

granted to bishops of the church just so long as they are pilgrims here in this mortal body. But when they have paid the debt of death, others who succeed in their place gain the same judicial authority, as it is written, "Instead of your fathers, sons are born to you; you will appoint them princes over all the earth."

Return, O you blind, to the true light that enlightens every man who comes into this world, because the light shines in darkness, and the darkness does not envelop it. By not looking at that light you are in the darkness. You walk in darkness and you do not know whither you are going, because the darkness has blinded your eyes.

Hear this also and be wise, you fools among the people, you who were formerly stupid, who seek the apostle's intercession by going to Rome; hear what the same oft-mentioned most blessed Augustine utters against you. In *On the Trinity*, book 8, he says, among other things, "Come with me and let us consider why we should love the apostle. Is it because of the human form, which we hold to be quite ordinary, that we believe him to have been a man? By no means. Besides, does not he whom we love still live although that man no longer exists? His soul is indeed separated from the body, but we believe that even now there still lives what we love in him."

Whoever is faithful ought to believe in God when he makes a promise, and by how much the more when he makes an oath. Why is it necessary to say, "O that Noah, Daniel, and Job were present here." Even if there were so much holiness, so much righteousness, so much merit, they, as great as they were, will not absolve son or daughter. He therefore says these things that no one may rely on the merit or intercession of the saints, for one cannot be saved unless he possess the same faith, righteousness, and truth which they possessed and by which they were pleasing to God.

Your fifth objection against me is that the apostolic lord was displeased with me (you state that I displease you as well). You said this of Paschal [II], bishop of the Roman church, who has departed from the present life [in 824]. An apostolic man is one who is guardian of the apostle or who exercises the office of an apostle. Surely that one should not be called an apostolic man who merely sits on an apostle's throne but the one who fulfils the apostolic function. Of those who hold the place but do not fulfil the function, the Lord once said, "The scribes and pharisees sit on Moses's seat; so keep and perform whatever things they tell you. But be unwilling to act according to their works, for they talk but they do not practise."

32. THEFT OF RELICS: THE TRANSLATION OF SS. MARCELLINUS AND PETER

Einhard, the Frankish historian and scholar at the court of Charlemagne and his successor, Louis the Pious, has left us (besides his famous biography of Charlemagne) a startling account of the relics trade as it was practised in early ninth-century Gaul. Charlemagne and his immediate successors emphasized the cult of the saints and the role of relics, reinvoking the original decree that altars should contain relics, and requiring that all oaths, whether secular or religious, should be sworn upon them. There was official encouragement for the adoption of the saints as a focus of devotion, for the discovery of relics to place in new churches, and for pilgrimages in their honor. Relics were therefore at a premium, and in particular the corporeal relics of martyrs that were mostly available in Rome, where many martyrdoms had occurred. The need for relics was made more acute by an increase in the number of religious foundations and by the competition among them (inspired by both spiritual and economic interests) to obtain prestigious relics. This in turn created a need for documents that authenticated the movement of relics from one place to another, known as 'translationes.' Such documents both honored the saints, like the accounts of their lives, and commemorated a particular historical event, the movement of their remains from a lowly tomb to a more elevated one, or from one place to another. In some cases this was accomplished with the express approval of the bishop; in others the translation was effected by more furtive and elaborate means, as in the account that follows. The first two books of Einhard's account only are presented here; two further books detail the miracles performed by the saints through their relics.

Source: trans. B. Wendell, *The History of the Translation of the Blessed Martyrs of Christ Marcellinus and Peter: the English Version* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926); revised by P. E. Dutton against the Latin edition of C. Waitz, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, vol. 15.1 (Hanover, 1888), pp.239 -264; abridged and repr. with permission. BHL 5233.

The Translation and Miracles of the Saints Marcellinus and Peter

Preface

To true worshipers and lovers of the true God and of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his saints, Einhard, a sinner. Those who have committed to letters and to memory the lives and deeds of the just, and of men who obey divine commands, seem to me to have wished little else than by such examples to encourage others to correct bad habits and to join in praising the omnipotence of God. And they have done this not only because they were free from malice but because they abounded in charity which desires the good of all. Now since their worthy purpose is so very clearly only to bring about the

ends which I have mentioned, I see no reason why they should not be imitated by many. And since I am sure that the pages which I have written, as well as I could, about the translation of the bodies of the blessed martyrs of Christ, Marcellinus and Peter, and about the signs and wonders that God wanted to be made manifest through them for the good of those believing, were composed with the same wish and purpose, I have decided to revise them and to offer them to those readers who love God. For I not only think that this work should not seem empty and purposeless to any of the faithful, but I also venture to believe that I shall have worked fruitfully and usefully, if I shall have succeeded in stirring any reader to the praise of the Creator.

Book 1

1. When still at court and busy with daily business, I used often to think in many different ways about the rest that I some day hoped to enjoy. Then I came across a secret place, far removed from the vulgar crowd and, by the generosity of Louis, the prince whom I then served, I obtained possession of it. This place is in the German forest, lying midway between the Neckar and Main rivers, and in our times is called Odenwald by the inhabitants and their neighbors. When, according to my powers and means, I had built there not only houses and other buildings for permanent dwelling, but also a church suitably designed for the celebration of the divine service, I began to wonder in the name and honor of what saint or martyr it should be dedicated. And when I had spent a great deal of time in this state of doubt, it happened that a certain deacon of the Roman church by the name of Deusdona, who desired to request the help of the king in some problem of his own, came to court. After he had stayed there for some time and the business on which he had come was settled and he was arranging to return to Rome, he was, as a visitor, invited by me one day, out of politeness, to come and share a frugal dinner with me. There, while talking a good deal at table, we happened in our conversation to reach a point where mention was made of the translation of the blessed Sebastian [Hilduin of St-Denis had acquired the relics of Sebastian in 826], and of the many neglected tombs of the martyrs in Rome. Then, our conversation turned to the dedication of my new church and I began to ask him how I could obtain some piece of the true relics of the saints who lie buried in Rome. At this he at first hesitated a little, and answered that he did not know how this could be managed. Then when he perceived that I was eager and anxious about the matter, he promised that he would answer my question on another day. After that evening, when he was invited by me again, he took from the folds of his garment a written note

and requested that I read it when I was alone, and that I would be so good as to tell him whether I liked what was written there. I took the note and, as he requested, I read it in secret. The contents were as follows: he had at home many relics of the saints, and he was willing to give them to me, if I could help him get back to Rome. He knew that I had two mules. If I would give him one of these, and send with him a reliable man of my own, who could receive the relics from him and bring them back to me, he would send them to me immediately. The general tone of his request pleased me, and I made up my mind to test the value of his uncertain promise without delay; so, having given him the animal he asked for, and added money for his journey, I ordered my notary, whose name is Ratleig, who had himself made a vow to visit Rome for the purpose of prayer, to accompany him. So setting out from Aachen – for at that time the emperor was there with his court – they came to Soissons and there they talked with Hilduin, the abbot of the monastery of St-Médard. The deacon [Deusdona] had promised the abbot that he would arrange for him to secure possession of the body of the holy martyr Tiburtius. Excited by these promises, the abbot sent along with them a certain priest, a crafty man by the name of Lehun, with orders to bring back the body of this martyr when he had received it from the deacon. Thus the journey began as they made their way toward Rome as fast as they could.

