

# Fortune and Misfortune at Saint Gall

EKKEHARD IV

TRANSLATED BY EMILY ALBU AND NATALIA LOZOVSKY



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EMILY ALBU AND  
NATALIA LOZOVSKY



*Fortune and Misfortune at Saint Gall*, written by the eleventh-century monk **Ekkehard IV** and part of the chronicles of the famous Swiss abbey, is a treasure trove of medieval monastic life. Saint Gall's records span its humble beginnings in the early seventh century to the late Middle Ages, with Ekkehard's contribution covering the 880s to 972, near the end of the monastery's two-century-long golden age. Its unforgettable tales, sometimes at odds with the historical record, contain sharp flashes of Ekkehard's signature humor—when, for instance, a spying abbot from a neighboring monastery is caught hiding in the latrine. Ekkehard also shows how the abbey's role as a spiritual haven could be compromised by worldly ties, including close associations with the powerful Carolingian and Ottonian courts. He bears witness to the struggles of the tenth-century church reform movement, when Emperor Otto I dispatched investigators to uncover Saint Gall's deviations from the Rule of Saint Benedict.

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FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE  
AT SAINT GALL

EKKEHARD IV

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Fortune and Misfortune  
at Saint Gall

*Casus sancti Galli*

EKKEHARD IV



Translated by

EMILY ALBU  
and

NATALIA LOZOVSKY

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FORTUNE AND MISFORTUNE  
AT SAINT GALL



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Praeloquium Ekkehardi Iunioris:  
De casibus

**M**oniti a loci nostri fratribus id operae pretium putantibus, quaedam coenobii sanctorum Galli et Othmari cum infortuniis tradere fortuna, rem arduam aggressi sumus. Enimvero obloquiis patere non dubitamus, quoniam, ut nunc morum et temporum est, si quicquam asperum, et maxime quod disciplinae sit, tetigeris, si malorum libertates et impunitates non laudare videberis, velut impostor et calumniator apud eos, *qui in levitate ambulat*, habebis. At vero quoniam rerum loco nostro gestarum etiam alii veritati nihil parcentes fortuna et infortunia, quomodolibet erant, edixerant, temptantes quidem et nos ea, quae a patribus audivimus, ea aviditate qua illi, quam verissime datum est, stilo et atramento veritatem perstringere, fortuna et infortunia loci nostri veritati nihil parcentes edisserere.

<sup>2</sup> De Salomone etenim abbate nostro, post episcopo, ingressi sumus. Quem per ordinem secuti rebus nostris potiti sunt Hartmannus, Engilpertus, Thieto, Cralo, cui interstitium regiminis frater suus fecerat Anno. Sequuntur

Preface by Ekkehard the Younger:  
Concerning Fortunate and  
Unfortunate Events

**A**t the suggestion of the brothers of my community, who thought it would be worthwhile to record some of the fortunate and unfortunate events that happened at the monastery of Saint Gall and Saint Otmar, I have embarked on this difficult task. However, I do not doubt that I am exposing myself to opprobrium, for such are the ways of our times that if you touch upon a thorny subject, especially something concerning discipline, and if you seem not to praise the freedoms and lack of restraint of the wicked, you will be held to be a fraud and a slanderer by those *who walk in levity*. Nevertheless, since other people have related with unsparing truthfulness what took place at our monastery, events of whatever kind—fortunate or unfortunate—I will try, with the same zeal as they have shown in adhering to the truth to the fullest extent possible for pen and ink, to set out with an unsparing regard for the truth what I have heard from the fathers about the fortunate and unfortunate events that occurred at our monastery.

I start with Salomo, our abbot and later bishop. He was followed in order of succession by those who subsequently took over as abbots of our house: Hartmann, Engilbert, Thieto, and Craloh, whose brother Anno took his place for a <sup>2</sup>

Purchardus, Notkerus, Ymmo, Vodalricus, Kerhardus, Purchardus alter, Thiepaldus, Norpertus, cuius hodie sub regimine quidem *non prout ipse et nos, ut inquiunt, volumus, sed prout possumus*, vivimus. Scripserat ante nos Radpertus, homo doctissimus, et ipse codicellum similis materiae a sancto Gallo et Othmaro usque ad se ipsum, a quo nos incepisse videmur, Salomonem episcopum. Cuius nominis tamen aequivocatae sit, ut bene cerneret, praemonemus. Nam tres eius nominis cum Constantiae praefuerint, secundum Rathpertus censum a loco nostro exegisse scripsit. De tertio nos, prout Deo dante potuimus, sic incipiemus.

