongue kept quiet.

29. Who would dare to diminish the prize of Radegund's martyrdom? Who would invent the story that a sword and executioner were missing? Who would deny [the case for] martyrdom where a woman is the torturer, the flame is the instrument, and Christ is the cause? If you seek an executioner, no one could be crueler to anyone than she was to herself. If [you seek] a sword, you will find as many coals as swords. If [you seek] a cause, she was trying to win Christ. Others may feel as they wish, but I am not ashamed to affirm that Radegund, wounded by a rough garment, afflicted with continuous fasts, exhausted by the weight of iron, scorched by coals and glowing brass, both earned the prize of martyrdom on earth and obtained it heaven.

30. Putabit fortasse aliquis illam mirabilem feminam, tot fatigatam cruciatibus, ad opera misericordiae tardius accessisse. Cujus profecto in hac virtute devotionem si quis nosse desiderat, paginam decurrat subsequentem. Ex quo illa reginam exiit, et humilem induit monacham, omni tempore, quinta feria et Sabbato, collectis pauperibus, et balnea, et communem praeeparavit refectionem. His in diversorio susceptis, suis ipsa manibus capita lavit, unguibus abrasit scabiem, putredines absternit, eduxit vermes ulceribus, admovit oleum; et quibuslibet ancillulis humilior, nullis eorum necessitatibus erubuit famulari. Infirmas etiam mulieres, quas hujusmodi cura egere sentiebat, balneis deponere, squalentes confricare humeros, et singulis membris congruum studebat exhibere obsequium.

31. Perscrutabatur diligenter quae quibus essent necessaria, pannos et sotulares prout indigebant, omnibus administrans. Illis taliter non ponere sedilia, nec mappas afferre, nec offerre aquam manibus abluendis gravabatur. Apponebat et fercula, cibos lautiores providens infirmis, et dispensans. Si quis gravioribus incommodis urgeretur, huic ipsa panem, ipsa carnes incidebat. Nonnullos suis ipsa manibus pavit. Pendebat ab humero linteum, quo vel ab ore debilium, vel a cochlearibus cadentia tergebantur. Aderant puellae comites, sed earum nulla famulantis vices exceperat. Radegundis curam qua tempus agebat, agebat; sicut necessitas occurrebat, discurrebat. Radegundis ante jacentes inclinata est, ante sedentes stetit, jejunavit ante comedentes. Nullus ibi tumultus, Radegundi monasticum quodammodo indicente silentium. Peracto denique convivio, in cellulam festinabat, orans ut cuncta ejus operatio, et a Deo semper inciperet, et per Deum coepta finiretur. Omni quoque Dominica, sicut in praefatis diebus, egenis convivium procuravit. Caeter[or]um, quia eo die celebratio instabat missarum solemnitas, post distributa prima fercula, per [post] oblatum semel omnibus poculum, festinantius ad monasterium revertebatur, relictis ante pauperes puellis, quae coeptum sollicito peragerent servitium.

30. Perhaps someone will think that that marvelous woman, worn down by so many tortures, was slow to take up works of mercy. Certainly, if one desires to learn of her devotion to this virtue, he should turn to the following page. From [the moment] in which she cast off her queen[ly garb] and dressed [the part of] a humble nun, she, on the fifth feria and on the sabbath in every season, prepared baths and common refreshment for the gathered paupers. When they had been received in a guest quarters, she herself washed their heads with her hands, scraped away the mange with her nails, washed away the putrid parts, drew the worms out from their sores, and applied oil. She was more humble than any of [her] handmaids and was unashamed to serve them in any of their needs. She was eager to put infirm women (whom she sensed were lacking in care of this kind) in baths, to scrub their dirty arms, and to show appropriate consideration to each individual limb.

31. She diligently scrutinized those things that might be necessary for them, administering bread and shoes to everyone insofar as these were lacking. It did not bother her to put out chairs for them so, to bring them tablecloths, or to offer them water for washing their hands. She put out trays, providing and dispensing the most elegant food to the infirm. If someone was beset with more serious handicaps, she would cut the bread and meat for that one herself. She fed some with her own hands. She hung from her arm a piece of linen, with which whatever fell from the mouths or spoons of the weak could be wiped up. [Her] young female companions were present, but none of them took turns serving. Radegund administered the care that the occasion called for, and, as necessity presented itself, she rushed to [tend to] it. Radegund bent down before the ones who were lying, sat before the ones who were sitting, and fasted before the ones who were eating. There was no disturbance there, with Radegund having declared in some way a monastic silence. When the banquet was finished, she hastened to her little cell, praying that all her activity would always be initiated by God and, once begun, be finished through God. Moreover, on every Sunday, as on the aforementioned days [of Lent?], she prepared a banquet for the needy. Because on that day (out of all the others) the most distinguished solemnity of the mass was pressing, she—after the first trays [of food] was distributed and after a drink was offered once to everyone—returned in a hurry to the monastery, while the girls remained before the paupers, carrying out with care the service that had been begun.