2. Now it happened, after they had reached Italy, that the servant of my notary, whose name was Reginbald, was overcome by a tertian fever [malaria], and this led, because of its repeated attacks, to a serious delay in their journey, for when he was gripped by intense fever they could not travel. There were few of them and they did not wish to be separated from each other. At this time, when the trip had been much slowed by the inconvenience and they were trying to accelerate their pace as much as they could, three days before they came to the city, there appeared in a vision to him who was sick with the fever a man in the dress of a deacon who asked him why his master was hurrying to Rome. And when he told him all he knew about the promises the deacon had made to send me relics of the saints and those made to the abbot Hilduin, he said: "This will not come to pass as you suppose, but very differently, yet the final outcome of the mission for which you came shall be fulfilled. That deacon who asked you to come to Rome will do little or nothing of what he promised you. Therefore I want you to follow me and carefully remember the things that I am about to show and relate to you."

Then taking him, as it seemed to him, by the hand, he made him climb with him to the summit of a very high mountain. And when they stood there together: "Turn," he said, "to the east, and observe the country lying

before your eyes." When he did so, and observed the country spoken of, he saw buildings of vast size, built close together like some great city, and asked by his companion if he knew what it was he replied that he did not know. Then his companion said: "It is Rome that you see." And he presently added: "Direct your eyes to the remote parts of the city, and see if any church appears to you in those regions." After he said that, he saw one church clearly. "Go and tell Ratleig," said his companion, "for in the church that you have just seen lies hidden the thing that he should carry back to his master; and so let him get to work, so that he might lay his hands on it as quickly as possible and carry it back to his master." And when he said that none of those who had come with him would put any faith in what he said about things such as these, his companion answered and said: "You know that those traveling with you are troubled because for many days you have suffered from a tertian fever that has not yet abated." And he said: "It is as you say." "Therefore," said his companion, "I want this to be a sign to you and to those to whom you shall relate the words I have spoken to you, for from this hour you shall be so cured, by the loving kindness of God, from the fever by which until now you have been detained, that it will not affect you at all for the rest of this journey." Awakened by these words, he made haste to report to Ratleig everything that he seemed to have seen and heard. When Ratleig reported these things to the priest who was traveling with him, it seemed to both of them that the proof of the dream would be whether the promise of health came true. For on that very day, following the nature of the disease from which he had been suffering, a fever should have attacked the one who had seen the [visionary] dream. And that it was not a vain fancy but rather a true revelation was clear, for neither on that day nor on any of those that followed did he experience in his body any trace of the fever that he had been suffering. So it came to pass that they believed in the vision and no longer had faith in the promises of Deusdona, the deacon.

3. When they arrived in Rome, they took up residence near the church of the blessed apostle Peter, which is called Ad Vincula, in the house of the deacon with whom they had come, and they remained with him for some days, awaiting the fulfilment of his promises. But he, who was quite unable to make good on his promises, excused himself for not doing so by various strategies of delay. At last, when they spoke to him about it, they asked him why he wanted to mock them so. At the same time they requested that he not hold them up any longer by deceiving them, thus preventing with vain hopes their return home. When he had heard them out, and perceived that he could no longer cheat them with trickery of this sort, he first informed my notary that he could not have the relics promised to me, because his

brother, to whom on his departure from Rome he had entrusted both his house and all he possessed, had gone to Benevento on business and he had no idea when he would return. Since he had given him those relics for safe-keeping, along with his other moveable property, he could not find them anywhere in the house; therefore, he was [not] able to see what he should do, because for his part there was nothing sure to hope for. After he had said this to my notary, who complained of being deceived and tricked by him, he talked in I know not what empty and misleading terms with the priest of Hilduin, who had cherished the same hopes, and so got rid of him. But the next day, when he saw them in low spirits, he urged them to come with him to the cemeteries of the saints; for it seemed to him that they might find something there that would satisfy their wishes, and that there was no need for them to go home empty-handed. But, although this proposal pleased them and they wished to set about what he had urged them to do as soon as they could, he put off the business, in his usual way, and by this delay cast their minds, which for a little while had been more cheerful, into such despair that, giving up on him altogether, they decided, although their business was completely unfinished, to return home.

4. But my notary, remembering the dream that his servant had had, began to urge his companions to go, without their host, to the cemeteries which he had promised to show them. So, having found a guide who regularly conducted travelers to those holy places, they first came to the church of the blessed martyr Tiburtius, on the Via Labicana, three miles away from the city, and examined the tomb of the martyr as carefully as they possibly could; and discussed with the greatest secrecy whether it could be opened so that no one would notice the fact. Then they descended into the crypt connected to this church, in which the bodies of the blessed martyrs of Christ, Marcellinus and Peter, were buried. Having examined the nature of this monument also, they went home, thinking that they could hide what they had been up to from their host. But it turned out otherwise than they expected. For, although they did not know how, knowledge of what they had done quickly reached him. Worried that they might achieve their desires without him, he made up his mind to figure out their intention as quickly as possible. And since he had a full and detailed knowledge of those holy places, he politely told them that they should all go there together, and, if God should deign to favor their wishes, they should make a common decision to do whatever seemed best to them.