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time. Then followed Burchard, Notker, Immo, Ulrich, Gerhard, Burchard the second, Thiepald, and Norbert under whose rule we live now *not as he and we, as they say, wish, but as we can*. Ratpert, a highly learned man, wrote a short book covering similar ground before us, from the time of Saint Gall and Saint Otmar up to the very man with whom I have decided to begin, Bishop Salomo. I warn you right away, however, to keep in mind how confusing that name is. For there were three bishops of Constance bearing this name; Ratpert wrote that the second had demanded a tribute from our monastery. It is with the third Salomo that I will begin, God willing, to the best of my ability.

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Salomonis tertii parentes cum essent clari et illustres, ipsum Isoni sancti Galli monacho, tunc temporis doctori nominatissimo, tradunt erudiendum et clericatui initiandum. Quem adprime, ut aiunt, ipse erudierat; sed et Notkeri, Tuotilonis, Ratperti, Harthmanni commonachorum statui praetulerat et delicatius quasi canonicum educaverat. Creverant tamen inde clandestine inter summae indolis discipulos invidiae; et cum conliberales genere essent et ingenio, ut ea aetas solet, aequanimiter non ferebant alienum sibi, qui fratres essent, praeferrari, et qui natalibus quidem essent pares, doctrinarum propectibus ab illo praeriri.

<sup>2</sup> Defunguntur Salomonis adhuc pueri parentes, tandem autem et frater, et ipse rerum heres effectus ad maximas res animum intenderat. Scholisque ablatu, Grimaldo abbate nostro, archicapellano eius, iuvante, capellanus fit Ludowici regis, cuius singulari gratia in brevi potitus Elewangis adhuc canonicus primo praeficitur; post etiam Campidonensibus variis suimet et loci damnis illum detrectantibus praeponebatur. In processu autem Hattone archiepiscopo Magontino, sibi propter animi acutissimam sollertiam amicissimo, opitulante plurimis locis praeficitur, tandem et nobis. Postremo

HERE BEGIN THE BOOKS ON THE FORTUNATE  
AND UNFORTUNATE EVENTS AT OUR  
MONASTERY.

Since the parents of Salomo III were noble and highly regarded, they handed him over to Iso, a monk of Saint Gall and the most distinguished teacher at that time, to be educated and initiated into the clerical life. Iso gave him an excellent education, they say, but also ranked him above his fellow monks Notker, Tuotilo, Ratpert, and Hartmann and instructed him more indulgently, like a canon. As a result jealousies grew in secret among his highly talented fellow students; and because they were equally noble in birth and intelligence, they could not, as is typical for young men of that age, bear with equanimity that an outsider was preferred to themselves, who were brothers of the monastery, and that he was surpassing them, though they were surely his equals in birth, in the progress of his studies.

Salomo's parents passed away when he was still a boy, and later his brother died too, and after he had become heir to the property himself, Salomo turned his attention to grand affairs. He left school and became chaplain to King Louis with the help of our abbot Grimald, who was then his archchaplain. Soon he gained the king's special favor and while still a canon, obtained Ellwangen; later he was put in charge of Kempten, whose inmates disparaged him for various damages to themselves and their community. Nevertheless in due course, with the help of Hatto, archbishop of Mainz, who was very friendly with him because of his very keen intelligence, Salomo was put in charge of many monasteries <sup>2</sup>

vero et Constantiae pastor et episcopus efficitur. His partim per transgressum praelibatis ad ordinem incepti operis revertamur.

2. Grimaldi temporibus canonici abbatis, Hartmuoto eius quasi proabbate, Marcus quidam Scotigena episcopus Gallum tamquam compatriotam suum Roma rediens visitat. Comitatur eum sororis filius Moengal, postea a nostris Marcellus diminutive a Marco avunculo sic nominatus. Hic erat in divinis et humanis eruditissimus. Rogatur episcopus loco nostro aliquamdiu stare allecto nepote. Diu secum deliberantes vix tandem consenserant. Dieque conducto partitur Marcellus nummos avunculi sui multos per fenestram, *timens, ne discerperetur ab eis. Fremebant enim in illum*, quasi ipsius suasu episcopus restaret. Equos autem et mulos, quibus ipse voluit, nominatim episcopus tradidit. Libros vero, aurum et pallia sibi et sancto Gallo retinuit. Stola tandem indutus abeuntes benedixit. Multis autem lacrimis utrimque discessum est.

