

# Workshop day #2 - The torture of Eusebia

---

## Setting

According to the tenth-century *Vita* that was written by Hucbald of St.-Amand, Saint Rictrudis lived in the seventh century. She was married to Adalbald and had several children: son Maurontus and daughters Eusebia, Clotsendis and Adalsendis. When Adalbald was murdered, Rictrudis entered the monastery of Marchiennes (near present-day Douai in northern France), which she may have ruled as its abbess. Her daughter Clotsendis was supposed to succeed her. Adalsendis died young and Maurontus became dean at St Amé (also near Douai). In the meanwhile, her husband's grandmother Gertrude, who had built the monastery at Hamage (Hamay) and ruled it as its abbess, was looking after her great granddaughter Eusebia.

## Manuscripts

**Mons, *Bibliothèque Universitaire*, 847 f. 20r (XXI. De SCA EUSEBIA)**

**Valenciennes, *Bibliothèque Municipale*, 513 f. 67r (XXII)**

**Douai, *Bibliothèque Municipale*, 849 f. 87r (.XXI.)**

## When coding, pay attention to

- certainly:
  - mistakes
  - abbreviations
  - page divides
- if possible:
  - subdivision in chapters, chapter titles/numbers/initials
  - use of capitals in saints' names
  - punctuation
  - marginal notes
  - accents on words

N.B. there is probably too much text to do during this workshop. It is best to start with one paragraph as it appears in in two or three different manuscripts (so that you get a chance to check for the variant readings), and only move to the second paragraph when you finished the first one. Douai BM 849 is the oldest manuscript (but is a bit hard to read because of the quality of the photos). Mons BU 847 is a direct copy of that manuscript; Valenciennes BM 513 is a later copy.

Paragraph 25 should be relatively easy, paragraph 26 is a bit more challenging.

## Edition in the *Acta Sanctorum*

### CAPUT III.

#### *Acta cum S. Eusebia filia. Hujus & SS. Amati & Mauronti atque ipsius S. Rictrudis obitus.*

[25] Interea Dei famula Geretrudis, quæ fuerat avia Adalbaldi viri venerabilis, longæ vitæ vitam accumulans operibus bonis in Hamatico monasterio a se ædificato, ubi etiam sacra virgo Eusebia ejus educabatur proneptis, viam ingreditur universæ carnis. Cui velut loco regiminis eadem succedit Eusebia, puella quidem bonæ indolis, sed adhuc satis teneræ ætatis, utpote duodennis. Mater vero ejus Rictrudis, vere Christicola, profundiori usa consilio atque prudentia, bene sciens quod multos multis exercitatos virtutibus maligni hostis seducat astutia in ætate quoque jam matura, metuebat pro filia, ne forte serpentina tentaretur fraudulentia, si libertate potiretur immatura: quapropter ad se eam venire, & secum voluit habitare. Illa vero renuente atque in Hamatico conversari volente, mater ejus Regales compulsæ aures pulsare, quo suam ipsius auctoritate filiam potuisset recipere. Quo concedente, missaque epistola reverti præcipiente, mœsta ad matrem sancta regreditur Eusebia ad monasterium Marcianas, cum suæ proaviæ sanctæ Geretrudis corpore, & cum Sanctorum Reliquiis, quæ ibidem fuerunt reconditæ, atque cum omni sua congregatione. At mater ejus voti compos effecta pluribus filiam hortabatur monitis, secum in spirituali Deo deservire militia. Quæ libentissime quidem ejus parebat dictis, divinis se mancipando jugiter obsequiis; sed refragari ejus nequibat intentio ab amore loci sibi veluti genialis.

[26] Unde fiebat frequentissime & noctibus pene singulis, ut post Vespertinalis completionem synaxis, dum capere cum ceteris quietem putaretur corporis, illa pro dissimulatione relictis ante stratum sandaliis, ad Hamaticum pergeret silentio in tempestæ noctis cum sua collectanea, aliisque fidis, ut putabat, sui secreti sociis. Ibique celebratis Vigiliis, omniumque horarum Officiis, ad monasterium Marcianas, fidei peracto furto, revertebatur mox satis hilaris, quatenus & ibi non deesse videretur nocturnalibus seu matutinalibus horis. Nec defuit qui hæc auribus intimaret maternis. Iterumque eam convocans, & mulcendo blandis, & terrendo sermonibus compellabat asperis, quatenus illam revocaret a suæ proposito voluntatis, sciens pro certo eam detineri secum corporis potius proximitate quam mentis. Cumque nec per se nec per amicos seu familiares suos quidquam proficeret, in re hujusmodi inito consilio cum suo filio Mauronto visum est utrisque, verberibus illam, pro ipsa inobedientia & quasi quadam animi pertinacia, debere castigari. Quod cum placuisset matri ab eodem fratre ejus fieri, eo jubente, inter brachia coarctata famuli, adjudicatæ subditur correptioni. Et quia isdem, a quo tenebatur, puer accinctus erat gladio, dum inter angustias verberum hac & illac se flectit Virgo, ejus tenerum latus, ut fertur ensis illius læditur capulo; in tantum, ut pluribus, quibus postea supervixit annis, putulentam mixtamque sanguine ejiceret salivam oris.