They agreed to his plan, and by common consent fixed on a time for setting out. Then, after fasting for three days, they went by night, unnoticed by any of the inhabitants of Rome, to the place I have mentioned. Once in the

church of St. Tiburtius, they first attempted to open the altar under which his holy body was believed to lie. But the strenuous nature of the work they began was little to their liking, for the monument, built of very hard marble, easily resisted the inexpert hands of those who were trying to open it. So leaving the burial place of that martyr, they went down into the tomb of the blessed Marcellinus and Peter, and there, having invoked our Lord Jesus Christ and having prayed to the holy martyrs, they managed to raise from its place the stone with which the top of the tomb was covered. When they had taken this off, they saw the most holy body of St. Marcellinus set in the upper part of the tomb and close to his head a marble tablet with an inscription on it which gave them clear proof of just which martyr's limbs lay in that place. So, as was proper, they lifted up the body with the greatest reverence, and, having wrapped it in a clean fine linen, they handed it over to the deacon to carry and to keep for them. Then they put the stone back into place, lest some trace of the body's removal should remain visible. Then they returned to their dwelling place in the city. But the deacon declared that in the house where he lived, near the church of the blessed apostle Peter which is called Ad Vincula, he would and could safely guard the body of the most blessed martyr of which he had taken charge. So he gave it to a monk by the name of Luniso to guard. Thinking that this would satisfy my notary he began to urge him, now that he had obtained the body of the blessed Marcellinus, to return to his own country.

5. But Ratleig was thinking and turning over in his mind a very different scheme. For, as he afterwards told me, it seemed to him by no means acceptable that he should go home with the body of the blessed Marcellinus alone, for it would be a great shame if the body of the blessed martyr Peter, who had been his fellow in suffering, and for five hundred years or more had lain with him in the same tomb, should be left there when [Marcellinus] was departing. And this idea having caught hold in his mind, he so struggled with it as it dawned on him and tormented him that neither food nor the approach of sleep would seem enjoyable or good to him until the bodies of the martyrs, who had been joined together in suffering and in the tomb, were joined together on that journey which he was about to make. But in what way this [reunification of the relics] could be achieved, he did not know, for he knew that he could not find a Roman to give him help in this matter, nor was there anyone to whom he would dare reveal his secret plans. Laboring under this anxiety, he happened to meet a foreign monk by the name of Basil who two years before had traveled from Constantinople to Rome. He lived on the Palatine hill with four disciples in a house with other Greeks, who were of the same religious persuasion as he was. He went to

him and explained the nature of his troubles. Then, encouraged by his advice and trusting in his prayers, he discovered such strength in his own heart that he determined to attempt the deed as soon as he could, despite the danger to himself. He sent for his companion, the priest of Hilduin, and first proposed to him that they should once again go secretly, as they had done before, to the church of the blessed Tiburtius, and try again to open the tomb in which the body of the martyr was believed to be buried.

This plan pleased [both of them] and, in the company of their servants, they set out secretly at night, their host having no idea where they were going. When they had come to the church, and prayed for success before its doors, they entered the church. They split up; the priest with one group went to hunt for the body of the blessed Tiburtius in his church and Ratleig with the others descended into the crypt connected to the church to [search for] the body of the blessed Peter. Having opened the tomb without any difficulty, he took out the sacred limbs of the holy martyr, with no opposition, and put them, once they were in his possession, into a silken bag, which he had made ready to hold them. Meanwhile, the priest who was searching for the body of the blessed Tiburtius, having spent a great deal of time in useless work and seeing that he could make no progress, gave up on his efforts, and joined Ratleig in the crypt, and began to ask him what he should do. Ratleig answered that he thought that the relics of St. Tiburtius were [already] found, and then explained what he meant. A little while before the priest had arrived in the crypt, he had found in the same tomb in which the bodies of the saints Marcellinus and Peter lay, a hole, round in form and dug three feet deep and one foot wide, and placed inside it was a substantial quantity of fine dust. It seemed to both of them that this dust might have been left by the body of the blessed Tiburtius if his bones had been removed from there. So that it might be harder to find, this dust might have been placed just between the blessed Marcellinus and Peter in the same tomb. [Thus] they agreed that the priest should take the dust and carry it away with him as the relics of the blessed Tiburtius. Having thus considered and disposed of this business, they returned to their lodgings with the things that they had found.

6. After this, Ratleig spoke to his host and requested the return of the holy ashes of the blessed Marcellinus that he had entrusted to his safe-keeping. Since he now wished to return to his own country, he did not want to suffer any unnecessary delay. [Deusdona] not only restored at once what was asked for, but also presented [Ratleig with] a substantial quantity of saints' relics, tied up in a bundle, which was to be carried to me. When asked what their names were, he answered that he would tell me himself when he came to see me. He advised, however, that these relics should be treated with the

same respect as that shown to the other holy martyrs, because they had acquired as much merit in the sight of God as the blessed Marcellinus and Peter and that I would realize this as soon as I knew their names. Ratleig took the gift that was offered, and, as he was advised, placed the bundle with the bodies of the holy martyrs. Having consulted with his host, he arranged that the holy and much-desired treasure, placed and sealed up in caskets, should be carried as far as Pavia by the host's brother Luniso, of whom we made mention before, and also by Hilduin's priest who had come with him. As for Ratleig, he remained with his host in Rome, watching and listening for seven successive days, to see if anything about the removal of the bodies of the saints came to the notice of the Romans. When he heard no stranger talking about this deed and when he judged that this business was still unknown, he set out after those whom he had sent ahead, taking his host along with him. They found them waiting for them in [the region of] Ticino, in the church of the blessed John the Baptist, which is commonly called Domnanæ, and which was at the time, through a benefice of the kings [Louis and Lothar], in my possession. They decided that they too would stop there for a few days, both to refresh the beasts on which they were riding and to prepare themselves for the longer journey ahead.

7. At the time of this delay, a story arose that ambassadors of the holy Roman church, sent by the pope to the emperor, would soon arrive there. Thus, worried that, if they were found there when they arrived, some inconvenience for themselves or even an obstacle might arise, they decided that some of their party should hurry to depart before the embassy arrived. The rest, however, would stay there and, after the matter over which they were anxious had been carefully investigated and the embassy had proceeded on its way, they would make haste to follow their friends, whom they had sent on ahead. So when they had thus settled things among themselves, Deusdona and Hilduin's priest left before the ambassadors from Rome arrived, and made what haste they could for Soissons, where Hilduin was believed to be. But Ratleig, with the true treasure which he carried with him, remained at Pavia to wait until the ambassadors of the Apostolic See had come and gone, so that when they had crossed the Alps he might make his own journey more safely. Still he feared that Hilduin's priest, who had gone with Deusdona and who had full and complete knowledge of all that had been done and arranged between them, and who seemed so cunning and slimy, might attempt to place some obstacle along the route by which he had planned to travel. So he made up his mind that he had best go another way. He first sent on to me the servant of our steward Ascolf with letters in which he informed me both of his own return and that he was bringing the treasure which with

divine assistance he had discovered. Then, after determining the resting places made ready for the others and believing that they must have now passed the Alps, he left Pavia and in six days came to St-Maurice [a distance of approximately 240 kms or 150 miles]. There, having procured what seemed necessary, he placed those holy bodies, enclosed in their casket, upon a bier and from that point on he carried them publicly and openly, with the help of the people who flocked to meet him.

