

**The Roman Itinerary of Nikulás of Munkaþverá:  
Between Reality and Imagination\***

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Arnarnagnæan Collection manuscript 194, 8<sup>o</sup> (dated 1387), an important geographical miscellany, contains on folios 11<sup>r</sup>-16<sup>r</sup> a famous itinerary from Iceland to the Holy Land, commonly known as the *leiðarvísir*.<sup>1</sup> It has generally been attributed to Abbot Nikulás of the Benedictine monastery in Munkaþverá, Iceland. He is reported to have returned from a journey in 1154, and to have died between 1158 and 1160. The journey probably took place between 1149 and 1154 (Simsek 264-267) and lasted three years between 1151 and 1154, and it is likely that the *leiðarvísir* was written between 1154 and 1158/9.

The *leiðarvísir* contains the description of a pilgrimage through Europe to Jerusalem and is full of practical information about real places useful for a traveller. It indicates routes and alternative routes, distances, times and stopping places. It is also informative about churches and episcopal sees, as well as peoples and their dialects. Nikulás intersperses his geographical information with religious stories and fantastic elements drawn from Germanic heroic legends, such as Gnitahreiðr, where Sigurðr killed Fáfnir (in the Nidda Valley region according to Magoun, 1943, 217), Gunnar's snake-pit (placed in Lunigiana, Italy) and Thithrek's Bath (between Viterbo and Sutri). In Nikulás's text there is no clear distinction between real and fantastic places. The presence of these religious anecdotes and fantastic elements, which could not be part of an actual travel experience, is evidence that Nikulás collected and incorporated material he came across which fleshed out his itinerary and made it vivid.

Scholarly research since the fundamental work of Eric Werlauff has been devoted primarily to identifying the places mentioned in the *leiðarvísir*, and only secondarily to the recognition of possible written sources on which the work could be based -- and this mainly in connection with the references to Germanic legends (Magoun, 1943). This paper focuses on the Roman part of the itinerary, in order to demonstrate that written sources played a fundamental role in the way Nikulás describes the city. These sources, though not *stricto sensu* belonging to a literary genre, are part of the imaginary world of Nikulás, the part of his itinerary apparently based not on experience but on collected information. I will show that written sources on Rome serve as the foundation for his description of real places. It is not implausible, as has often been assumed, that Nikulás took notes during his journey to help his 'good memory'; at the end of the *leiðarvísir* he is in fact called 'minnigr'.<sup>2</sup> It is also not unlikely that Abbot Nikulás turned to written sources for some of his material, given the medieval intellectual and theological writing tradition of collecting

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<sup>1</sup> A fragment of the same itinerary is also included in MS AM 736 II, 4<sup>o</sup> (c. 1400).

<sup>2</sup> 'Nikuláss ábóta er bæði var vitur og viðfrægur, minnigr og margfróður, ráðvís og réttorður.' (Thorsson, p. 61) Further *leiðarvísir* quotations are from the Rome section: Thorsson, pp. 57-58.

information and often passages of text verbatim without any indication of their borrowed nature, but with the virtuous intention of producing an excellent text based on the best information and ideas available.

The section of the itinerary dedicated to Rome shifts stylistically from the earlier descriptions. It distinguishes itself in the *leiðarvísir* for its length and wealth of detail used in depicting sacred and secular places. Particularly significant is the fact that in the description of Rome Nikulás repeatedly uses Latin. He does this, for example, to indicate the gate *er heitir ante Portam Latinam*, and when giving the dimensions of Saint Peter's on the Vatican: *Ecclesia Petri quadrigentorum et sexaginta longa ad sanctum altari sed lata ducentorum et triginta pedum*. The use of Latin suggests the presence of written sources, which are relied on for their authority.

