Dado on the Life of St Eligius


Book I.

1. Eligius sprang from the villa of Chaptelat about six miles toward the western shore from the town of Limoges in Gaul, which joins the Britannic ocean in the space of about two hundred miles. Thus the city sits in Armorican parts, in ulterior Gaul and prima Aquitaine which looks to the western shore. On the east, it is bordered by the province of Lyon and Gallia Belgica and to the west and south it has the province of Narbonne which also border Ocean. In fact, Spain may be reached from the west. So Eligius was born and raised in that region from free parents of an ancient Christian line. His father was called Eucherius and his mother Terrigia. By grace of divine prescience, he received the name Eligius, a fitting mirror of his mind. And as a foretaste of what he would do, or indeed what God would do through him, it is fitting to tell what happened before he was born. For I should not omit the sign of his sanctity that was shown or the testimony of great men that I have heard.

2. For when the blessed man was still in his mother's womb, his genetrix had a vision ordained in this manner. She saw a splendid eagle wheeling above her bed crying out to her three times promising I don't know what. And when she awoke, terrified by the reverberating voice, she began to wonder much what the vision might mean. Meanwhile the hour of the birth approached and the mother was beginning to be endangered in the greatest pain. So they called a certain religious priest, a man of good repute, that he might pray for her. When he came to her, prophetic words soon seized him and he assured her: "Do not be afraid, mother, for the Lord has deigned to bestow a blessed birth upon you. He will be a holy man and chosen from all his people he will be called a great priest in the church of Christ."

3. So Eligius was born and nurtured in the true faith and imbued by his parents with the Catholic Christian religion. When he had passed the years of boyhood, he entered adolescence with industry and took up whatever work suitable to his age came to his hand and completed it with wonderful aptitude. When his father saw that his son was so skillful, he apprenticed him to an honorable man, Abbo, a proven goldsmith who at that time performed the public office of fiscal moneyer (fiscalis monetae) in the city of Limoges. Soon he was fully trained in the uses of this office and began to be honored with praises among the dwellers and neighbors in the lord. For he acted with dovelike simplicity, lest he bring pain to anyone and he had the wisdom of the serpent lest he fall into traps set by others. He was worthy both in having his skills and in his easy and pure speech. Often he entered into the meetings of the church giving gold to whomever was there reciting the sacred scripture which he longed eagerly to bury within the memory of his heart so that even when he was absent he might ruminate with intense meditations on what he had heard.
4. Afterwards some years went by until for some reason which I believe was guided by
divine providence, he left his native land and his parents and went to the soil of the
Franks. Only a few days passed before he came to the notice of a certain royal treasurer
named Bobo, and honest and mild man, who committed him to his patronage and put him
to work under his tuition. He strenuously employed himself at all work and won the love
of everyone to whom he could speak.