8. When he had passed the place which is called the Head of Lake [that is, Villeneuve in Switzerland] he found a fork in the road by which the ways leading to Francia are divided in two. Taking the path to the right he came through the territory of the Germans to Soleure, a town in Burgundy. There he met the people whom, after the news of his return had reached me, I had sent from Maastricht to meet him. When the letters from my notary were brought to me by my steward's servant [Reginbald], of whom I spoke before, I was at the monastery of St. Bavo on the River Scheldt. Informed by reading these letters of the advent of the saints, I ordered one of my household to go from St-Bavo to Maastricht, there to collect a company of priests and other clergy, as well as laymen, and then to hurry to meet the approaching saints at the very first place he could find them. Thus, with no delay, he and his party, in a few days, met up with those who were transporting the saints at the place I mentioned above. They joined together and were accompanied from that point on by an ever increasing crowd of chanting people. Soon they came, with the great rejoicing of all, to the city of Argentoratus, which is now called Strasbourg. From there they sailed down the Rhine until they came to a place called Portus where they disembarked on the east bank of the river, and, after a journey of five days and with a great crowd of people rejoicing in praise of God, they came to the place called Michelstadt. That place lies in that German forest which today is called Odenwald, and is about six leagues distant from the River Main. When they found there the church newly built by me, but not yet dedicated, they bore the holy ashes into it, and there set them down, as if they were to remain there forever.

9. When this news was brought to me, I hurried there as fast as I could. Three days after my arrival, at the end of the evening service, a servant of Ratleig, acting on his orders, remained alone in the empty church and with closed doors sat next to those holy bodies in a small chapel, as though guarding them. Suddenly he was overcome by sleep and saw, as it were, two doves come flying in through the right window of the apse and land on the top of the bier above the bodies of the saints. One of the doves was all white, the other dappled with the colors white and gray. When they had walked up and down on top of the bier for a good while and had made again and again the

cooing sound made by doves, as if they were talking, they flew out through the same window, and were to be seen no more. Immediately afterwards a voice was heard above the servant's head: "Go," the voice said, "and tell Ratleig to inform his master that those holy martyrs are unwilling to have their bodies rest in this place, for they have chosen another place to which they want to be taken at once." The speaker of this message could not be seen by him, but when the sound ceased he awoke, and roused from sleep he told Ratleig when he came back to the church what he had seen. The next day, as soon as he could come to me, Ratleig reported to me what his servant had told him. Now, although I did not dare to spurn the sacred secret of this vision, I nevertheless decided that it must be confirmed in some more definite fashion. In the meantime I had the holy ashes removed from the linen packages wrapped with cords in which they had traveled, and had them sewn up in new cushions made of silk. When I examined them and noticed that the relics of the blessed Marcellinus were smaller in quantity than those of St. Peter, I thought that [perhaps St. Marcellinus] had been smaller in stature and in the dimensions of his body than the holy Peter. That this was not the case was later made clear by the discovery of a theft; where, when, by whom, and how this theft was accomplished and uncovered I shall tell you at the proper time. For the time being the sequence of the story as I have begun to tell it must be structured and held to without any diversion.

10. Now after I had examined that great and marvelous treasure, more precious than any gold, the casket in which it was contained began to displease me a great deal, because of the poorness of the material out of which it was made. Desiring to improve it, I directed one of the sacristans, one day when the evening service was over, to find out for me the dimensions of the casket as measured in rods. To do this he lit a candle and lifted up the hanging clothes with which the casket was covered; then he noticed that the casket was, in a wondrous way, dripping all over with a bloody liquid. Alarmed by the strangeness of the thing, he took the trouble to inform me at once of what he had seen. Then I went there with the priests who were present and, full of wonder, saw for myself that astonishing miracle. For as columns, slabs, and marble statues are accustomed to sweat and drip when rain is coming on, so that casket with its most sacred bodies was found to be wet with fresh blood and sprinkled all over with it. The unusual, indeed unheard of, nature of the miracle alarmed us. Thus, after speaking of the matter, we decided to spend three days fasting and praying, so that we might be worthy to know by divine revelation what that great and ineffable sign meant and what it urged us to do. When the three days' fast was over and evening was already growing late, that liquid composed of frightening blood began suddenly to dry up. In

a wondrous fashion the liquid that had dripped for seven successive days without stopping, as if it were an incessant stream, dried up so quickly in a few hours that when the bell called us to the night service (for it was Sunday and we celebrated before dawn) and we went into the church, no trace of the blood could still be found on the casket. But the linen cloths that hung about the casket had been so sprinkled with fluid that they were stained with spots like blood-stains. I ordered them to be preserved. To this day considerable evidence of that great, unheard-of prodigy remains on those linens. It is agreed that the fluid had a somewhat salty taste similar to the quality of tears, that it was thin like water, but that it possessed the color of true blood.

11. In the quiet of that same night, two youths were seen standing beside him by one of our servants by the name of Roland, and, as he himself bore witness, they urged him to tell me many things concerning the need to translate the bodies of the saints. They showed him where and how this should be done, and, with terrifying threats they demanded that I should be told without delay. As soon as he could see me, he carefully told me everything that he had been commanded to tell. When I had learned of these things, I began to fill with anxiety and to turn over in my mind what I ought to do: whether fasting and prayers should again be observed, and God once more appealed to for the resolution of our questions or whether some devout and faultless servant of God should be sought, to whom we could make plain the worry in our hearts and the degree of our perplexity, and from whom we might request that, by his prayers, he should discover for us a clear direction from God concerning this matter. But where and when could such a servant of Christ's household be found by us, particularly in those parts? For although certain monasteries had been established not far from the place where we were, nevertheless, by reason of the rude customs common in the region, there were few men or, perhaps, none about whom anything of this sort or even the slightest rumor was reported. Meantime, while I was so troubled and was praying for the assistance of the holy martyrs, and eagerly requesting all who were there with us to do the same, it happened that for several days no night passed in which it was not revealed in dreams to one, two, or even three of our companions that those bodies of the saints must be translated from that place to another. At last, as he himself acknowledges, there appeared in a vision to a priest by the name of Hiltfrid, who was among those gathered there, a certain man in priestly garment, remarkable for the venerable whiteness of his hair, and clothed in white, who accosted him with words like these: "Why," he said, "is Einhard so hard of heart and so obstinate that he will not put faith in so many revelations, and thinks that these many divinely inspired counsels, which have been sent him, may be

despised? Go and tell him that what the blessed martyrs desire to be done with their bodies cannot remain undone. Since until this moment he has put off satisfying their wish in this matter, let him now, if he does not wish the merit of this deed to pass to another, make haste to obey their command and carry their bodies to the place which they have chosen."