In the mid-twelfth century, there were several medieval texts which described the city of Rome and which could be used by both the travelling pilgrim and the sedentary scholar far from Rome.<sup>3</sup> In recent years an exemplary and thorough study on medieval pilgrim guides has been carried out by Nine Miedema. I will concentrate on those texts which were distinguished by their wide circulation and importance in the tradition of this genre and which, directly or through their textual traditions, were available in Nikulás's day. By 'traditions', I mean that some of these texts appear in various forms, as new versions developed over time. One of the oldest texts is about Rome's churches and is commonly known by the name *Stationes ecclesiarum urbis Romae*. The form of the text is a list in which, for every day of the year, a station (i.e., a church) is indicated where the principal mass for the day was to be celebrated. The oldest manuscript dates back to the eighth century (Miedema, 1996, 15). Another famous text is the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, whose first known version's *terminus ante quem* is 1143, several years before Nikulás's journey is believed to have taken place. It was part of the *Liber politicus* by Benedictus, Canon of St Peter's.<sup>4</sup> It consists of lists and descriptions of monuments and sites, many belonging to ancient Rome. The *Ordo romanus* is another text attributed to Benedictus, closely related to the *Stationes ecclesiarum* and often belonging to the manuscript tradition of the *Mirabilia*. The text which was most commonly used from the late twelfth century through the Renaissance is the *Indulgentiae ecclesiarum urbis Romae*.<sup>5</sup> It reached wide circulation in the fourteenth century and its oldest manuscript, BL MS Cotton Faustina B.VII (late twelfth century), comes just after the supposed date of Nikulás's trip, but it is based on traditions which began earlier. The *Indulgentiae* appear in many versions. The common feature of these texts is that they are accounts of the churches of Rome and the indulgences that could be obtained in each, although they differ in the number of churches and their description.<sup>6</sup> For the *Indulgentiae* we do not have a uniform tradition but a multiform *corpus* of texts. In reviewing the *Indulgentiae* which could be part of the tradition informing the *leiðarvísir*, I have taken into account the five published editions of the Latin versions of the *Indulgentiae*, based on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts (Huelsen, 137-156; Hulbert; Schimmelpfennig; VZ, IV,

<sup>3</sup> On the older Roman itineraries and catalogues, see Testini, pp. 25-32.

<sup>4</sup> For the contentious issue of the *Mirabilia's* dating, see Miedema (1996), pp. 2-11.

<sup>5</sup> Miedema (1996, pp. 24-95) offers a comprehensive catalogue of the Latin manuscripts containing the *Mirabilia*, *Stationes* and *Indulgentiae*.

<sup>6</sup> On the *Indulgentiae's* textual history, see Miedema (2003), esp. pp. 18-23.

78-88; and Weißhanner), as well as manuscripts Cotton Faustina B.VII and Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 687 (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries). Many manuscripts contain several of these sources on Rome, sometimes copied by one hand, as is already the case in Faustina B.VII, which includes the *Indulgentiae* immediately after a shortened version of the *Mirabilia* and before a list of the *Stationes ecclesiarum*. My aim in reviewing these various sources on Rome and in comparing the *leiðarvisir* to them has been to determine whether written precedents could have been relied on in drafting the Rome section, serving to provide particular detail and phrasing. I do not believe that we can say for certain which works Nikulás was reading, but the evidence does suggest that he had access to sources in the traditions I have described which offered the specifics he supplied in the *leiðarvisir*.<sup>7</sup>

To begin with, Nikulás opens his description of Rome in the manner of the *Mirabilia*, giving the dimensions of the city. He indicates, however, its length and breadth, not the measure of its perimeter with the number of towers in the walls, which is how the *Mirabilia* begins. Nikulás tells us: *Svo er sagt að Róma sé fjórar mílur á lengd en tvær á breidd*. The *Mirabilia* starts with the following words:

Murus civitatis Romae habet turres .CCCLXI., turres castella .XLVIII., propugnacula .VLDCCCC., portas .XII. sine Transtiberim, posterulas .V. In circuitu vero eius sunt miliaria .XXII., excepto Transtiberim et civitas Leoniana. (VZ, III, 17)<sup>8</sup>

After this introduction, Nikulás describes the most important churches, stating that there are five bishop's thrones, i.e. five patriarchal churches: *Þar eru fimm biskupsstólar*. The patriarchal churches until the fourteenth century were in fact still five and not seven, as they would become with the reclassification of the ancient churches of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and San Sebastiano.<sup>9</sup> The *Indulgentiae* preserved in manuscript Faustina B.VII begin on folio 16<sup>va</sup> with the rubric: *Indulgentiae indulte a romanis pontificibus ad stationes que sunt in urbe romana*. There follows (ff. 16<sup>va-b</sup>) a list of the main churches of Rome with indications of the indulgences to be obtained in each.<sup>10</sup> After this, we find an enumeration of the patriarchal churches:

Ecclesie Patriarchales. Quinque sunt patriarchales ecclesie in Roma. Ecclesia Sancti Petri. Ecclesia Sancti Pauli. Ecclesia Sancti Iohanni in Laterano. Ecclesia Sancte Marie Maioris. Ecclesia Sancti Laurentij extra muros et propterea Sancta Sanctorum.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Miedema (2001, p. 22), in discussing the non-German and Dutch versions of the *Indulgentiae*, asserts in fact that the *leiðarvisir* reworks the *Indulgentiae*.