[27] Cum vero neque sic a cœpto ejusdem sacræ Virginis cessaret intentio, convocant Episcopus vel Abbates illustresque viros e vicino, qui omnes agebant cum ea diverso modo, quatenus a tali revocaretur desiderio. Illa autem cunctis multum constanti renitebatur alloquio. Qui dum inflexibilem ejus cernerent animum, matri dederunt consilium, ut illam ad cupitum redire permitteret locum. Quod & mater annuit, licet invita, religiosam illius conversationem suasoriis roborans monitis, Deoque precibus eam commendans sacris. Quæ diu desiderato potita votorum effectum, cum omni sua plebecula, accepto iterum sancto suæ proaviæ corpore, cum venerandis Reliquiis Sanctorum, gaudio plena ad monasterium repedavit Hamaticum. Ibique angelicam agens vitam in terris, in mediis ipsius adolescentiæ annis rapitur ad thalamum Sponsi cælestis; ne, sicut dicit Scriptura, malitia mutaret intellectum ejus, aut ne fictio deciperet animam illius: & consummata in brevi, explevit tempora multa; placita enim Deo erat anima illius; propter hoc properavit educere illam de medio iniquitatum.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Rictrudis abb. Marchianensis: Vita (BHL 7247)' by Hucbald of St.-Amand, in: *Acta Sanctorum* Mai. 3 (Antwerp: 1680) pp. 81-89.

## English Translation

[25] Meanwhile, God's servant, Gertrude, grandmother of Adalbald, Rictrude's venerable husband, went the way of all flesh. In a long life, she had accumulated good works at the monastery she had built at Hamay. There she had brought up the holy virgin Eusebia, her great granddaughter. A girl of good quality, Eusebia succeeded her in the ruling of the place, but she was as yet hardly old enough, being but twelve years old. A true servant of Christ, her mother Rictrude, was guided by deeper counsel and prudence, well knowing that the malign enemy, by his cunning, seduces even more mature folk with much training in virtue. She feared for her daughter, lest having too much liberty while still immature, she be too strongly tempted by the serpentine fraudulence. Therefore, she wished her to come and live with her. Eusebia refused, wishing to remain at Hamay. Her mother was compelled to put a word in the king's ear by whose authority she could recover her daughter. He agreed and sent letters ordering her return. Sorrowing, the holy Eusebia went back to her mother's monastery at Marchiennes with the body of her great-grandmother, Saint Gertrude, and other relics of saints kept there. Her entire flock came with her. And having gained control of her daughter, the mother gave her many admonitions to train her to serve with her in God's militia. And most freely obeying these precepts, she settled to the yoke of divine service. But she could not turn her mind from her love of that other genial place.

[26] Whence, almost every night when Vespers were over, in the dead of night when she was supposed to be resting her body with the others, she would deceitfully leave her sandals by her bed and silently proceed to Hamay, with her prayer book and a harp which she considered the comrades of her secret. There, she celebrated the vigils and offices of the hours. Having finished this truthful deception, she would return to the monastery of Marchiennes in good spirits never being caught absent at the evening or matutinal hours. But it did not fail to reach her mother's ears. Calling her again, she was compelled to punish her; both soothing her with sweet blandishment and terrifying her with harsh words, she sought to recall her to her will, knowing surely that she could contain her body but not her mind. And when she saw that neither she nor her friends or familiars could succeed, she took counsel with her son Maurontus, urging that she should be punished with a whipping for her disobedience and a certain pertinacity of mind. Her brother agreed to carry it out when it suited her mother. He ordered the servant to hold her tightly by the arms and she was subjected to the decreed correction. One of the boys who held her was girded with a sword and while the virgin twisted this way and that under the pain of the whips the hilt struck her tender ribs. This so wounded her that, through the rest of her life, pus and blood sometimes mixed with the saliva which she spat from her mouth.