12. After these warnings and others of various sorts had been brought to me, it seemed to me that the new translation of the holy ashes must not be postponed any longer. And so, having sought advice, we decided that we should hasten to accomplish the thing as fast as it could be done. Thus, at dawn one day, after the morning service was finished, after making ready quickly but with the greatest of care everything that seemed necessary for this convoy, we took up that holy and priceless treasure, amid very great grief and lamentation from those who were to remain in that place, and starting on our way we began to carry it, accompanied by a multitude of the poor who in those days had flocked there from all sides for the purpose of receiving alms. The people who lived around that place knew nothing about our plans and purpose. The sky was heavy with dark clouds, which would soon turn into heavy rain if a divine power did not prevent it, for all night long it had rained so hard without stopping that it had seemed hardly possible to begin our journey next day. But that doubt of ours, which came from the weakness of our faith, was resolved, by the grace which is on high through the merits of his saints, very differently from what we had expected, for we found that the way by which we were traveling had been transformed into quite another state than the one we had anticipated. We found little mud and discovered that the streams, which are apt to rise in such heavy and continuous rain as had fallen that night, were hardly swollen at all. When leaving the forest, we came close to the nearest villages and were met on our way by multitudes giving praise to God. They accompanied us for a distance of about eight leagues, devoutly helping us to carry our holy burden and singing God's praise they diligently joined their voices with ours.

13. But when we saw that we could not arrive that day at our destination, we turned aside at a village called Ostheim, which could be seen from the road. Just as evening was falling we bore those holy bodies into the church of St. Martin which is found in that village, and, leaving there most of our company to keep watch over the relics, I myself, with a few others, hurried towards the place to which we were destined. Throughout the night, I made ready all those things that custom demands for the reception of the bodies of saints.

But to the church where we left the sacred treasure of those remains came a nun by the name of Ruodlang who was shaken with palsy. She belonged to the convent of Machesbach [Mosbach], which is distant from that church by

the space of one league, and had been brought there in a cart by friends and neighbors. She had passed the whole night among the people gathered there to watch and pray beside the bier of the saints, and she recovered the strength in all her limbs. On her own feet, with no one supporting or assisting her at all, she walked back the next day to the place from which she had come.

14. But we, stirring at daybreak, went out to meet our companions who were coming, having with us a numberless throng of our neighbors, who excited by the news of the approach of the saints had gathered before our doors even at the first gleam of dawn, so that they might journey with us to meet the saints. We came upon them at the place where the brook Gernsprinz empties into the River Main [near Aschaffenburg]. Thence, traveling together and singing in unison the praise of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, we bore those holy remnants of the most blessed martyrs, amid the great joy and exultation of all who could be there, to Upper Mulinheim, for so that place is called in modern times. But, because of the great throng of people who had gone before us and who had filled up the town, we could neither make our way to the church nor carry the bier into it. And so in a field near by, on rising ground, we set up an altar under the open sky. After setting the bier down beside the altar, we celebrated the solemn offices of the Mass. When these were finished and the multitude had gone back to their work, we bore those most holy bodies into the church as demanded by the blessed martyrs, and there, having placed the bier before the altar, we carefully celebrated the Mass once again. While the celebration was going on there, a boy of about fifteen years, by the name of Daniel, from the Portian region, who had come there with other poor people to beg and who was so bent over that unless he lay down on his back he could not see the sky, approached the bier. All of a sudden, as if struck by a blow, he fell down. After he lay there for a long time, like one sleeping, all his limbs were straightened, and regaining the strength of his muscles he got up before our eyes and was sound. These things came to pass on the sixteenth day before the Kalends of February [17 January], and the light of that day was so great and so clear that it equaled the splendor of the sun in summer and the calmness of the air was so gentle and sweet that it seemed with soft sunshine to surpass the season of spring.

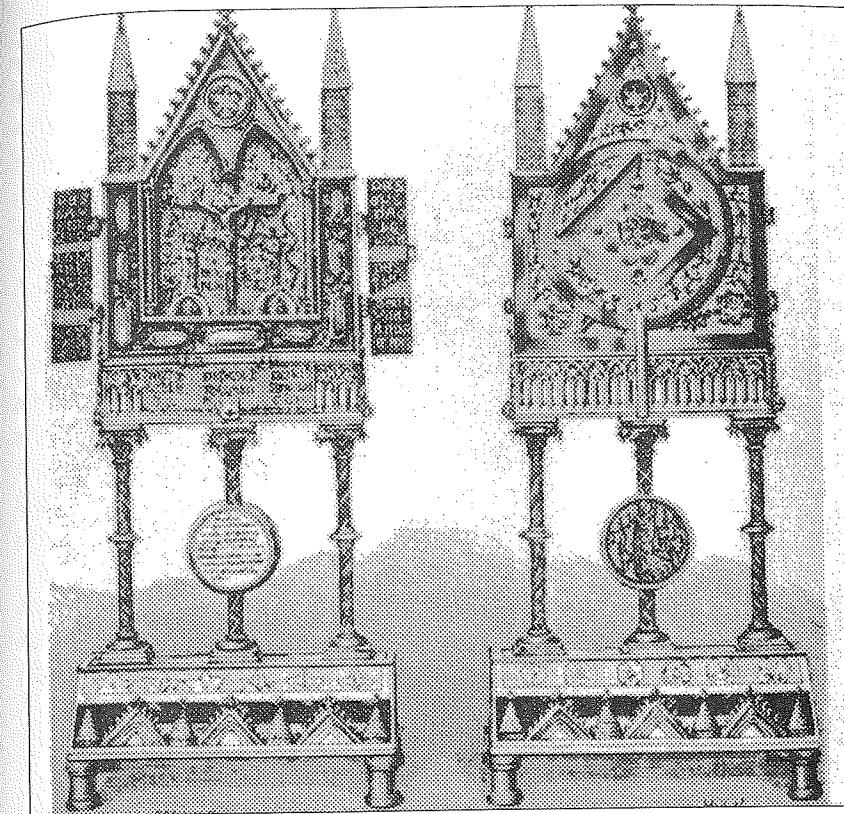
15. The next day we placed the holy bodies of the blessed martyrs, enclosed in a new shrine, in the apse of the church, and, as is the custom in Francia, we erected over it a wooden frame and covered it with cloths of fine linen and silk for the sake of beauty. Nearby we set up an altar. Beside the altar, one on each side, we placed the two standards of our Lord's Passion which had been carried before the bier on our journey. We took pains, within the limits imposed by the poorness of our means, to make that place

fitting and suitable for the celebration of divine services and we appointed clergy who would keep wakeful watch there night and day, and carefully and continually sing the praises of the Lord. When these had been called to their posts, not only by my mandate but by a royal diploma that had been sent to us along the way, I was summoned to the palace and, with the Lord making my journey a successful one, I returned in a spirit of great exultation.