32. Erat ei etiam circa leprosos tam devota sedulitas, ac si ipsum adesse Christum minime dubitaret; quibus benigne susceptis, ipsa eorum manus aqua repente lavabat, suspenso tactu laceram cutem fovere non abhorrens. Mulieres autem, quarum vultus praefata valitudo terribilis vulneraverat, non amplexari verebatur, non arctius osculari. Apposita deinde mensa, ne vel durius, vel pede pendulo sederent, stratis mollioribus et scabellis agebatur. Quis neget Radegundem susceptis ministrasse leprosis? Quis dicere audeat commissum alii plenum copiosa mercede negotium? Nunquid abhorruit offerre poculum, quam conferre osculum minime fastidivit? Nemo credat Radegundim tam tepide coronam dilexisse, ut oblatam verita sit promereri. Imperfecte sollicita esset de praemio, nam hujus obsequium praemium aliis invidet. Invidit autem quae succincta fastidiosum sine fastidio explebat officium. Cum autem jam pransi surgerent, necessaria eis largiebatur indumenta, discedentium manibus et osculum porrigens, et argentum. Ubicumque autem vel febribus, vel quibuslibet morbis afflictos decumbere noverat, quae illis salutaria essent, quae manducarent libentius, quas appeterent delicias curiosius inquirebat. Nullius votis defuit, dummodo tempori concordarent. Plerumque accidit ut quos diutius languisse constabat, ejus eulogiis amissam reciperent sanitatem. Stupebant omnes ejus munificentiam, mirabantur unde tot divitiae, nescientes jam solvi Dominicum illud promissum: «Date et dabitur vobis (Luc. VI, 38).»

32. There was in her such a devout attentiveness toward lepers that it was as if she had no doubt that Christ himself was present. Having received them kindly, she unexpectedly washed them in water with her own hands, not shrinking with an uncertain touch from touching the torn skin with care. She did not dread embracing the women, whose faces had been wounded by that terrible aforementioned illness, or to kiss them up close. With a table placed near by, it was furnished with soft chairs and stools lest [the lepers] sit either too uncomfortably or with their feet hanging down. Who would deny that Radegund [herself] ministered to the lepers who had been received [there]? Who would dare to say that the task, filled with copious mercy, was entrusted to others? Is it possible that she dreaded offering [one of them] a cup any less than it bothered her to give [one of them] a kiss? May no one believe that Radegund loved the [heavenly] crown so tepidly that she dreaded to acquire the sacrifice; that she was imperfectly concerned about the [heavenly] reward, for she envied the reward of this service to others. She envied anyone who, prepared for action, completed a nauseating task without any squeamishness. When [the lepers] got up, having already eaten, she generously provided the necessary clothing for them, extending a kiss and silver to the hands of those who were leaving. Wherever she learned that those afflicted with fevers or other kinds of malady were lying ill, she inquired most curiously what might be good for them, what they might gladly eat, and what treats they might desire. She was absent with regard to the wishes of no one, as long as they were consistent with the season. For the most part it happened that those whom she was certain to have languished for a long time, they regained their health sent down with her blessings. Everyone was amazed by her munificence, and they wondered where her many riches came from, not knowing that that promise of the Lord was already fulfilled: "Give and it shall be given to you." (Luke 6:38).

33. Hinc illa pauperibus locuples se ipsam sub gravi paupertate coercuit. Mollem cultum inexorabili persecuta est odio, quibus cilicium tegetetur, vestes induta grossiores. His etiam, cum posset pretiosis abundare, saepius eguit, inter virtutes sciens esse paupertatem, quam necessitas non adducit, sed voluntas. Unde cum ei tempore quodam manicae defuissent, unam de caligis suis in operimentum divisit brachiorum. Beata mulier, quae sic abundare noluit, ut nullam sentiret egestatem. Nondum sibi verus pauper videretur, nisi cum paupertate spiritus rerum quoque penuriam sustineret.

34. Porro inter has circa pauperes curas et quotidianos carnis cruciatus, ad Matutinas surgere prima; prima statutis adesse horis; prima, quae forte jubebantur, implere festinabat. Quod si caeteris tardius vel inchoasset, aliquod bonum vel egisset, statim se negligentiae arguebat, tanquam si poenaliter deliquisset, veniam postulare non differens. In iis autem administrandis quae unicuique legibus ordinis imponuntur, aliis ipsa plerumque successit, nullam sibi [non] otiose diem transactam credit, nisi labore suo labores aliarum relevaret. Factura coquinam, nullum causata est incommodum, nullam praetendit excusationem. Hanc ingressa, sordes non erubuit ejicere, quas videre quaelibet ancilla fastidiret. Dehinc ipsa de puteo aquam hausit, ipsa tulit, ipsa focum accendit, scultellas mundavit, incidit olera, curam leguminibus adhibens, et coquendi sufficienter et congrue dispensandi. Sic illa monasticis obsecuta legibus, coeptam sine querela septimanam complevit. Totum praeterea monasterii pavimentum, atque officinas, seu etiam penetralia tam submisso mundare consuevit, ut nec plenos sordibus cophinos efferre, nec fetorem sustinere recusaret. Dummodo pateretur pro Christo, paupertas illi divitiae, labor quies, opprobrium gloria videbatur.

33. From then on that wealthy woman forced herself [to live] under strict poverty with paupers. She persecuted her soft refinement with relentless hatred, and dressed in coarse clothing, with which her hair shirt was covered. Though she could have abounded with precious things, she was most often wanting in them, knowing that poverty was among the virtues, [a poverty] which her will introduced, not her need. As a result of which, when once she lacked sleeves, she divided up one of her boots for the sake of covering her arms. Blessed [be] the woman who in this way refused to abound in this way, so that experienced no want. She did not yet seem to herself to be a true pauper, unless she sustained her want of things with a poverty of spirit.

34. Amidst her concerns toward the paupers and the daily tortures of the flesh, she hastened to be the first to rise for Matins, the first to be present at the [other] established hours, and the first to fulfill those things that by chance were commanded. If she began or did any good deed later than the others, she immediately blamed herself for the negligence, not hesitating to ask for a pardon as if she had offended in some punishable way. In those matters that were to be administered, the ones that were imposed on each one by the rules of the order, she for the most part submitted to others; she believed that a day passed idly for her unless she alleviated with her labor the labors of others. She alleged no inconvenience and offered no excuse with regard to kitchen work. Upon entering it, she was not embarrassed to throw our dirty things which any given handmaid was squeamish about even seeing. She herself drew water from the well, she herself carried it, she herself lit the fire, cleaned the plates, and cut up the greens, exercising care with the legumes, care in cooking a sufficient [amount] and dispensing them equally. Thus she, having yielded to the monastic rules, completed the week that she had begun without any complaint. She was accustomed to cleaning the entire floor of the monastery, as well as the workshops and the innermost places, so submissively that she did not object to carrying out baskets full of sordid things or enduring the foul odor. While she suffered for Christ, her poverty seemed to her to be riches, her labor repose, and her shame glory.