<sup>8</sup> Francis Magoun (1940, p. 281) suggests that the 'ii' of the text could be a scribal error for 'iiii', which would also better correspond to the approximately circular shape of the city.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., Schimmelpfennig, p. 641, and Miedema (2003), p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> That Cotton Faustina B.VII was intended for pilgrims is confirmed by the following observations about the different degrees of indulgences according to travellers' countries of origin: 'Quid indulgentiae recipiant viciniore et quid remotiore. Peregrini visitantes limina apostolorum Petri et Pauli si sunt Angli vel Scotti vel hibernienses habent indulgentiam trium annorum, Francigene, Yspani, Teutonici trium annorum, Lombardi, Tuscani, Apulei vnus anni', MS Cotton Faustina B.VII, f. 17<sup>ra</sup>. See also Miedema (2003), p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Faustina B.VII, f. 16<sup>vb</sup>. See Miedema (2003), p. 21.

The sequence given by Nikulás differs from this. He begins with St John Lateran, observing that no one inferior to a *lýðbiskup* can celebrate a mass there: *Einn er að Jóns kirkju baptista. Þar skal engi messu syngja yfir háaltari, sá er miður sé vígdður en lýðbiskup*. Magoun (1940, 281) observes that *lýðbiskup* (suffragan bishop) may be a misinterpretation of *cardinalis episcopus*. This suggests the use of a written source, which the author may have partially misunderstood. We find a similar passage in the *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae*.<sup>12</sup> This description, written by John the Deacon during the papacy of Alexander III (1159-1181), was based on earlier texts (the first dated shortly after 1073) and enriched with his own updates (VZ, III, 319-325), and it constituted a source for the parts of the *Indulgentiae* about St John Lateran: *Super hoc etiam sacrosanctum altarium, super quod missam non celebrat nisi papa vel cardinalis episcopus ...* (VZ, III, 338)

Nikulás goes on to indicate that in St John Lateran there is the papal throne: *Þar er páfastóll*.<sup>13</sup> *Páfastóll* is a translation of the Latin *cathedra pontificalis*, of which we find an example in John Deacon:

In hac itaque sacrosancta Lateranensi basilica Salvatori Ihesu Christo Deo dicata, quae caput est mundi, quae patriarchalis est et imperialis, sedis est apostolicae cathedrae pontificalis. (VZ, III, 336)<sup>14</sup>

There follows in the *leiðarvísir* a list of the relics to be found in St John Lateran: *Þar er blóð Krists og klæði Maríu og mikill hlutur beina Jóhannæs baptista. Þar er umskurður Krists og mjólk úr brjósti Maríu, af þorngjörð Krists og af kyrtli hans og margir aðrir helgir dómar varðir í einu gullkeri miklu.*

This list of relics -- which includes the blood of Christ, a garment of Mary, bones of St John the Baptist, the prepuce of Christ, the breast of Mary, a large part of Christ's crown of thorns and his coat -- is present in many branches of the tradition of text describing St John Lateran and the chapel of San Lorenzo in Palatio, the *Sancta Sanctorum*.<sup>15</sup> In John the Deacon's *Descriptio Lateranensis Ecclesiae* the following relics are located in St John's: *tunica inconsutilis, Purpureum vestimentum eiusdem Salvatoris et Redemptoris, de sanguine et aqua lateris Domini ampullae duae, circumcisio Domini, de sanguine sancti Iohannis Baptistae, and de pulvere et cinere combusti corporis eiusdem praecursoris Christi*. (VZ, III, 337) In the text immediately preceding these items there is a quote from Paul, Hebrews, IX, 2-4, where we have an *urna aurea habens manna, quod habuit secundum tabernaculum quod dicit sancta sanctorum*. While the quote is explicit in John the Deacon (*Unde Paulus dicit Apostulus*), it merges without citation into the text in the *Indulgentiae*:

Item in eadem ecclesia est quedam camera, que dicitur sacristia. Ibi est altare beati Iohannis baptiste .... Et ibi est archa testamenti, in qua sunt due tabule

<sup>12</sup> See also Werlauff, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Significantly, in the German tradition of the *Indulgentiae* the basilica is often called *des babstes stule*. (Miedema, 2001, p. 163)

<sup>14</sup> On the throne situated in the hemicycle of the tribune was a twelfth-century tetrastich: *Haec est papalis sedes et pontificalis/praesidet et xpi de ivre vicarius isti/et quia ivre datvr sedes romana vocatvr/nec debet vere nisi solvs papa sedere/et quia svblimis alii svbdvntur in imis*. (Armellini, p. 124)