Book 2

i. Only a few days after I had come to court, having risen early as is the custom of court officials, I went to the palace first thing in the morning. There I found Hilduin, of whom I made mention in the former book, sitting by the door of the royal bedchamber awaiting the appearance of the emperor. Having greeted him as is customary, I asked him to rise and to come over to a certain window from which there is a view of the lower parts of the palace. Leaning against it side by side, we talked a great deal about the translation of the holy martyrs Marcellinus and Peter and about that wondrous miracle which was revealed in the flow of blood with which, as I have recorded, that casket sweated for seven days. When we came to that part of our conversation in which mention was made of the garments which were found with the bodies, and I said that the robe of the blessed Marcellinus was of wonderfully fine texture, he answered, like one who knew the object as well as I did, that what I said about the robes was true. Astonished and perplexed by this, I proceeded to ask him how this knowledge of garments that he had never seen could have reached him. Staring at me, he kept silent for a little while, and then said "It is better, I think, for you to hear from me what, if I do not speak, you will soon learn from others. I should inform you fully about a matter which any other informer would not tell you about as fully, nor indeed can, for it is so provided by nature that no one can speak the whole truth about a thing he knows not by experience but by the accounts of others. I trust so greatly in your character that I believe you will deal justly with me when, by my story, you know the whole truth about what has happened."

And when I had answered him in a few words [to the effect] that I would not deal with him otherwise than was appropriate, he said: "The priest, who on my orders went to Rome for the purpose of bringing me the relics of the blessed Tiburtius, found that he could not accomplish the goal for which he had come. After your notary received the relics of the holy martyrs about which we have been talking and had decided to return home, he formed a plan that he should remain in Rome a little longer, while the priest himself



[Fig. 37] A thirteenth-century reliquary, preserved in the Convent of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart at Mons, France. Made of copper with moveable panels, it contains relics of apostles, church fathers, and martyrs around the crucifixion scene and in the space between the columns (Lacroix, *Military and Religious Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 372).

along with Luniso, the brother of Deusdona, and with the men who were to carry those holy ashes, should go on before him as far as Pavia, and should there await his arrival with Deusdona. The plan pleased them both, and leaving the two of them at Rome, the priest, with Luniso and the servants who bore the relics, set out for Pavia. When they arrived there, the caskets containing the holy ashes were placed in your church behind the altar, and in that church were guarded by clergy and laity with constant vigilance. But one night, when the priest himself along with others was on watch in the church, it happened, as he maintains, that, around the middle of the night, sleep gradually stole over every single person who was gathered there to guard [the relics], except the priest. Then he fell to pondering and it seemed to him that without some great cause it could not have come to pass that so

sudden a slumber should overcome so many men. And so, deciding that he ought to avail himself of the opportunity placed before him, he rose up, and with a lighted candle made his way silently to the caskets. Then, burning the cords of the seals by putting the flame of the candle close to them, he quickly opened the caskets without a key and took a small portion of each body. Then he fastened the seals together again, as if they had been unbroken, with the ends of the burnt cords. When no one saw what he had done, he went back to his own seat. Afterwards, when he had returned to me, he gave me the relics of the saints thus obtained by theft, and at first declared that they were not the relics of St. Marcellinus or St. Peter, but of St. Tiburtius. Then, out of some fear unknown to me, he told me in secret from which saints the relics had come, and fully explained to me by what means he had got hold of them. We have placed these relics in St-Médard's in a place where honor is formally shown to them and where they are worshiped with great reverence by all who come there, but whether it is right for us to have them is for you to decide."

When I heard these words, I remembered what I had heard from a certain man with whom I had spent some time during my recent journey to the palace. In conversing with me, he said, among other things: "Have you not heard the rumor about the holy martyrs Marcellinus and Peter which is floating about in these parts?" And when I answered that I knew nothing of it, he said, "Those who come from St. Sebastian [at St-Médard] tell us that a certain priest of the abbot Hilduin, who made the journey to Rome with your notary, when they were on their way back and had in a certain place lodgings in common, and all your men were heavy with drink and sleep, and completely ignorant of what was going on, opened the caskets in which the bodies of the saints were enclosed, and took them out, and going his way carried them to Hilduin, and that they are now at St-Médard's. Apparently little of the holy dust remained in the caskets that were brought to you by your notary." Remembering these words, and comparing them with those which were spoken to me by Hilduin, I was gravely disturbed, especially because I had not as yet found the way to destroy that abominable rumor spread abroad by the wiles of the Devil or to remove it from the hearts of the deceived masses. Nevertheless I judged it best that I should request Hilduin to return to me the very thing which, after that voluntary admission, he could not deny had been taken from my caskets, carried to him, and received by him. This I took care to do as soon as I possibly could, and although he was a little harder and slower than I might have wished in coming to an agreement, he was nevertheless overcome by the earnestness of my prayers, and yielded to my insistence, though a little while before he had

declared that, particularly in this matter, he would yield to the demands of no one.

2. Meanwhile, having sent letters to Ratleig and Luniso – for they were in the place where I deposited the bodies of the martyrs [Upper Mulinheim] – I carefully informed them about what kind of rumor concerning the martyrs was spreading through most of Gaul, admonishing them to consider whether they could recall or remember any such moment on their journey, or anything like what Hilduin claimed concerning his priest's actions. Coming to me at once at the palace, they related a story that was very different from the one that Hilduin told. For first they declared everything which that priest had told Hilduin to be false, for after they left Rome no opportunity had been given either to that priest or to anyone else to commit a crime of that sort. Yet at the same time it was clear that this very thing had happened to the holy ashes of the martyrs, but at Rome in the house of Deusdona through the greed of Luniso and the cunning of Hilduin's priest, at that time when the body of the blessed Marcellinus, removed from its tomb, was hidden in the house of Deusdona. This they declared was the nature of the theft. That priest of Hilduin, disappointed in the hope he had of obtaining the body of St. Tiburtius, undertook, in order not to return completely empty-handed to his lord, to obtain by deceit what he could not come by honestly. So approaching Luniso, for he knew him to be poor and, therefore covetous, and offering him four gold and five silver coins, he seduced him into committing this bit of treachery. Accepting the proffered money, he opened the chest in which the body of the blessed Marcellinus had been placed and locked up by Deusdona, and gave that good-for-nothing scoundrel full power to take from it what he chose, as he had hoped would be the case. In that robbery he was not moderate, for he took away as much of the holy ashes of the blessed martyr as could be contained in a vessel holding a pint. That the deed was done in this way, Luniso himself, who had plotted it with the priest, admitted, throwing himself at my feet, crying and sobbing. When the truth of the matter was discovered, I ordered Ratleig and Luniso to go back to the place from which they had come.