35. Porro ad communem sedenti mensam ponebantur eadem quae caeteris, sed non eadem sumebantur, superpositam quippe secundo pani similam, velut commessura labiis admovebat, cum saporem palato penitus sentire fastidiret. Ne tamen omnino deficeret ex hordaceo pane, sumpta est prope jejuna refectio. Denique surgens a mensis, hymnum Deo solvebat reliquo tempore vel lectioni deputato, vel psalmis. Cum enim a psalmodum modulatione desisteret, aliqua monacharum aderat, quae divinarum recitaret oracula Scripturarum, quas illa studiosius audiens, aliis persuadebat ut legentem diligenter attenderent, et de interiori habitu speculum consulerent animarum. Quoties obscurum offendebat locum, nescientibus exponebat, increpabat negligentes.

36. Diaeta igitur tam beatis transacta negotiis, cum jam caeterae dormirent, ipsa singularum sotulares tergebat et ungebat, diligentius intuens quae novis indigerent. Dehinc accedebat ad lectum, quo sicut nihil humiliter, ita nihil minus aptum voluptati. Eo quoque tempore lectrix aderat, ut beata sanctimonialis etiam a somno evigilans, spiritualibus deliciis aleretur. Si quando illa sileret, opinata quiescere fatigatam, ac dormire, statim audiebat: «Quid taces? Lege, ne cesses.» Praeterea, ne cor ejus vigilasse dubitetur, cum membra modico sopore quiescerent, psalmos etiam dormiens cantabat, dictura veraciter cum Propheta: «Meditatio cordis mei in conspectu tuo semper (Psal. XVIII, 15).»

37. Surgebat autem media nocte, et quousque congregatio monasterium adiret, in lacrymis et gemitu psalmis instans et contemplationi. Contemplatio quippe sibi sic ejus animum vindicavit, ut, licet absens corpore, spiritu tamen illam tantum civitatem frequentaret, cujus plateae sonant laudes de die in diem. Tota illius deliciis tenebatur, nec aliud cor eructare poterat, quam coelestium nectar, et gratiam gaudiorum. Unde, cum quadam die praetereuntem juxta se posticariam nominare vellet, et ei aliquid imponere negotii, pro ejus nomine protulit Alleluia. Idem saepius felix error incurrit. Ubi erat thesaurus suus, ibi erat et cor suum.

35. The same things were placed before her, sitting at the communal table, as were placed before the others, but they were not consumed. She would move it up to her lips as [if she were] about to eat, while inside she felt an aversion to experiencing its taste on her palate. But lest she be left entirely wanting, refreshment (that was practically a fast) was taken in from barley bread. At length, rising from the table, she released a hymn to God, with any left over time being assigned to the reading or to the psalms. Whenever she stopped [her] singing of the psalms, one of the nuns was there, who recited the oracles of the divine scriptures. Eagerly listening to them, she persuaded the others to diligently attend to the reading, and deliberate on the mirror of their souls with regard to their inner character. As often as she encountered an obscure part [of the reading], she explained to the ignorant and rebuked the negligent.

36. Her regimen having been carried out with such blessed activities, she—while the rest of [the nuns] were asleep—cleaned and oiled the shoes of each one, most diligently considering who might be in need of new ones. She would then approach [her] bed, compared to which there was nothing more humble and nothing less conducive to pleasure. At that time a [female] reader was present so that the blessed nun, keeping [her] vigil from sleep, was could be nourished with spiritual delights. Whenever that [reader] fell silent, thinking that [Redegund], tired, was at rest and asleep, she would at once hear: “Why are you silent? Read! Don’t stop!” Meanwhile, lest anyone doubt that her heart was awake when her body had quieted with a little sleep, she would sing the psalms in her sleep, ready to assert truthfully along with the prophet: “the meditation of my heart always in thy sight” (Psalm 18:15).

37. She used to get up in the middle of the night pressing on with the psalms with tears and sighing, until the congregation approached the monastery. In this manner, contemplation vindicated her soul to herself so that, although she was absent in body, she would frequent that city [Jerusalem?] so much in spirit, [that city] whose paths resounded praises day in and day out. All of that [city] was held with delights, such that her heart was not able to bring forth anything other than the nectar of heavenly things and the grace of joyful things. And so, on a certain day when she wished to nominate someone who was passing by next to her as bathroom attendant and to impose something of this task on that one, she offered a “Hallelujah” in that person’s name. This same happy deception happened often. Where her treasure was, there also was her heart (Matthew 6:21).

38. Quid autem loquar de aegrotis sanctimonialibus, quibus omni die visitatis, delicatiores cibos jejuna Radegundis praeparabat? Ipsa nullum vel infirmitatis, vel sexus abhorrens incommodum, languentes levabat et lavabat, efferebat et referebat. Ipsa eis sorbiciunculas, ipsa decoctiones procurabat, nihil eorum praetermittens quae decumbentium valetudo postulasset. In colligendis quoque hospitibus non minor sedulitas, non minor et devotio fuit. Iis in Christo susceptis ipsa pedes lavit, ipsa pransuris aquam porrexit. Denique ipsa ministravit omnia quibus hospitem necessitati subvenitur. Quod si contigisset religiosam suscipi personam, de moribus hominis, de studio, de vita secretius inquirebat; si eum sub arctioribus disciplinis vivere didicisset, ejusdem se subdebat institutis, ejus exemplis ad virtutum utebatur incrementum. Infra perfectum se credebat profecisse, nisi in actibus suis actus omnium refulgerent perfectorum. Hos ejus opera loquebantur, hos ipsa Christi virginibus commendabat, hos praedicabat imitandos. Nihil tamen suggerebat aliis quod non magis exemplo doceret quam verbo.