5. After a while, a certain cause brought him to the notice of King Clothar of the Franks.
For that king wanted a seat urbanely made with gold and gems but no one could be found
in his palace who could do the work as he conceived it. But when the aforesaid royal
treasurer had satisfied himself of Eligius's skill of Eligius, he began to investigate
whether he might complete the work as it was planned. When he was sure that [Eligius]
could easily undertake it, [Bobo] went to the prince and indicated to him that he had
found an industrious artisan who was at his disposal for the work without delay. Then the
king most readily gave him a great weight of gold which he in turn gave to Eligius.
Having taken it, he began the work immediately and with diligence speedily completed it.
And from that which he had taken for a single piece of work, he was able to make two.
Incredibly, he could do it all from the same weight for he had accomplished the work
commissioned from him without any fraud or mixture of siliquae, or any other
fraudulence. Not claiming fragments bitten off by the file or using the devouring flame of
the furnace for an excuse, but filling all faithfully with gems, he happily earned his happy
reward. For having brought the completed piece to the palace he gave one seat to the king
and kept the other back. The king began to marvel and praise such elegant work and
ordered that the craftsman be paid i
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7. When he reached the age of virility, desiring to show himself a vessel sanctified to God and fearing that some sin might stain his breast, he confessed his adolescent deeds to the priest. Imposing severe penances with mortifications on himself, he began to resist the flesh with the fires of the spirit in labors following the apostle, vigils, fasts, chastity, in much patience and unfeigned love. For he protected himself against the present ardors of the flesh with fires of future suffering and the memory of the ardors of Gehenna shut out lust. Day and night he begged God for heavenly gifts always considering this from his book of Job: "I pray the lord and place my speech to God who makes great and inscrutable miracles without number, who places the humble on high and raises the deserving." He would forego a sufficiency of bread so that he might gain heavenly bread. His fasts made him pale and his body withered with thirst but always his mind thirsted more sharply with love of the eternal fatherland and as that became heavier, he bore his sufferings more lightly. For always feeling the end of his present life, he trembled in fear of God's judgment, knowing the scripture: "Blessed is the man who is always afraid." And the apostle: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." And also that saying of Job: "For always I fear the flood of God swelling over me." He lay at night with his feet to the Lord, beating his breast with his hands, dripping tears, with sighs his eyes turned to heaven, always he looked about him fearing that he might have offended in some way and his tearful voice trembled: "To you alone I have sinned; have mercy on me from your great mercy." And that blessed Job: "Remember, for my life is as a wind" and "Spare me for my days are nothing." And when he went out he kept in his mind, "Eyes cannot see nor ears hear not the heart of man know what God prepares for those that love him." And the more he pursued these meditations the more he progressed. The more he humiliated himself, the humbler he became and so much more did he profit. As much as he sorrowed, so much he was forgiven and as much as he humbly afflicted himself, so much did he deserve to be raised on high by God. Oh profound benignity of God! He makes the pardon swifter than the offense. Oh happy penitence, that so swiftly attracts the mercy of Christ to itself. He barely ceased extinguishing the flames of crime with assiduous tears and excluding the virus of sins with frequent fasting than he received from the Lord the mercy that he asked. Indeed through the prophet Malachi the lord spoke of this: "I give and I fear, and he feared me and trembled before the face of my name." Here, therefore, is it written: "Fear of the lord drives out sin." and again, "Who fears the Lord, will tremble at nothing and will not shrink because his hope is in him."

8. Then calling on the Lord with a breast full of faith he asked that if his penitence were acceptable to God he might deign to give him a sign. Now, in the cubicle where he was accustomed to rest regularly he had tokens of many saints hanging from above and beneath that sacred covering he rested his head on a haircloth and spent the night in prayer. When as usual he lay prostrate in that place one night, praying on his haircloth, he was weighed down by descending sleep and dropped off for a moment and suddenly he saw someone standing before him who said: "Behold Eligius! Your prayers have been heard and the sign you asked for in the past will now be given to you." As soon as he heard this, he sensed a sweet odor, and the softest drops from the chrism of the reliquaries flowed smoothly upon his head. Exceedingly astonished by this, he swiftly arose and careful investigation disclosed chrism like balsam distilled on the blanket that covered
him. And such a sweet fragrance spread from there that it filled the room so that he could scarcely remain there. And then, mindful of his petition, and exceedingly amazed by the generosity of God's bounty, loudly weeping, he blessed Christ the faithful rewarder, who never fails those who hope in him, from the bottom of his heart. For indeed his power began with almighty God to whom all things are possible. The holy man secretly confided in his comrade named Ouen, cognomen Dado, whom he loved as his own soul, exacting a promise that as long as he remained in this body he would tell no one. Hearing this, he immediately felt compunction in his heart and with the secret of these arcane [things] began to burn inside with love. Because of this he spurned secular blandishments and desired to emulate Eligius studiously to the good. And then they took Dado's brother Ado into their common counsel. These were men high among the optimates at court, the sons of Audechar. With common counsel they both began to imitate what they had learned from Eligius and he was their familiar consort and they had one heart and one soul in the Lord.

9. Therefore Eligius found grace in the presence of the Lord and in the presence of the king of the Franks. And he was held in such good repute by all that the king turned over to him a huge heap of gold and silver and gems without even weighing them. Day by day, he grew in honor with great favor and wholly tested in every respect he flourished, devout in the court. Meanwhile, Clothar died and Dagobert his son succeeded alone to the monarchy of the kingdom by whom Eligius was granted such familiarity that his happiness earned the hatred of many.