3. After I had talked with Hilduin and an agreement had been reached between us about when the holy relics should be returned to me, I ordered two clerics of our household, namely Hiltfrid and Filimar, one a priest, the other a subdeacon, to go to venerable Soissons for the purpose of receiving the relics. By means of those two I sent to the place from which those same relics were to be carried away, for the sake of blessing, one hundred gold coins. When they came on Palm Sunday to the monastery of St-Médard, they stayed there for three days and once they had received that incomparable



[Fig. 38] The Crown of Thorns received in Paris by St. Louis: the top scene commemorates Louis's crusades, showing the island of Cyprus, the Crusaders' fleet, and a battle with Saracens; the panels from left to right show the king visiting the Sainte Chapelle, built to receive the relic; Louis receiving the Crown from Baldwin II, emperor of Constantinople; and the king and his mother worshiping before the relic (Lacroix, *Military and Religious Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 375).

treasure for which they had been sent, they returned, accompanied by two monks from that same monastery, with all the speed they could manage to the palace. Nevertheless they delivered the relics not to me, but to Hilduin. Having received them, he placed them in his private chapel, to be kept there until, after the many engagements of Easter were over, he would have spare time in which to show me what was to be returned before he returned it.

When a week or more after holy Easter had passed and the king had left the palace to go hunting, Hilduin, according to what had been agreed upon between us, took those relics from his oratory where they had been kept safe and carried them into the church of the holy Mother of God [Charlemagne's chapel at Aachen] and there placed them on the altar. Then he caused me to be fetched to receive them. Opening up the box in which the relics were contained, he showed it to me, that I might see what it was that he was giving back to me and what it was that I was receiving.

Then, lifting that same box from the altar he placed it in my hands, and having offered up suitable prayer, he took it upon himself to lead the choir and ordered those of the clergy who were skilled in psalmody to chant an anthem befitting the praise of the martyrs. And so singing he followed us, bearing off that priceless treasure, as far as the doors of the church.

From there, in slow procession with crosses and candles, we made our way, praising the mercy of God, to an oratory that had been built with crude hands in our house, and into it – for no other place was to be found there – we bore the holy relics.

4. But in that procession of ours, which I have said we made from the church to our oratory, something miraculous happened, which I think I should not neglect to mention. For when we were coming out of the church, and singing praise to our Lord God with loud voice, such a great and sweet scent filled all that part of the city of Aachen that looks westward from the church that almost all the inhabitants of that part of the city, and all those at the same time who for any reason or business found themselves in that part of the city, were so divinely moved by the fragrance that, putting down all the work they had in hand, they all made haste, running as fast as they could, first to the church, and then, as it were following the scent, to our oratory into which they had heard that those relics had been carried. So within our gates there was an immense crowd of people, at once professing joy and wonder. Though many of those who had gathered together did not know what was happening, nevertheless with gladness and exceeding joy they offered up praise together to the mercy of almighty God.

5. But after, with spreading fame, it was proclaimed far and wide that the relics of the holy martyr Marcellinus had been brought to that place, there gathered together, not only from the city of Aachen itself and neighboring or adjacent towns, but also from places and villages much further away, such a constant and huge crowd that, except for evenings and at night, there was no easy access for us to that oratory to celebrate divine service. The infirm were brought from all over, and those who suffered from various disorders were set down by their kinsfolk and friends beside the walls of the oratory. You could see there almost every kind of bodily affliction in both sexes and in all ages

being cured, by the virtue which comes from Christ the Lord and by the merit of the most blessed martyr. Sight was given to the blind, gait to the lame, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb; even paralytics and those deprived of all strength in their bodies were brought there by the hands of others, and, made sound, they returned home on their own feet.

6. When word of these events was carried by Hilduin to the ears of the king [Louis the Pious], he first resolved that on returning to the palace he would without delay visit our oratory, where these things were wrought, and there do reverence to the martyr. But advised by Hilduin not to do so, he ordered that the relics should be carried to the larger church, and when they were taken there he paid reverence to them with humble prayer, and after the solemnities of the Mass had been celebrated he made an offering to the blessed martyrs, Marcellinus and Peter, of a certain manor, situated near the river Ahr, named Ludovesdorf, having fifteen farms and nine arpents of vine yards. And the queen [Judith] made an offering of her girdle, made of gold and jewels, and weighing three pounds. When these things were done, the relics were carried back again to their proper resting place, that is into our oratory, and there they stayed for forty days or more, until the emperor left the palace to go hunting in the forest, as is his yearly custom. When this was done, we too, after making ready whatever seemed necessary for our journey, set out with those same relics from the town of Aachen.

7. Now at the very moment when we were starting out a certain old woman, very well known at the palace, of about eighty years of age and laboring under a contraction of the sinews, was cured within our very sight. As we later learned from her own statement, she had been burdened with this disease for fifty years and had performed the business of walking by crawling about like a quadruped on her hands and knees.

8. So having begun our journey, aided by the merits of the saints, we came with the help of the Lord, on the sixth day to the village of Mulinheim, where when we set out for court we had left the holy ashes of the blessed martyrs. On that journey how much joy and how much happiness was brought by the coming of those relics to the people gathered along our way I cannot pass over in silence, and yet no account can fully do justice to it. Yet I must try to tell it, lest a thing that very greatly praises God, should seem, as if by laziness, to be swallowed up in silence. First, indeed, my mind moves me to tell you what we ourselves saw when we went out from the palace, in the presence of many. There is a stream called the Wurm [which flows into the Ruhr], lying about two thousand paces from the palace of Aachen, with a bridge across it. We stopped there for a time, so that the multitude which had followed us to that point from the palace and now desired to go back might have a place to pray. And there a certain man from among

those who were praying came close to the relics with another, and looking his companion in the face, said, "For the love and honor of this saint, I free you from the debt which you know you owe me." For he owed him, as the man himself admitted, half a pound of silver. Again, another man, leading to the relics a fellow whom he had taken by the hand, said "You killed my father and, therefore, we have been having a blood-feud, but now, for the love and honor of God and of this saint, with all hatred put aside, I wish to join and pledge faith to you that from this time forth there shall forever be friendship between us. Let this saint be the witness of this love agreed upon by you and me, and let him work vengeance upon any who shall attempt to break this peace."