39. Tota ejus vita loquebatur sanctimoniam. Tota Christum redolebat. Praeter odium nihil illi cum vitiis fuit. Zelus legis, et jugis in lege meditatio virtutum introduxit conventum. De his nihil sinister, nihil felix eventus imminuit. In omni statu secura fuit apud mulierem justitia. Ea nullam de splendore natalium, nullam fecit de gloria conjugii mentionem. Regis amplexus, quibus nec etiam captiva capta est, admissos potius doluit quam dimissos. Hos experta, dispendium pudoris praerogativa supplevit meritorum. Attende mores, actus considera, jugem inspicere poenitentiam, fatearis necesse nullam sanctimoniali defuisse virtutem. Nisi enim ei esset prudentia, nec salutaria noxiis, nec fugiendis appetenda praetulisset. Fortitudine autem atque temperantia semper sibi constans facta est et aequalis.

38. What might I say about the sick nuns, whom she visited every day and for whom the fasting Radegund prepared sumptuous foods? Abhorring no inconvenience of any illness or of sex [nakedness?], she lifted up and washed the listless, and carried them out and back again [to relieve themselves?]. She herself procured for them small portions of food and potions, overlooking none of the things that the wellbeing of the one ones lying there might demand. There was no less attentiveness and no less devotion in [her] gathering of guests. Once these ones had been received in Christ, she herself washed their feet, she herself offered water to those who were about to eat. In short, she administered everything with which assisted the needs of the guests. If she happened to have received a religious person [at the monastery], she secretly inquired about the man's customs, zeal, and [manner of] life; if she learned that he had lived under stricter disciplines, she subjected herself to his principles and used his examples toward the increase of [her own] virtues. She believed herself to have accomplished less than perfection unless the acts of all the perfect shone in her actions. Her works spoke of them, she herself commended them to the virgins of Christ, and she preached them as actions to be imitated. But she suggested nothing to others that she did not teach more by example than by words.

39. Her whole life spoke holiness. Her whole life reeked of Christ. Beyond her hatred [of vices], she had nothing to do them. [Her] zeal for the law and [her] continual meditation on the law introduced an assembly of virtues. With regard to these, neither anything unfavorable nor favorable impaired the outcome [of her judgment]. In the presence of [this] woman justice was secure for [those of] every rank. She made no mention of the splendor of her origins, or of the glory of her marriage. She grieved the embraces of the king—by which she, though a captive, was not held captive—that were accepted more than the ones rejected. Having experienced them, privilege of [her] merits made up for the loss of modesty. Note her behavior, consider her actions, examine her continual penance, and you will acknowledge that no virtue necessary for sanctity was lacking in her. Unless it was prudent for her, she prioritized neither beneficial things for the guilty nor the things desired by those going into exile. With fortitude and temperance, she was always made constant and fair to herself.

40. Inter haec vero principatum quemdam obtinuit servata usque in finem humilitas. Humilitatem quoque nemo patet pauperi defuisse, quae sceptrum tenens superbiam ignoravit. Si de abstinentia quaeritur, pauca indulgit naturae, nulla gulae. Nemo illa mansuetior, quae regina, et offensa, nullam quaesivit ultionem. In omni actione et verbo modum discretionis posuit, attendit tempora, rerum terminos observavit. In suis quidem gratias egit, alterius vero flevit injuriis. Laesa, promptior fuit offerre veniam, quam qui laessisset, postulare. Irasci Christum timuit, si irata solem videret occidentem. Ante illam nemo alteri impune detraxit. Deficiam necesse est, si singulas ejus virtutes explicare tentavero. Reclusa est haec in cellula, donec Deo spiritum redderet. Corporis sui pia carnifex et sacrificer fuit; ibi usque ad injuriam naturae, longis instans jejuniis, cilicio vulnerata, secretis afflicta cruciatibus, ad Deum pro universis Ecclesiae gradibus intercessit. Ejus sanctissimis precibus et litteris, inter discordantes principes, pro concordia destinatis, parata est ecclesiis requies, pax patriae restituta.

CAPUT V. *Diversa miracula quae Deus per intercessionem hujus sanctae patravit.*

41. Tantam praeterea a Deo consecuta est gratiam, ut ad ejus nomen sanarentur infirmi, quiescerent maria, vita defunctis redderetur. Plerumque siquidem contigit longaeva decumbentes incommodo, susceptis ejus eulogiis, in pristinam convalescere sanitatem. Nonnulli quoque, gustatis arborum foliis, quibus ea sacras manus admoverat, quartanas, atque alias infirmitates evaseserunt.