<sup>15</sup> *Sancta Sanctorum* was also the name given to the wooden 'ark' of Leo III (795-816), a reliquary which had this name inscribed on it, and it became the name of the oratory of San Lorenzo. (Lauer, 1906, p. 26; Armellini, pp. 144-149)

testamenti, et virga Moysi, virga Aaron, ornamenta Aaron, urna aurea plena manna, candelabrum aureum ...' (Schimmelpfennig, 651)<sup>16</sup>

The 'gullker' (golden vessel) of the *leiðarvisir* may have derived either from the *archa testamenti* (Ark of the Covenant), which St Paul says was covered in gold, or from the *urna aurea habens manna*; if the latter is the source, there was possibly a misunderstanding of *magna* for *manna* which generated the adjective *mikku*. John the Deacon also says that *ossa duo sancti Iohannis Baptistae* are in this chapel. (VZ, III, 357) Similar lists are found in versions of the *Indulgentiae*, for instance in the Schimmelpfennig edition, which is close to Vat. Lat. 687:<sup>17</sup>

Item in predicta ecclesia sunt due ampulle de sanguine et aqua, que fluxerunt de latere Christi, et sudarium et purpureum vestimentum et lintheum, quo pedes discipulorum suorum tersit in cena, de V panibus ortaceis, quibus saciati fuerunt VM hominum, de carne preputii, que domino nostro fuit abscissa in circumcissione eius, velum beate Marie virginis, caput Zachariae, de crinibus et sanguine beati Iohannis baptiste ... (Schimmelpfennig, 651)

Magoun (1940, 281-282) compared Nikulás's list with some verses in Huelsen's edition of the *Indulgentiae*. These verses were actually also the text of a mosaic inscription (of the second half of the twelfth century) by the door of the sacristy at the Lateran, and they also included the milk from Mary's breast: *lac quod sacris suxisti Christe mamillis*.<sup>18</sup> I could not find in the sources I reviewed any reference to the 'thorns of Christ's crown' kept in St John's, only to *novem spine de corona Christi* kept in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. (Hulbert, 408)

After St John's the *leiðarvisir* mentions the second bishop's throne, which is in Santa Maria Maggiore, where the pope celebrated mass on Christmas and Easter: *Annar biskupsstóll er að Mariukirkju. Þar skal páfi messu syngja jóladag og páskadag*. This liturgical information coincides with the tradition of the *Stationes ecclesiarum*, where it is reported that the principal mass was to be celebrated *in natalem domini ad Sanctam Mariam*, and *In Dominico Sancto ad Sanctam Mariam*. (Rusch, 109 and 110) The *Ordo romanus* includes a thorough description of the rituals to be followed by the pope and his court. For Christmas, it says: *In adventu Domini ...*

<sup>16</sup> See also *Graphia aureae urbis*, VZ, III, pp. 83-84.

<sup>17</sup> Vat. Lat. 687 (ff. 129<sup>v</sup>-130<sup>v</sup>) reads: 'Item in eadem ecclesia sunt due ampulle de sanguine et aqua que fluxerunt de latere Christi [et] sudarium [et] purpureum vestimentum et lintheum cum quo Christus extersit pedes discipulorum suorum in cena de quinque panibus ortaceis [ordatecis] de quibus saciati fuerunt quinque milia hominum, de carne preputii que fuit domino nostro Iesu Christo abscissa in circumcissione, velum beate marie, caput Zacharie, de crinibus et sanguine sancti Iohannis baptiste...' This early list of relics is already partly present in Vat. Lat. 636, f. 73<sup>v</sup> (13<sup>th</sup> century); interestingly, the list in this manuscript is followed by an early thirteenth-century version of the *Mirabilia*; it also appears in the *Graphia aureae urbis* (VZ, III, pp. 83-84).

<sup>18</sup> Grisar, p. 76: '... iste reliquie sunt ad sancta sanctorum rome/iste locus celebris nostris sic venat in horis/vt popvlo veteri sancte domus interioris/cirvmcisa caro christi sandalia clara/ac viget hic precisio cara/de velo matris domini carisque capillis/et lac quod sacris svxisti christe mamillis/hic panis cene sacer est hvmersqve mathei/vestis babtiste cvm mento bartholomei/hic (sancte) evfemie capvd agnetisque beate/hic petri pavliqve capvd pars de cruce sancta/hiis sociata manent carissima pignora qvanta.' See also Werlauff, p. 45, n. 95 and Lauer (1911), pp. 294-295.