10. He grew more in vigils, in fasts, and in charity. For the king's use, he made many utensils from gold and gems. He sat fabricating in a mine opposite Thille, his vernaculus from the Saxon tribe who followed in his master's footsteps and led a venerable life. Sitting at the work, he propped open a book before his eyes so that even while laboring he might receive divine mandates. Thus he performed double offices, his hands to the uses of man and his mind bound to divine use. His fame spread abroad so that Roman, Italian, or Gothic legates or those sent from any other province to make an alliance or on another mission to the palace of the king of the Franks, would not go first to the King but would repair first to Eligius asking him either for food or seeking healthful counsel. Religious men and monks also flocked to him and whatever he could collect, he gave to them in alms or gave for the ransom of captives, for he had this work much at heart. Wherever he understood that slaves were to be sold he hastened with mercy and soon ransomed the captive. The sum of his captives redeemed rose from twenty and thirty to fifty and finally a hundred souls in one flock when they were brought in a ship, of both sexes and from different nations. He freed all alike, Romans, Gauls, Britons and Moors but particularly Saxons who were as numerous as sheep at that time, expelled from their own land and scattered everywhere. If it should happen that the number of people for sale outweighed his means, he gave more by stripping what he had on his own body from his belt and cloak to the food he needed and even his shoes so long as he could help the captives. And often it was pilgrims of Christ that he rescued. Oh, daily did he wish to be a debtor that his own debts might be forgiven? Daily did he not rip golden bracelets,
jewelled purses and other gold and gems from himself so that he might succor the miserable? Let me briefly comprehend how many multitudes of captives over successive periods of time he freed from the harsh yoke of dominion and how much alms he distributed to people of both sexes, diverse churches and monasteries, though no orator, however studious or eloquent, could tell the tale. Standing directly in the presence of the king, redeemed captives threw the denarius before him and he gave them charters of liberty. To all of them he gave three choices: since they were now free, they could return to their own country and he would offer them what subsidy they required; if they wished to remain he would accommodate them willingly and include them not among his servants but as his brothers; and, if he could persuade them to embrace the venerable life of monks and take the cloister of a community, honoring those marked for the lord, he would supply clothing and whatever else was needed for their care. He had several vernaculos in his contubernio helping him with these needs. One was Bauderic, his countryman, who took care of his things with all honesty. Tituin of the Suevi tribe was a faithful lay cubicularius who achieved the highest reward when he was later killed. Buchin, converted from the gentiles, later lived at the community of Ferrieres. Andreas and Martin and John at his procurance deserved to come to the clergy. These and more others than I can count were in his chamber day and night striving to complete the solemn canonical course with all effort.

11. Mostly missing. Ends, but since I have seen the man why not depict his form?

12. He was tall with a rosy face. He had a pretty head of hair with curly locks. His hands were honest and his fingers long. He had the face of an angel and a prudent look. At first, he was used to wear gold and gems on his clothes having belts composed of gold and gems and elegantly jeweled purses, linens covered with red metal and golden sacs hemmed with gold and all of the most precious fabrics including all of silk. But all of this was but fleeting ostentation from the beginning and beneath he wore a hairshirt next to his flesh and, as he proceeded to perfection, he gave the ornaments for the needs of the poor. Then you would see him, whom you had once seen gleaming with the weight of the gold and gems that covered him, go covered in the vilest clothing with a rope for a belt. Sometimes the king himself would see him despoiled for love and devotion to Christ, tearing from himself what he had given him even to his clothing and his belt. For he said that the ornaments that served his appearance to the world were worthless and all that which was inglorious he gave up for the sake of Christ. While he was with the king he had a mansion carefully joined with Dado whom he loved as his own soul. From this, we could take many examples if we had enough time to repeat them. He had many tokens of saints hanging there in his cubicle and several holy books turning on an axis. Thus after exchanging psalmody and prayers, like a careful bee, he secreted the choicest from a variety of flowers from different readings in the beehive of his breast. At night, it was his custom to stretch out before his bed on a haircloth and either from the first twilight or after a little rest rising from bed to pray prostrate with his head bowed and passing many nights in tears keeping watch. For he had the great grace of tears. In various ways, he determined as far as human nature could permit, that every night would be consumed in the service of God. So he would pray at length interrupting the prayers for some relief, reciting the psalms in order and then turning to chanting or reading. And when he was
struck by some sacred words, you would see him suddenly raise his eyes to the sky, joining sigh to sigh, mixing tears with the reading striking his breast and pouring out an ocean of weeping. And when during this reading he was weighed down by invading sleep, he would meditate on the words in a sort of dream. Then starting awake he would finish the reading and according to custom turn to prayer in which work he strove with so much silence never moving his head or any other part that you could barely hear the fleeting breath. Often, for various reasons, he was called to the king's chamber at night but even when one messenger followed another, he would not go until he had completed his service to Christ. Then leaving the house, he was armed with the sign of prayer and the cross. Returning home he prayed first thing. And thus he did every day of his life longing for his eternal homeland. For he was affable in every way and subtle, with pious heart and a spirit strong for battle.