2 Remanserat episcopus cum nepote et paucis suae linguae apparitoribus. Traduntur post tempus Marcello scholae claustrum cum Notkero, postea cognomine Balbulo, et ceteris monachici habitus pueris; exteriores autem, id est canonicae, Ysoni cum Salomone et eius comparibus. Iucundum est memorari, quantum cella sancti Galli his auspiciis crescere

and finally ours. Ultimately, he was also made pastor and bishop of Constance. Now that I have given a partial foretaste of these events by skipping over segments, let me go back to an orderly account of the story I had begun.

2. When Canon Grimald was abbot and Hartmut was acting as his deputy, a certain Marcus, a bishop of Irish stock, was returning from Rome and visited Gall as his compatriot. Marcus was accompanied by his sister's son Moengal, later called by our brothers Marcellus, a diminutive form of his uncle Marcus's name. Marcellus was most learned in the divine and human disciplines. The bishop was invited to stay for a while at our monastery with his nephew who had already been admitted. After protracted deliberations with one another, with difficulty they finally reached agreement. On the day agreed upon Marcellus distributed many of his uncle's coins—through a window, *out of fear that that he would be torn to pieces by their entourage. In fact, they were railing at him*, as if it was at Marcellus's suggestion that the bishop was staying. The bishop also handed over his horses and mules to people he wished, by name. The books, gold, and precious cloths, however, he kept for himself and for Saint Gall. Finally, wearing his stole, he blessed them as they were leaving. With much crying on both sides, the company departed.

The bishop stayed with his nephew and a few attendants who spoke his language. After a while the claustral school that included Notker (later called the Stammerer) and other boys in monastic habits, was entrusted to Marcellus, while the external school, that is the school for canons, which included Salomo and others like him, was entrusted to Iso. It is pleasant to recall how much the cell of Saint Gall began to

ceperit tandemque floruerit Hartmuoto eam, Crimaldi quidem vicario tandemque abbate, omnimodis augmentante.

3. Petiit tandem Salomon iam adolescens bene educatus, ut frater conscriptus nobis fieri mereretur. Quod Crimaldo iubente et Hartmoto iuvante a patribus est consecutus. Tradidit autem de praediis, quibus abundaverat, sancto Gallo locum, qui Colda dicitur, concambium sibi faciens, ut annam monachi et locum hospitis in refectorio haberet, dum viveret, et collem quendam, qui ultra Iram amoenior sibi videbatur, cum pratis sibi et agellis adiacentibus possideret, ut *mansione* ibi *parata* crebro velut frater adveniens abbati non esset onerosus neque familiae incommodus.

2 Talibus homini velut iam tum cum Fortuna ludenti ad votum cedentibus, aulam regis Luodowici, ut diximus, adiit; capellanus factus eius fit intimus et praelibatis abbatiis proclive est praelatus. Locum autem nostrum sibi prae omnibus habitum subinde adiit. Claustrumque ille, quia potens erat, absque duce et, quod magnae confusionis tunc erat et est, lineus diatim introiit. Surgunt inde ab aemulis illius murmuria ipso ignaro; comitantur, ut assolent, in absentem obloquia. Plurima fratribus velut dives opum commoda fecit. Quorum cum uni reverendo quidem, ut erant tunc

grow under their auspices and how it eventually flourished when Hartmut, first as deputy for Grimald and ultimately as abbot, expanded it in every way.

3. After a while Salomo, by now a well-educated young man, sought the privilege of becoming an enrolled brother among us. This he obtained from the fathers, by Grimald's order and with Hartmut's help. From his estates, which he had in abundance, he handed over to Saint Gall a place called Goldach, in exchange for a monk's rations and a place as a guest in the refectory for as long as he lived. He also asked for a certain hill beyond the Ira that seemed rather pleasant to him, together with adjacent meadows and small fields, so that once *a dwelling place* had been *prepared* for him there he would not be frequently burdening the abbot or inconveniencing the monastic household like a visiting brother.

As these things were happening as he prayed they would, 2 as if even then he were playing a game with Fortune, he moved to the court of King Louis, as I said earlier. Once appointed chaplain, he became close to the king and was quickly entrusted with authority over the abbeys mentioned above. He frequently came to our monastery, which he preferred to all the others. Because he was powerful, he daily entered our cloister without a guide, and, moreover, dressed in linen, a practice which was a cause of considerable embarrassment then as it is still today. Then without his knowledge, mutterings arose among his rivals; they were accompanied by abusive remarks in his absence, as is usually the case. As a rich man, he conferred many benefits on the brothers. When he gave a fur cloak to one brother who was particularly venerable, as many of them were in those days, and

# *Parisiana poetria*

JOHN OF GARLAND

TRANSLATED BY TRAUGOTT LAWLER

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