



FROM MY DIARY

The third unfinished project on my desktop is a translation from the Latin of the *Life* of St Nicholas by John the Deacon, who lived in Naples in the middle of the 9th century. John was bilingual, and created his work by translating the Greek *Life* by Methodius – the one that defeated all my translators.

It is a hard thing to pick something after a year or more, even if you are reasonably well-organised, unless you leave a file of notes written to your future self as to where you were and what you were doing. (Memo to self: do this next time!!) So I spent the end of yesterday and a couple of hours today trying to work out what I had, and reorganising the working directory.

The Latin text was printed by Mombricitus in his *Sanctuarium* in 1477 or 1478 – it's undated. I did OCR this and create a corrected file, but then I concluded that it was a bit too rough to work with; spellings, punctuation, etc. The text was printed again from some Vatican manuscripts by Falconius in 1751, who helpfully placed chapters 13-15 as an appendix and instead inserted a bunch of chapters from completely different *Life* of St Nicholas. Luckily the BHL volume specifies this, and I had prepared an electronic text with a note to myself about just this.

I had also divided the text into 15 files, and I had started the translation of chapter 1. I vaguely remember finding it very hard work indeed, which was why I stopped.

I've now sorted out the directory, and done a little more on chapter 1. After a year of Latin, it is less difficult. It really does help to establish exactly what the construction is, and to footnote a query if not sure, for later examination! Mind you, in a couple of sentences I have already come across two words which are not in my QuickLatin. The word order is horrendous sometimes, although the case of the words makes clear their function. Was John trying to show off in his prologue, like some dull Victorian German editor, I wonder? Let us hope that it settles down in the next chapter!

So all I need now is time and motivation. I shall start grinding away.