13. When the king asked him to lead a legation to Breton lands, he hastened there without delay, secure in the love of Christ. And when he met the prince of the Bretons, he indicated reasons for making a pact and received pledges of peace. And when some might have intended a quarrel or to declare mutual war on them, his gentleness attracted the aforesaid prince with so much benignity and mildness that he was easily persuaded to go with him. For after he had remained there for some time he returned home taking with him the king and many soldiers of his tribe. Presenting them in the villa of Creil to the king of the Franks, he negotiated peacefully. He who brought many gifts returned home even more heavily rewarded. Para ends with a gap.

14. Indeed King Dagobert, swift, handsome and famous with no rival among any of the earlier kings of the Franks, loved him so much that he would often take himself out of the crowds of princes, optimates, dukes or bishops around him and seek private counsel from Eligius. And whatever Eligius requested, he would give without delay. Whatever he could gain, he expended in alms for the needy, ransom of captives and remedies for the weak, whence the prince rewarded him ever more freely because he knew that not one but many would profit by it.

15. Among other things, he acquired a villa in the neighborhood of Limoges called Solignac, saying: "May your serenity concede this place to me, lord King, so that here I may raise a ladder by which you and I may both succeed in climbing into heaven. As usual, the king freely granted his petition, agreed, and gave the order without delay that what he asked might be conceded. That was a time when a public census from the same region was exacted to be paid to the royal treasury. But when all the revenue collected together was ready to be brought to the king, the domesticus and monetarius wished to refine the gold by cooking in the furnace so that according to ritual only the reddest and purest metal would be brought into the king's presence. They did not know that it had been conceded as a reward to Eligius. Despite every strain and effort for three or four days, God hindered them so that they could not complete the work. At last, the arrival of a messenger from Eligius interrupted the work being done and asserted his ownership. As soon as the announcement was made, with the inhabitants rejoicing, the work was completed and his wealth committed. There in that place, first the most powerful man of God built a monastery. Then having constituted an abbot, he freed many of his vernacularis
to the number of a hundred from different provinces and added fifty monks with enough land to support them abundantly. He lavished so much love and devotion on the place that whatever he had, whatever the king gave him, whatever he could buy, whatever he was paid in gratuities by the powerful, he sent to that place. There you would see loaded carts, vessels for every use of both copper and wood, vestments and lectuaries and linens and volumes of sacred scripture and all things needful for the use of a monastery in such profusion that it kindled the envy of many depraved great folk. He even thought that he would bind himself to that same monastery except that the dispensation of God obligated him to something else.

16. I saw, when I visited the place, such observance of the holy rule there that could hardly be matched in any other monastery in Gaul. For that large congregation is adorned with many different flowers of grace. And they had artifices by many skilled in different arts which were completed in fear of Christ and always prepared in obedience. For no one there claimed anything as their own but as we read in the acts of the apostles all things were all in common among them all. Such joy reigned in that fertile place that when anyone strolled among the orchards and the gardens flourishing with beauty, he knew the words to be completely fulfilled: "How good is your house Jacob, and how beautiful is your tent, Israel. Such shady woods and cedars above the waters like Paradise above the flood." Surely, of such was it said through Solomon: "the habitations of the just are blessed." That same community is undoubtedly about six miles from Limoges toward the southern shore. It is surrounded by a wall not just of stone but with a well-fortified ditch having the circumference of ten stadia. On one side it is strengthened by a river, guarded by a high mountain covered with trees and sheer cliffs. And they filled the whole area of the monastery with orchards of diverse fruit trees. And so the sluggish soul is refreshed and rejoiced to occupy itself with the amenities of paradise.