40. But among these [virtues], humility, [which she] preserved up to the end, achieved a certain supremacy. No one [but her]—who, though holding a scepter, was ignorant of pride—displays the kind of humility lacking [even] in a poor person. If [her] abstinence is inquired about, she indulged in [only a] little for the sake of nature, and nothing for the sake of gluttony. No one was gentler than that queen, who, when offended, sought no retribution. In every action and word she posed limits with discretion, she paid attention to seasons, and she observed the limits of things. She gave thanks for these ones, but wept for the injuries of another. Injured, she was quicker to offer pardon than to ask for it from the one who had injured her. She was afraid she would anger Christ, if she saw the sun setting while she was still angry. Before her no one disparaged another without being punished. I will by necessity fail if I try to set forth her virtues one by one. She was closed up in a little cell until she could hand over her spirit to God. *She was the pious executioner* of her own body and its sacrificer, to the point of the injury of her nature; persisting in long fasts, wounded by her hair shirt, afflicted with secret tortures, she interceded with God on behalf of all the ranks of the church. With her holy prayers and letters, designed for the sake of concord between discordant princes, rest for the churches was brought forth and peace was restored to the land.

Chapter V: The various miracles that God accomplished through the intercession of this holy woman.

41. Moreover, she obtained so much grace from God that at her name the sick were healed, seas were quieted, and life was restored to the deceased. Frequently it happened that those lying about with the discomforts of old age, having received her blessings, grew strong in their former health. Some, having eaten the leaves of trees to which she had moved her sacred hands, evaded quartan [fevers] and other infirmities.

42. Erat eo tempore matrona quaedam in Francia, cujus oculi diuturna caecitate caligaverant. Haec, audita sanctae mulieris opinione, Pictavim manibus suorum deducta est servulorum. Rogata sanctimonialis ut signum crucis illius oculis imprimeret, indignam se proclamavit, cujus tactus morborum remedia sperarentur. Tandem exaudiuntur qui devote pro misera supplicabant. Sed quia illorum quae per eam divina operabatur gratia, testem malebat esse nullum, quam populum, sera nocte mulier adduci jubetur, adducta genibus sanctimonialis advolvitur, signum crucis imprimitur oculis, et fugata caecitate visus illius reformatur.

43. Puella, nomine Fraiflidis, a daemonio mirabiliter torquebatur, quae inter beatas manus Deo devotae feminae, et liberari et quiescere promeruit. Aliam quoque gravissima vexabat infirmitas, verme interiora scapularum corrodente. Pro qua dum devotius Christum Christi filia precaretur, rupta cute vermis exsiliit, intra paucos dies integra ei sanitate restituta. Monacharum quaedam tanta vi februm tenebatur, ut nunc igne consumpta nunc frigore, de vita penitus desperaret. Hanc sex mensibus in lecto decubantem praesentari sibi Christi sponsa praecepit; praecepit etiam calefieri aquas, et calefactas in cellulam deportari. Complentur sine mora quae beata sanctimonialis praeceperat; deinde remotis omnibus ipsa febricitantem deponit in balneum, pio membra contrectat obsequio, coelum pariter et gemitu pulsans et fletu. Ecce salus desperata subsequitur, et tanquam si tactum formidaret infirmitas, eodem momento sub beatis manibus abscessit. Sed illa in pristinam reformata salutem, dum remedium suscepit, meritum declaravit.

42. There was at that time a certain matron in France whose eyes had clouded over with lasting blindness. Having heard of the reputation of the holy woman, she was led by the hands of her servants to Poitiers. When the holy nun was asked to press the sign of the cross on the eyes of that one, she, whose touches were hoped for as remedies from illnesses, proclaimed herself unworthy. At length those who devoutly beseeched on behalf of the wretched woman were heard. **But because she preferred** there to be no witness (in terms of people, anyway) of those things that divine grace worked through her, the woman was ordered to be led to her in late at night. Led in, she fell at the knees of the nun, and the sign of the cross was impressed on her eyes, and, with the blindness put to flight, the vision of that one was restored.

43. A girl by the name of Fraiflidis was being tormented by a demon to an extraordinary degree and merited being liberated and at peace at the blessed hands of the woman devoted to God. A most grave malady vexed another [woman], with a worm gnawing away at the internal parts of her shoulders. When that daughter of Christ beseeched Christ most devoutly on her behalf, the worm burst forth, the cut skin broken open, and within a few days she was whole, with her health restored to her. One of the nuns was held by such power of fever, that, consumed first by fire and then by cold, she completely despaired for her life. The spouse of Christ ordered her, lying six months in bed, to be presented to her; she ordered water to be heated and to be carried to her cell. What the blessed nun had ordered was carried out without delay; then, once everyone had left, [Radegund] herself placed the one suffering from the fever in the bath. She massaged her limbs with tender attention, pounding on [the door of] heaven equally with her sighs and weeping. Behold, the health that she had despaired of followed closely thereafter. As if the infirmity feared [Radegund's] touch, it withdrew from her blessed hands at the same moment. But that woman, restored to her former health, upon receiving the cure, proclaimed the reward.

44. Inderedi cujusdam uxor sterilem sortita fecunditatem, sepulcro parere consueverat, non marito; concepta in utero progenies ad exsequias potius quam ad cunas parentes invitabat. Ex quo illa mater extunc ille funeris procurator venter male fecundus, cum hominem promitteret, non hominem exhibebat. Quid ultra? Pariendi tempus advenerat, et ecce mater in lucem sine luce protulit infantem defunctum priusquam genitum. Accusans pater naturam, occurrit ad gratiam; fide quidem plenus, et in sola Radegundi spem sibi reponens haeredis, cilicio ejus cadaver involvit exanime. Beata praesumptio felicem exitum promeruit; tacta etenim veste, puer oculos aperit, lethalem exiit colorem, vitaeque redditus ad maternum refertur gremium, qui de gremio prodierat ad sepulcrum. Susceptus infans et partus angustias, et mortis moerorem mitigavit.