[27] Still she would not desist from carrying out her intention. They called bishops, abbots and other important men of the neighborhood who all met with the holy virgin to try to persuade her in diverse ways to give up her desire. However, with great constancy, she opposed their advice and exhortations. When they saw how inflexible her mind was, they counselled the mother to let her go back to her chosen place. Though unwillingly, she agreed, stiffening her religious habits with persuasive admonitions and commending her to God in her holy prayers. Thus she achieved what she had desired for so long. With all her little following, she took up the body of her grandmother and the venerable saints' relics and walked back to the monastery of Hamay full of joy. Living there the life of an angel on earth, she was carried off to the chamber of her heavenly spouse in the middle of her adolescence. For, as scripture says: "Lest that wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul," she achieved much in a short time and ended her life quickly. For her soul was pleasing to God and he hurried to take her from the midst of the wicked.

[28] Now, despite a certain clumsy garrulity, we are pleased to sharpen our pen a little in order to confound those who would slander the righteous with forked tongues and misplaced pride. Such folk would lay their tongues to heaven itself and will not fear to malign people who are free of earthly burdens and, as we believe, reigning with God in heaven. So in their cunning they have observed: 'Look who they are calling saints: a mother who attacked her innocent daughter for wanting to serve God; a daughter who detested her own mother and fled her as an enemy; a son who, with his mother's consent, branded his sister like a fugitive taken away in secret, or like a condemned

thief whipped her so viciously that she nearly died. And even though she did not perish on the spot, she wasted away in slow agony. Is this how they make saints pleasing to God? What sanctity is here? What peace? What charity?' Now, how can we answer the madness in men's heads? Oh, foolish arrogance of minds gone mad! Oh, rabid fools, yapping like dogs rather than men. What will be given-what assigned-to the accursed tongue? Only the sharp point of the arrow, that is, the lance of God Almighty's word from the quiver of the Holy Scripture! For [these weapons] can not only transfix the loquacious mouth but also the clouded heart.

[29] And first they are struck with the thunder of the Gospel: "Judge not, that ye be not judged," He says, "Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." Then sounds the trumpet of the Apostle Paul: "Why dost thou judge thy brother?" "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant." To this is added: "Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." And now hear James: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law." But God himself speaks through the Psalmist: "Thou givest thy mouth to evil. and the tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother." And a little while after: "I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." And again: "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaketh proud things." And again the Scripture says: "Who calumniates the brethren shall be eradicated. Why do you not fear exceedingly this misery?" "How long will ye love vanity, and seek after falsehood? Thou shalt destroy all that speak falsehood." And, "Thou lovest lying rather than to speak righteousness. Thou lovest all devouring words." That means the blasphemies of the deceitful tongue and so, "God shall likewise destroy you forever."

[30] Listen if you can, and pay attention: the holy mother Rictrude did not persecute her innocent daughter. Rather, she considered her immature age, knowing that everything has its time and there is a time for every business. As Solomon, the most wise, said: "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." And she heard the scripture say: "Hast thou daughters? Have a care of their bodies, " and thought she would be better to remain with her, in order to achieve greater perfection by more powerful exhortations and examples. And her daughter Eusebia, though betrothed to the heavenly King, did not spurn or despise her blessed mother for she knew that her Spouse commanded: "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land." Still she confided in His grace Who affianced her with a ring. She wished only to delight in Him and show no other love, not even affection for her mother, lest it should detract from her love's immoderate fervor. Nor did her brother, the minister of Christ Maurontus, whip his sister from hate or cruelty but rather from fraternal charity for her insolence and disobedience (as he was given to understand) to her parent. As her age required, he punished her infancy, knowing the Scripture: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son." Correction and the rod bestow wisdom. What wonder hat a mother and her son might be mistaken in their human judgment? They corrected the holy virgin, not yet knowing of the divine grace that was in her. With the holy prophets, they made a human judgment as though from the Spirit of God. Cease therefore, cease your vain and foolish chatter! For no work that springs from the root of charity can be called a work of iniquity. Truly is it said: Therefore if thine eye be Single, thy whole body shall be full of light. And as to the blessed virgin's endurance of such infirmity as long as she lived, who would not see it as the crowning pinnacle of the accumulated grace built up in her? For while her body weakened, her spirit grew stronger, as the Apostle says: "When I am weak, then am I strong." Therefore let us stop up our mouths against wicked gossip. As the divine voice intones in the prophet Isaiah: "I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

[31] In effect, God's good worshiper, Eusebia, died full of virtue on March 16, which is the seventeenth calends of April. [...] Amen.