17. When he had completed that cenobium with all its works, and stabilized it with care, he thought to build a xenodochium in the city of Paris. But God inspired him to conceive a more excellent plan. He began to raise in his own house which he had received as a gift from the king in that same city, a domicile of virgins of Christ. After long and sweaty labor, he constructed a monastery worthy of holy virgins. There, constituting the strict discipline of the rule, he gathered thirty girls from diverse tribes, some from among his own ancillae and other more noble matrons of the Franks. He appointed an abbess fitting to God, a girl named Aurea, daughter of Maurinus and Quiria. He assigned land with high revenue and turned it over from all his property. From hither and thither you could see deliveries of everything necessary or useful for a monastery, vessels and vestments, sacred books and other ornaments. The most pious father provided whatever things appropriate to the sex might be needed with the most solicitous and diligent care. And when all the house was complete and furnished with everything necessary to it and made perfect, one vile but necessary thing still remained for the building of the domicile. He had not enough land, for it was all filled by the house, but there was a small piece from the fisc lying adjacent for the necessary work. Therefore, he ordered the land cleared, so he might learn its dimensions and hurried off to the prince, suggested the area and without delay obtained what he asked. And when he returned home, the lines drawn, and the size of the habitation considered, he found that it was a foot greater in size than he
had told the king. He was sad, for he who never wished to lie to anyone had lied to the
king. Leaving the work completely, he went back to court and sought out the prince,
threw himself on the ground and accused himself of lying asking for pardon or for death.
But when the king learned the insignificance of the cause he consoled with his injury
more in amazement and soon turning to the multitude of bystanders and said: "behold
how bright and venerable is the faith of Christ! My dukes and domestics rob me of
spacious villas and the servant of Christ because of the faith that he has in the Lord will
not bear to hide a palm's breadth of land from us." And he consoled Eligius so kindly that
he doubled the gift he had given him. This story makes clear how the holy man feared to
be guilty of a lie and soil his conscience with the meanest fib kept from the king. So his
faith raised him to heaven and that fidelity made him dear to God and famous among
men.

18. When the monastery was done and the edifice for handmaids of God complete, for
which the profit of the labor is its own reward, then he built a basilica for the interment of
the bodies of God's handmaids. It was dedicated to the holy apostle Paul. The roof
covered with lead in sublime elegance and Abbot Quintilianus lay buried there. Then he
built and restored the basilica in honor of St. Martial, bishop and confessor, at Limoges.
He also covered that roof with lead in urbane stability. When he bore the saint's relics
there, fully devout with great triumph and a great company of both sexes, a chorus
psalling with melodies of psalms and sweet modulations of antiphons, the lord declared a
miracle worthy of memory. Eligius was inspired to direct that the relics be taken a certain
way when he could have gone more directly by another. But on that path there were four
enclosed dungeons where three guards held seven men, either innocent or guilty. When
Eligius passed, exulting and dancing before the ark with the relics like David of yore
accompanied by the exultant voices of his flock, they came to the dungeon. Suddenly
depressed by a heavy weight, the bearer of the relics was fixed to the ground. However
much they pushed and pulled, he could not move a step which he confessed in a
stentorian voice. And while the witnesses were marvelling at this, there came a sound like
a thunderbolt from within the prison and the walls were burst with a great explosion from
the ground. And immediately the prisoners appeared at the broken gate with all their
bonds broken. Then the feet of the relic bearer lightened and they went on to the church
with the former prisoners. And all who were there in amazement began to praise the new
miracle and the joined merits of two saints, praise of Martial to declare the favor of
Eligius. And all, seeing the fruits, praised Christ the Lord who does his work in his
servants and raised their voices continually.

----lacuna----

19 and 20 missing.