45. Monacharum famulus, nomine Floreius, jussu beatae Radegundis navem piscaturus ascenderat. Is cum in altum duceret, oborta coepit tempestate periclitari. Insurgens undique ventus et unda, cacumen altius erigens, in naufragium jurasse videbantur. Perterritus his Floreius ad nomen Radegundis frequentius recurrit; Radegundim invocat, saepius iterans: «Subveni, sanctissima, nobis, dum tuo paremus imperio.» Ad ejus nomen vis ventorum resedit, quievit maria, Floreius ad portum votis potitus pervenit.

46. Magna sunt quae praecedunt, sed nequaquam minora quae sequuntur: evelli speciosam laurum, et ante suam plantari cellulam filia Christi praeceperat; quo facto, radix recusans humum degenerem, transplantata protinus exaruit. Quod ubi abbatissa comperit, jocando beatae locuta feminae: «Donec,» inquit, «hoc impetres a Deo ut terrae sicca laurus inhaereat, a cibo te suspendo.» Quod etsi joculariter abbatissa protulerit, illa tamen quasi seria loquenti, plenam exhibuit abbatissae obedientiam. Facta siquidem oratione, continuo laurus virore induitur, novis operitur foliis, et altius actis radicibus, fecunditatem quam violentia perdidit, gratia acquisivit.

44. It was the lot of the wife of a certain Andered,¹⁸ to [have] a sterile form of fecundity; she had grown accustomed to producing children for the tomb, not for her husband; [in other words,] the progeny conceived in her womb summoned the parents to a funeral rather than to the cradle. As a result of which, that mother, that overseer of funerals from the outset, that belly that was tragically “fertile:” while it promised a person, it did not actually produce a [living] one. What more [is there to say]? The time of giving birth had arrived and behold the mother brought forth into the light a child without light, one who was dead before it was born. Laying the blame on nature, the father rushed to grace; filled with faith, placing the hope of an heir in Radegund alone, he wrapped the lifeless cadaver in her hair shirt. [This] blessed presumption earned a happy outcome; as soon as the garment touched the boy, it opened its eyes and shed its deadly pallor. Restored to life he was returned to the bosom of its mother, he who had just gone forth from the bosom to the sepulchre. Upon being taken up [by the mother], the infant alleviated both the difficulties of the birth and the grief of death.

45. A servant of the nuns by the name of Floreius, by order of the blessed Radegund, had climbed into a boat, about to go fishing. When he made his way into deep water, he began to be endangered, a storm having arisen. Wind and waves rising all around—the peaks [of which] rising up most loftily—they seemed to have conspired to create a shipwreck. Terrified by these things, Floreius had frequent recourse to the name Radegund. He invoked Radegund, often repeating: “Help us, most holy one, since we are [after all] obeying your command.” At her name, the power of the winds abated and the seas grew peaceful, and Floreius, having attained his desires, returned to the port.

46. Great are those things that precede [this point of the text] but by no means less are those that follow. The daughter of Christ had ordered a beautiful laurel to be pulled out and planted in front of her little cell, but once this was done, the transplanted root, rejecting the inferior soil, immediately dried up. When the abbess learned that, she spoke in a joking way to the blessed woman: “Until you manage to procure from God [the favor of having] that dry laurel root take root in the soil, I suspend you from all food.” Although the abbess had offered this jokingly, [Radegund] showed full obedience to the abbess as if she were serious in speaking [that way]. No sooner had she uttered a prayer than the laurel was immediately dressed in green and covered with new leaves. With its roots having been driven deep, it gained by grace the fecundity that it lost through an act of violence.

¹⁸ According to Venantius Fortunatus' *Life* (34), Andered was Radegund's "agent."

47. Pro cuiusdam quoque Carpentarii uxore, quam malignus invaserat spiritus, abbatissa jocose potius quam serio, beatae sic locuta est Radegundi: «Excommunico te, mater, nisi obsessa a daemonio muliercula infra triduum liberata quieverit.» Sed et hoc non inaniter dictum, **fraelex** effectus est indilate subsecutus. Sequenti enim die, dum sanctimonialis interventu prolixiore pro misera precaretur, per aures daemon egrediens, vasculum reliquit liberum, quod diutius solita praesumptione fatigarat. Offertur ei et alia quaedam miserrima, cui simili praeejudicio vexatae, nequam spiritus quietem mentis extorserat et carnis. Putares inimicum praesentiam beatae mulieris formidare, cui nisi summa vi non potuit exhiberi. Praesentata tamen muliercula pavimento jubetur prosterni, non inde prius amovenda, quam et ipsi salus, et amicis ipsa redderetur. Hanc enim sacrae preces habuerunt efficaciam, ut cum super arreptitiae cervicem sanctissima mulier pedem poneret, per meatus immundos immundus egrediens spiritus, mulierem desereret incolumem.

47. On behalf of a certain carpenter's wife, whom an evil spirit had possessed, the abbess said to blessed Radegund, not seriously but in a joking manner: "I will excommunicate you, mother, unless this little woman, possessed by a demon, is at peace, liberated within three days." Yet this was not said in vain; the **jest** [?] was carried out, pursued without delay. The following day, while the nun was praying on behalf of the poor woman for an extended period of time, the demon, leaving by way of her ear, left free that vessel that it had harassed with its accustomed stubbornness for such a long time. Another most miserable woman was brought to [Radegund], a woman from whom, vexed by similar case, an evil spirit had tortured the peace of her mind and of her body. You might suppose the enemy to dread the presence of the blessed woman, to whom he could not to be exhibited except with great force. Presented [to Radegund], the little woman was ordered to lie down on the floor, not to be moved from there before health was restored to her and she to her friends. The sacred prayers had this effect, such that when the most holy woman placed her foot on the neck of the possessed one, the unclean spirit, leaving [her] through unclean channels, abandoned the woman unharmed.