9. At this point the crowd that had started out from the palace with us, after worshiping and kissing the holy relics, with many tears which from excess of rejoicing they could not keep back, returned home. And with another great company which met us there, singing *Kyrie eleison* [Lord have mercy] without interruption, we proceeded on our way to a place where we were joined in a similar manner by others rushing towards us. Then the second great crowd, like the first, having made a prayer, returned again to their daily duties. In this manner, day after day, we were accompanied from the break of dawn until dusk by crowds of people singing praises to Christ the Lord, and so made our way from the palace of Aachen to the village of Mulinheim, the Lord guarding the success of our journey. And there upon the altar, behind which the casket containing the holy ashes of the martyrs had been placed, we set down those relics in a jeweled box.

10. There they stayed in place until the month of November, when, getting ready to go back to the palace, we were warned by a vision that we should not leave that place before we had rejoined the relics once again to the body from which they had been stolen. How it was revealed that this ought to be done should not be passed over in silence, because not only in a dream, as is usual, but also by certain signs and warnings it was made clear to those charged with the duty of keeping watch that the blessed martyrs were entirely determined in this matter that their commands should be obeyed exactly.

11. There was a cleric by the name of Landolf who was appointed to keep watch in the church. It was also his job to strike the bell and he had his bed near the eastern door of the church. When, after the custom of vigils and matins, he had risen in his usual manner and had struck the bell, and the service being finished before daybreak, he wanted to go back to sleep, he prostrated himself for the purpose of supplication before the holy ashes of the martyrs. There, as he claims, when he began to repeat the fiftieth Psalm, he heard close to him on the pavement, as it were, the sound of the feet of a

man walking back and forth. Stricken with no small fear, he raised himself a little on his knees and began to look about in every direction, because he suspected that one of the poor, with the doors of the church shut, was skulking about in some corner. But when he saw that no one else but he was within the walls of the church, he readied himself again for prayer and started to recite the Psalm he had begun before. But, before he could finish a single verse, the jeweled box, containing the holy relics of the blessed Marcellinus, which had been placed on the altar made such a loud ringing noise that you would have thought it had been smashed open, as if by the blow of a hammer. Two doors of the church also, that is the western and the southern, as if some one were shaking and pounding them, made the same sound.

Frightened and greatly perplexed by these things, for he had no idea what he ought to do, he rose from the altar and threw himself in great fear on his bed. Soon overcome with sleep, he saw a man, with a face he had never seen, standing by his side, who addressed him with words like these: "Is it true," he asked, "that Einhard so wishes to rush back to the palace that before he goes he will not rejoin the relics of St. Marcellinus which he has brought here, in the place from which they were removed?" And when he answered that he knew nothing of this matter, that one said: "Arise at first light and tell Einhard by order of the martyrs not to dare to go from here or to start off in any direction until he has restored those relics to their proper place." He sat up wide awake, and was careful to impart to me, as soon as he could, that which he had been ordered to tell me. And I, thinking that in business of this kind nothing should be done carelessly, and indeed judging that what was commanded should be carried out without any delay, gave orders on that very day to make ready what seemed necessary for that purpose. On the next day, with the most anxious care, I delicately joined those relics once again to the body from which they had been separated. For which the blessed martyrs were thankful, as can be seen by the plain witness of the miracle that followed. For the next night, while we were sitting in the church for the solemn office of matins, a certain old man, deprived of the use of his legs, came to prayer, painfully crawling on his hands and knees. In the presence of us all, by the strength of God and the merits of the most blessed martyrs, he was so perfectly cured at the very hour when he came in, that when he walked he no longer needed the use of a crutch. He also declared that he had been deaf for five successive years, and that together with the use of his feet hearing had been restored to him. And so, when all these things had come to pass, I set out, as I said above I wished to do, for court, there to pass the winter pondering many things in my mind.

33. FALSE RELICS AND IMPOSTERS

If opposition to the cult of relics was rare, the abuses to which it was vulnerable were certainly recognized, especially the creation of false relics and the tricksters who promoted them. Gregory of Tours tells a story about an imposter who claimed to have the relics of saints Felix and Vincent, and who carried along with them in his pouch "moles' teeth, the bones of mice, bears' claws and bear's fat" ('History of the Franks,' 9, 6), while Chaucer's Pardoner carries pigs' bones and a piece of sail from St. Peter's fishing boat (see 26 above). Rodolphus Glaber, who tells a similar story, was born c.980 near Auxerre and became a monk, spending time in a number of abbeys influenced by the Cluniac reforms, as well as at Cluny itself. 'The Five books of the Histories,' written mostly while he was at the abbey of St-Germain-d'Auxerre, was dedicated to the abbot of Cluny, Odilo (see 19 above). The following story illustrates not only the corruption to which the cult of relics was susceptible but also the eagerness of lay rulers to acquire relics for their foundations. Manfred built his abbey to encourage resettlement in the Val di Susa, an important Alpine valley which had been depopulated by a Saracen attack. The false relics of St. Justus of Beauvais remained in the monastery but were under such strong suspicion that by the end of the eleventh century, in a move to quench the controversy, the relics received a new identity, and became known as those of St. Justus of Oulx.

Source: trans. John France, *Rodolphus Glaber: The Five Books of the Histories* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 181–185; repr. with permission.

Book 4

3. To punish the sins of men, God sometimes permits evil spirits to perform miracles.
6. Through Moses, divine authority gave to the Jews this warning: 'If there arise amongst you a prophet speaking in the name of one of the gods of the Gentiles, and foretells something to come, and by chance it takes place, do not believe him, for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love him or not.' In our own times we have seen a similar kind of thing, though relating to a different matter. In those days there was a common fellow, a cunning pedlar whose name and country of origin were unknown because in the many lands where he sought refuges he took false names and lied about his origins lest he be recognized. Furthermore, in secret he dug bones out of graves, taking them from the remains of the recently dead, then put them into coffers and sold them widely as the relics of holy confessors and martyrs. After he had perpetrated many frauds of this kind in Gaul, he

MEDIEVAL SAINTS

A READER

edited by

MARY-ANN STOUCK