21. Even as religious monks frequently flocked to him, he was never satisfied but grew
ever more thirsty with desire for holy conversation until he would hurry off to the
cenobium of Luxeuil which was at that time the most eminent and strict of all the
monasteries in Gaul. For Gaul was not yet crowded with monasteries and those that were
there were not under the regular discipline but fermented with the ancient malice of the
world. Beyond Luxeuil, therefore, which alone is said to have held carefully the strictness
of a rule, the monastery of Solignac stood first in the western lands. Many got a start there and were inspired by its example so that now there are many innumerable cenobia of both sexes throughout all Francia and Gaul under the nurturing regular discipline propitiating the divinity. Thus as I began to say, who can tell with what devotion and humility Eligius visited that monastery, going among the brothers? You would have seen him, when he first entered the monastery, face low to the ground, depressed from the light, his head inclined on a mound of earth. Then he would move with great gravity, his whole body bowed, among the brothers and prostrate himself on the earth before each monk. He listened most devoutly to all the benedictions and gave them copious alms while he took only the humblest crust of bread from them for benediction on leaving, which he took for the most generous reward. And every day while he could keep it unspoiled, he consumed eulogies from it fasting as for holy communion.

----lacuna----

22-26 missing.

27. Another time, dressed as a layman, he took the road with his boys from the royal villa called Etrepagny. When he came to the vicus of Gamaches, entering the basilica there, he found a certain poor cripple lying before the entrance. When he saw Eligius, this man began to clamor asking for money from him or some other consolation. Then Eligius, strongly feeling the gift of the Holy Spirit seize him, said: "Let us pray together to the Lord to restore your health." Conducting him quickly into the church, he ordered him to stand, supported by prayer. Prostrating himself on the ground, he prayed for a long time. When he got up he saw the cripple still lying there and he lay down again to prayer pouring out his request with tears. So prolix were his prayers and so many tears did he shed that the whole pavement was moistened as they flooded, running to the ground like a river. At last, strengthened by faith, he arose and approached the invalid with great confidence and seized his hand saying: "In the name of our lord Jesus Christ, the son of God on high, rise and walk." As soon as he said the word, the invalid was healed by the Son of God and arose in health. Everyone there heard, with great wonder, the joints and nerves and and all his twisted bones crack and solidify. He was healed in that hour and walked carefully, blessing God with all alacrity. For he had been bound by the chains of paralysis for many years and thus the swiftness of his cure excited the greater wonder. The blessed man gave him alms and sent him away in peace. Adoring and glorifying God he returned to his place. Then Eligius began to conjure the boys and each of his companions sternly not to reveal these things to anyone while he remained in the body, for he greatly feared lest in the use of this power his mind should be oppressed by human praise.

----lacuna----

30. One day while he was living in Paris, the custodian of the basilica of Saint Columba the virgin sped to him at dawn trembling and falling all over his feet. He announced that, in the silence of the night, the basilica had been robbed of all its ornaments. The news deeply depressed Eligius but he swiftly reverted to his usual source of hope. He kindly comforted the custodian and then hurried to that same oratory where he prayed with these
words: "Listen, Saint Columba, to what I say. My Redeemer knows that unless you restore those stolen ornaments speedily to the tabernacle, I will have the entrance sown over with thorny plants so that veneration will never be offered to you again in this place." He said that and left. And behold! the following day, when the custodian rose in the morning, he found all restored as before, down to the tiniest curtain. And his joy matched his former distress as he sped again to Eligius and announced that everything had been returned. Seeing everything in its place, he praised the martyr and as always magnified the name of Christ the lord with growing hilarity.