48. Quaedam praeterea monialium, beatae familiaris feminae, oculo superficies (*sic*), contactum visum deplorabat amissum. Sed et haec sanitatem promeruit absinthium, quod, prout lenius haberet, pectori suo sancta mulier admoverat, oculo superponens. Apposita siquidem herba statim dolorem fugavit, et sanguinem, mulieri gaudio pariter et visu restituitis. Quadam autem die, dum sanctimonialis oraret in cellula, quasi dolentis populi voces audivit. Sciscitanti quidnam esset, unam obiisse monacharum respondetur, ejusque funeri reliquas humanitatis affectu exhibere officium. His auditis, exanime corpus deferri praecipitur, et ei in cellula praesentari. Nulla in medium mora, et ecce praesentato cadavere, qui defunctum intulerant, longius abscedere compelluntur. Remotis igitur arbitris, oratura mulier, cellulam obserat. Humi genita deponitur, precibus coelum pulsatur et gemitu, lacrymis invitat vitam, praesumens id ex gratia, quod non sperabat ex natura. Imperiosa res vera religio, quae leges et statuta rerum immutat. Religione actum est ut nihil inaniter a Christo Christi filia postularret. Sed neque in hoc piis illa frustrata desideriiis, tantam invenit apud Deum gratiam, ut ejus meritis redderetur vitae destinata sepulturae. Stupentibus iis qui cadaver intulerant, monacha incolumis egreditur, comitata sorores ad conventum, quae illam praecedebant ad sepulcrum.

49. Quaedam monacharum, nomine Animia, lethalis tumuerat hydrops et vocati frustra medici, nihil aliud quam vicinas promittebant exsequias. Quae dum pene spiritum exhalaret, visum ei est in somnis, quod decumbentem beata Radegundis cum sua visitaret abbatissa, visitatam demitteret in balneis, oleo membra perungeret, ac postremo candidis operiret indumentis. Excitata a somno monacha, mitigatum sensit incommodum. Deinde cum dies plenior illuxisset, aquis lethalibus exsiccans, tumefactus recedit uterus, eodem die sic in suum regressus modulum ut morbi nulla penitus vestigia remaneret.

48. Meanwhile a certain one of the nuns, who was a member of the holy woman's household, lamented the loss of her sight, with the surface of her eye [eyelid?] being covered over. Yet she gained her health [via] the wormwood that, though she regarded [it] lightly, the holy mother had moved from her chest, placing it over the eye.¹⁹ Once the herb had been applied, it immediately put the pain and the blood to flight, with the woman's joy restored along with her sight. On a certain day while the nun [Radegund] prayed in her cell, she heard voices as if of people grieving. It was reported to the one asking what it might be, that one of the nuns had died, and the duty of her funeral had furnished the survivors with human emotion. Having heard these words, the lifeless corpse was ordered to be brought down [to Radegund] and to be presented to her in her cell. With no delay in the midst of this, behold, once the cadaver had been presented [to her], those who had carried in the dead body were compelled to withdraw a long distance. Once the witnesses were far away, the [holy] woman, who was about to pray, closed the little cell. The newly born one is laid on the ground, and [Radegund] pounds on heaven with her prayers and sighing, summons life with her tears, daring [to do] on the basis of grace what she could not hope for from nature. A powerful thing, the true religion, that changes the laws and statutes of things! It is an act of faith that the daughter of Christ asks nothing from Christ in vain. She was not frustrated in her pious desires: she found so much grace in God's presence that by her merits she who was destined for the grace was restored to life. While those who had carried in the cadaver were stupefied, the nun went forth alive, and accompanied to the convent those sisters who were just leading her to the grave.

49. A certain one among the nuns by the name of Animia began to swell with deadly dropsy. The doctors, summoned in vain, promised those close to her nothing but a funeral. At the point in which she had almost breathed out her spirit, it seemed to her in her dreams that the blessed Radegund, along with the abbess, visited her laying there, sending sent the visited woman to the baths, anointing her limbs with oil, and clothing her with shining white garments. The nun, roused from her sleep, sensed that her malady had been alleviated. Then, when the day shown more brightly, drying out from the lethal fluids, her swollen uterus receded, and on that very day it returned to its small size so that hardly any vestiges of the malady remained.

¹⁹ *Vita Radagundae* 34: "she laid hold of some wormwood which the saint had about her breast for refreshment."

50. Magnum Radegundis meritum, quae hoc etiam obtinuit a Domino, ut opera manuum suarum quamdam prae caeteris sortirentur dignitatem. Glomus quippe, quem beati neverant digiti, dum morsu sores vellet atterere, praefocatus exspiravit. Nulli dubium meritis hoc accidisse mulieris, cujus labores, dum vermibus appetit, gratia conservavit. Puellam praeterea, nomine Godam, tantum febris urgebat incendium, ut nihil aliud quam mortem diuturna promitteret anxietas. Haec inaniter erogata in medicos substantia, sicut a nullo eorum sanari, sic a nullo sanctorum exaudiri promeruit. Compulsa igitur ad probatum recurrere auxilium, candelam ad modum corporis sui factam, in honore ac nomine beatae mulieris accendi praecepit. Quo facto, tanquam si ignis morbi materiam consumpsisset, eodem tempore consumpta est infirmitas, quo candela. Surrexit mulier incolumis, et sanctissimae debens feminae, quo sanitati restituta, non prius hujus mundi procellas evasit, quam professa monacham, mores in melius commutaret.

51. Porro beata Radegundis inter caetera gratiarum praeconia, quibus Christi Ecclesiam illustravit, puro affectu veram amplexata est paupertatem, ut de rebus quas ipsa monasterio delegaverat, nihil proprium duxerit, nihil omnino alieni dederit absque suae licentiae abbatissae. Quapropter vinarium vas octo ferme modiorum usui ejus abbatissa destinavit, unde quibus vellet larga dispensatrix ministraret. Huic autem vasi tantam Dominus infudit abundantiam, ut exhaustum non minueretur, non deficeret erogatum. Certamen iniisse videbantur et evacuando mulier, et gratia refundendo.

