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FROM MY DIARY

I have now got all the way through the 5th century Latin “Passecrates” *Life* of St George, as edited by Arndt, and I have prepared an English translation of every sentence.

What a mess the text is in! The editor, Arndt, plainly had trouble reading the manuscript at all. At points it makes no sense. You get readings like “deus Christianorum”, where the sense plainly calls for “genus Christianorum”.

Fortunately a collection of five Latin *Lives* of St George, printed by Huber, contains a version which is very close indeed to the Arndt *Life*. It does help, in working out the meaning of the text. Indeed in the above example Huber’s text does read “genus”.

Next, I need to resolve a couple of issues, and check whether the translation makes sense and has continuity: to move away from the focus on individual sentences to paragraphs and the text as a whole. At one point St George tells the wicked emperor that he has put St George to death three times – as you do. It would be good to check whether the text has actually done this!

The “miracles” seem over the top to squeamish moderns like me. But they must have seemed over the top to those in the Dark Ages too, because all of them tone it down!

I have started to wonder whether the text is actually intended satirically, to mock the credulity of Catholics in the 5th century. The author definitely mocks this same group, by giving a villain the name of “Athanasius”. Maybe I shall say something like this in a note.

Onward!