31. Among the infinity of his other good works, he obtained license from the king that wherever he might find any human bodies executed by royal severity or judicial censure or from cases following any diverse arguments, whether in cities or villas, he might take them down from the gallows or the wheel or the noose and bury them. From among his companions, he appointed respelliones named Gallebodo and Vincent to whom he entrusted this care with their colleagues. Thus wherever they went whether in nearby towns or far away, they carried hoes with them so that they could immediately cover any corpse they found with earth. One day in the royal county of Austria, they came to a certain town called Stratoburg and outside the town on a height they saw a hanging man. The noose had taken his life on that very day. Going straight to the place, they removed the noose so that they might start the burial rites. But the venerable man felt power working. While the burial was being prepared, he approached the body and began to massage it gently from head to toe. When he felt the spirit to be present, denying the power that came from him, he said without delay: "Oh what a terrible crime, we have nearly perpetrated without the Lord's order! We nearly buried this body in the ground when the spirit is still within!" Saying this, he ordered the man covered with clothing and they waited. Refreshed in spirit, he arose from the ground having suffered no injury. When news of what had happened circulated in the town, hostile pursuers planned to seize him on the road and put him to death. But Eligius swiftly tore him from their hands and supplied royal letters of safe conduct for him and defended him. Not long after, he removed himself from his company, perhaps with Eligius' connivance. Lest the things he had done should spread among the people, he never appeared again among his servants. But enough about that. It is enough that what he did about this is known to God alone and not hidden whether he was in secular habit or under the venerable apostolic tonsure. Meanwhile, I will try to be brief in telling what he achieved with his handiwork. 32. Among other good works this same blessed man fabricated tombs for the relics of saints Germanus, Severin, Piaton, Quentin, Lucian, Genovefa, Columba, Maximian and Lolian, Julian and many more, with gold and silver and gems. But above all, by order of King Dagobert, he covered blessed Martin of Tours' sepulchre with wonderful work of gold and jewels and he urbanely composed the tomb of St. Briccio and another where the body of St. Martin had formerly lain. And he obtained great benefices from the king for that same church. At Eligius' request, and for reverence to the holy confessor Martin, King Dagobert forgave the whole census that was released to the royal tax gatherer from that church and confirmed it by a charter. Thus the church claimed the whole use of the fiscal cens from him so that in that town even today it is decreed through obliging episcopal letters. Above all, Eligius fabricated a mausoleum for the holy martyr Denis in the city of Paris with a wonderful marble ciborium over it marvelously decorated with gold and
gems. He composed a crest [at the top of a tomb] and a magnificent frontal and surrounded the throne of the altar with golden axes in a circle. He placed golden apples there, round and jeweled. He made a pulpit and a gate of silver and a roof for the throne of the altar on silver axes. He made a covering in the place before the tomb and fabricated an outside altar at the feet of the holy martyr. So much industry did he lavish there, at the king's request, and poured out so much that scarcely a single ornament was left in Gaul and it is the greatest wonder of all to this very day.

33. At last, all these wonderful works were done and all the people about quieted, even the ferocious Gascons broken on their own hostile swords. Then the great and famous king Dagobert died and was buried in that same basilica of St. Denis under the arch in the right side. His son Clovis still juvenile in age, succeeded him to the kingdom. In his reign, the Roman Empire being headed by Constantine, a wicked heresy which originated in eastern lands began to pullulate. The heresiarchs began wickedly to violate ecclesiastical rule and wandered teaching and preaching untrue things. They asserted that our lord and savior Jesus Christ had least following the form of a slave and they jabbered in profane voices that he never assumed true flesh from the virgin Mary. These things troubled the church much and not only infected some folks in their homeland with the contagion of this pestiferous assertion but even some in Rome. At that time, the bishop was the most blessed pope Martin who carefully and manfully guarded against this, fighting many adversaries and sustaining many trials. Discerning that the emperor and many others were giving ear to these assertions, he was moved to gather a council of priests to restrain the case and destroy this depraved doctrine. In that council, with the consent of all the orthodox, he published a great and accurate declaration of faith against the heretics which he sent to Gaul with an attached letter ordering the king of France that if there were any learned Catholic men in his kingdom he should have them assigned to this work. Eligius would then have willingly joined with his companions except that at that time he was impeded by a certain circumstance.