50. Great is the merit of Radegund, who obtained this as well from the Lord, so that the works of her hands might obtain a certain dignity above the rest. There was a ball of yarn that those blessed fingers had spun. When a mouse wanted to damage it with a bite, it died, having suffocated. No doubt this happened by the merits of the woman, whose labors grace protected when pests went after them. Thereafter, a burning fever so threatened a girl by the name of Goda, that even daily care for her promised nothing other than death. In vain she begged doctors for a natural cure, but just as she did not merit being healed by any of them, so she did not deserve being heard by any of the saints. Forced to have recourse to proven assistance, she ordered a candle, made to be the size of her body, to be lit to the honor and name of the blessed woman [Radegund]. This having been done, it was as if the flame were consuming the substance of the illness; for at the same time that the candle was consumed, so was the infirmity. The woman rose up unharmed and, being indebted to the most sacred woman by whom she was restored to health, no sooner did she evade the storms of this world than she, professed as a nun, changed her ways for the better.

51. Again, among the other proclamations of graces by which blessed Radegund embellished the church of Christ, she embraced with pure emotion true poverty, so that, with regard to those things that she herself had delegated to the monastery, she considered nothing her own, and she gave nothing at all to any outsider without the permission of her abbess. On account of which her abbess directed for her use a wine jar of almost eight pecks,²⁰ as a result of which she could serve as a most bountiful dispenser. The Lord poured such an abundance into this vessel that it, when drawn from, was not diminished, and when expended did it fail. They seemed to have entered into a kind of competition with one another, the woman by emptying, and grace by refilling.

²⁰ A Roman dry measure of about 2 gallons.

52. Conatus inanis conatus meus, si singula quae per illam Dominus operari dignatus est, memoriae studeam commendare. Supersunt enim plurima, quibus non solum vivens, sed et dormiens in Christo latius claruisse memoratur. Ea sane, dum dilatione praemii longa traheret suspiria, totaque desiderio coelestium tabesceret gaudiorum, juvenis ei apparuit, statura eminens, et in vultu divinam praeferens venustatem; quem propius accedentem dum mulier sanctissima formidaret, ejusque blanditiem vereretur, Quid, inquit, tantis me gemitibus interpellas? Quid mei desiderio sic tabescis? Ignoras quae reposita tibi sint apud me praemia. In diademate capitis mei noveris te primam esse gemmam. Iis dictis juvenis evanuit, in exstasi pariter et gaudio beata muliere derelicta. Quam profecto visionem duabus tantum sibi familiaribus indicavit, adjurans ne secretum Domini Dei sui revelare praesumerent, quandiu fragilis mundi legibus obnoxia teneretur.

55. Accedente autem diu suspirato, diu exspectato vocationis suae articulo, beata mulier hujus maris magni et spatiosi tempestates illaesa pertransiens, fatigatos artus et naturam profitentes cineri et cilicio commendavit. Conturbata subito casu virginum multitudo, cellulam querulis gemitibus implet, pulsat et lamentis. Fluunt lacrymae, nulla penitus invenientes solatia. Tandem beatissima mulier, erectis in coelum luminibus, exsilium patriae, laborem quieti felici transitu commutavit. Obiit autem primo Idus Augusti, relicto gregi sacro profutura patrocinio, cui praefuerat et doctrinis et exemplo. Neque enim credi fas est apud Christum Christi filiam pro suis inaniter supplicare, cujus meritis suscitatos constat mortuos, expulsos daemones, turbata quievisse maria, variis oppressos languoribus, in pristinam revocatos sanitatem, operante per eam sponso suo Domino Jesu Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

52. My effort is an empty effort, if I desire to commit to memory all the individual things that the Lord deigned to work through her. Many are left out, which, not only someone who is still alive but others who are now sleeping in Christ, might remember having shone more broadly. Indeed while she was drawing long sighs along with the increase of her rewards, and while she was wasting away in her total longing for heavenly joys, a youth appeared to her, a youth of immense stature displaying divine beauty in his face, a youth whom the most holy woman feared and dreaded his charms as he came closer to her. "Why," she says, "do you interrupt my great sighs? Why do you waste away so with desire for me?" [The youth responded:] "You do not realize what rewards are being put up for you in my presence. In the crown of my head you will recognize that you are the first gem." These things having been said, the youth vanished, and the blessed woman gave herself to both joy and ecstasy. Indeed, she recounted this vision to only two of her closest friends, having them swear not to reveal the secret of her Lord God as long as she was held subject to the fragile laws of this world.

55. With the day of her death nearing, the long awaited juncture of her calling, the blessed woman, passing unharmed through the tempests of the great and spacious sea, commended to ashes and haircloth her exhausted limbs that were declaring her nature. Disturbed by this sudden decline, a multitude of virgins filled the little cell with mournful signs and pounded on it with their laments. Tears flowed, finding nothing in the way of inner solace. Finally, with torches having been set up in heaven, that most blessed woman, an exile from her fatherland, commuted her labor with a peaceful and quiet passage. She died on the first day of the Ides of August, about to be of profit in terms of patronage to the sacred flock left behind, to which she had been preeminent in both teachings and example. It is not right to be believed that in the presence of Christ this daughter of Christ prayed for them in vain, she by whose merits it is known that the dead were resuscitated, demons expelled, turbulent seas were quieted, those oppressed with various diseases were restored to their former health, with her spouse the Lord Jesus Christ operating through her, He who lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit and rules as God through all the ages and ages. Amen.