34. Meanwhile, during the delay, the enemy of human kind, being sharply incited, struck powerfully against the walls of the church. Men were lost and turrets weakened with all sorts of attacks and he hoped to bring bishop Martin himself down with affliction. But though the unclean spirit struck with all his armed might, Martin resisted by the grace of Christ and stood, filled with virtue like an immobile rock amidst the flood, repelling the jabberers with a virile spirit. Imperial letters ordered him to make a proclamation against the faith of the fathers. But he, to whom that holy faith was venerable, denied that he could speak impious words against God, judging it wiser to lay down his temporal life that he might keep his conscience of faith unwounded. We know a certain brother from eastern parts who witnessed all these deeds that I now report in his own presence. Though he suffered many injuries, scourged for many days in the people's presence with his hands tied [behind] his back like a scapegoat, no persuasion could deflect Martin from the Catholic faith. With the whole city lamenting, he was finally driven into exile. After he was brought to Constantinople and relegated to exile there, he succeeded by his prayers alone in restoring the light to a blind man. Thus lingering in exile, after many torments, the noble life of this exalted and venerable man came to an end. Now the heretics might pretend as much as they liked but they were confounded and blushed that
he had made himself a martyr. Although they clamored that his soul had been peacefully exhaled still he did not kill himself but they contrived their own defeat by his death, as pain will not consume him in whom pain was consumed. And if they were here now, they would hear from me these words for the martyr: "So," I say, "under the protection of Him Who was made flesh, he did not die by the sword, but relegated to exile for confessing the Catholic faith, after continuous and unwearying profession he earned the exit of a glorious death. And thus, having returned to his Lord, he was received as a martyr in the heavenly court. For his virtue and honor is no less than that conferred on the blessed martyrs seeing that he bore all that his adversaries inflicted on him with a stout heart. As Scripture attests, it is no lesser glory but rather more excellent to sustain martyrdom to keep the church from being torn by heresy than it is to be sacrificed for pulling down idols. For people endure persecution by the pagans for the sake of their own souls but suffer from heretics for the sake of the universal church. So I call him greater because without doubt he was proved more outstanding and excellent." These few words about so excellent a man have been inserted into the life of Eligius because Martin did so much to brighten the faith in the part of the world where he lived. And it suffices us to have narrated it for love of grace so that the memory of that special man who impended much good to my colleagues in Rome shall not be forgotten in the West although he was brought to the East.

35. While these things were happening in the city of Rome, a heretic from overseas struck a blow at the province of Gaul. He came to that city once called Aedua, now Auxerre, and began most fraudulently to preach nefarious dogma. And when this came to the ears of Eligius in the palace, vigilant as always, with Ouen and other Catholic men, he began to seek out every manifestation of this plague. He did not stop reminding the bishop and the optimates, and by his order the sacerdotal princes were gathered in a council at Orleans. The aforesaid heretic was led before them and they questioned him about different things, knowing him to be learned, but could reach no conclusion. He answered their questions so craftily that just where he seemed to be absolutely straight, he opened up holes, slithering like an oily snake. And when no one could stop him or overcome him in any way, a most learned bishop named Falvius emerged among us by God's providence who was his match in everything and we rejoiced in his skill. Now all his previously hidden cunning and arts were revealed as dissimulation and his arguments were uncovered. Thus all the bishops imposed a sentence against him and sent a decree above his name to all the cities to eliminate the error to the ends of Gaul.

36. But when Eligius discovered another apostate disturbing the people of Paris, he energetically extirpated him from the city. Similarly, after long imprisonment, he ejected another man who circulated through villas and squares deceiving the populace by pretending to be a bishop from the boundaries of the kingdom of the Franks. And with great authority he pursued everyone else who attempted to subvert the people. For he hated all heretics, schismatics, and every figment beyond the Catholic doctrine and followed every trace of them with outrage. His eloquence flowed out and he was most subtle in the study of scripture, and when he had been sufficiently instructed, he went everywhere preaching with the evangelical cohorts to the people to hold unshakably to their faith in Christ and take care to protect themselves from every contagion of heresy.
40. But it would take far too long to recount every sign of his virtue and it is time to put an end to this part of the book. Words fail and words attenuate our aridity and we will succumb long before we have exhausted all there is to tell of Eligius. Indeed, I will never tell even a hundredth part of all the ornaments of good which are so precious that he earned as his heavenly reward. And we have only covered part of his life. For now the time came when he put off the dress of a layman and so we can impose an end on this part of the book before our audience sinks into boredom. The things which he accomplished in his episcopacy and the way in which he migrated from this world and the virtues he performed after his death, if the lord grants me life and power, I will explicate in another book. For we do not confide in ourselves but his merits, to take the work happily begun faithfully even to the end. If Christ deigns, he will intercede for us in heaven who earned his reward to work such miracles on earth through the same our lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit reigns and lives through the cycle of the ages. Amen.

Here ends the first book of the life of St. Eligius Bishop and Confessor.