*stacio ad Sanctam Mariam Maiorem .... In vigilia Nativitatis Domini ... stacio ad Sanctam Mariam Maiorem .... Ad vesperum et ad vigiliis debet ibi manere pontifex per totam noctem .... Et ad Presepium debet cantare missam.* (VZ, III, 210-211) For Easter, it tells us: *In die sanctae Resurrectionis ... stacio est ad Sanctam Mariam Maiorem ...* (VZ, III, 216)

Nikulás provides us with analogous information for the next church: Saints Stephen and Lawrence, i.e. San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, where the pope is to sing mass on the octave of Christmas and on the feast of these saints: *Þriðji er að kirkju Stephani et Laurenti. Þar skal páfi messu syngja hinn átta dag jóla og hátíðir þeirra sjálfra.* The two Latin genitives in the Icelandic text hint strongly that a Latin text served as a model. In the *Ordo romanus* we find corresponding information about the pope's stations: *Ista dominica Septuagesimae stacio ad Sanctum laurentium foris muros .... In Festivitate sancti Stephani ... pontifex ... vadit ad Sanctum Stephani ubi est stacio ...* (VZ, III, 214)<sup>19</sup> For the feast of St Lawrence, it says: *In festivitate sancti Laurentii domnus pontifex in basilica eius in agro Verano ... facit vesperum.* (VZ, III, 221)

Sant'Agnese, the next church in the *leiðarvisir*, is not a *biskupsstóll*, but according to Nikulás is the most beautiful 'in all the city' and built by Constance, daughter of 'King' Constantine: '

En austur þaðan tvær mílur er Agnesakirkja. Hún er dýrlegust í allri borginni. Hana lét gera Konstantía dóttir Konstantínuss konungs er hún tók fyrri trú en hann og það hún leyfis að láta gera Agnesakirkju en konungur leyfði henni utan borgar að ráði Silvestri páfa.'

Nikulás is referring here not to the church built by Pope Honorius I but to the large, stadium-shaped basilica next to it which today is in ruins. In the *Indulgentiae* editions that I compared, although the church is mentioned (Huelsen, 145; Schimmelpfennig, 657; and Weissthanner, 63), I did not find references to this legend of Constance. We do find it, however, in several hagiographic and historical accounts. For example, in the Life of St Sylvester written by Anastasius Bibliothecarius in the late ninth century, it is reported that:

Eodem tempore fecit [Constantine] basilicam Sanctae Martyris Agnetis ex rogatu Constantiae filiae suae, et baptisterium in eodem loco, ubi et baptizata est soror ejus Constantia cum filia Augusti a Silvestro Episcopo.' (PL, CXXVII, 1521)

This 'baptistry' is clearly the mausoleum Constance built next to the basilica. In his *De ratione temporum*, Bede, writing about Constantine, says: *Item basilicam sanctae martyris Agnetis ex rogatu filiae suae, et baptisterium in eodem loco, ubi et baptizata est soror ejus Constantia cum filia Augusta* (PL, XC, 556). It is thus not unlikely that here Nikulás has again used a written source, not necessarily a description of Rome, to enrich his depiction of Sant'Agnese.<sup>20</sup>

After Sant'Agnese, the text works in the Porta Latina and the church of San Giovanni a Porta Latina: *Þaðan eru fjórar mílur í borgina austan í hlið það er heitir ante Portam Latinam. Þar er kirkja Jóhannes postula.* Once again Nikulás clearly shows the use of a Latin model and another possible misunderstanding: *ante portam latinam* should instead be part of the name of the church which is usually mentioned

<sup>19</sup> See also Werlauff, p. 45, nn. 96-97.

<sup>20</sup> See also *Acta sanctorum*, Feb., III, p. 70; Hrotsvit von Gandersheim, *Historia Passionis Sanctae Agnetis Virginis et Martyris*, PL CXXXVII, col. 1121.

with this full name in the *Indulgentiae*, including the earliest version (Faustina B.VII, f. 16<sup>vb</sup>; cf. Weißthanner, 63, Huelsen, 148). Nikulás's description also strays from geographical fact. San Giovanni a Porta Latina is said in the *leiðarvísir* to be a short distance from the 'hall' (or 'palace') of Diocletian: *till hallar þeirrar er átti Diókletianus konungur*. Kaalund (1908, 76) and Magoun (1940, 283) point out that Nikulás probably confused the Baths of Diocletian with those of Caracalla, which are closer to the church. It is worth noting that, while the Baths of Caracalla are not mentioned in the *Mirabilia*, the *Thermae Dioclitianae* are.<sup>21</sup> Also interesting is the fact that the term 'palace' (*palatium*) is used later in the *Mirabilia* to refer again to the Baths of Diocletian (and for many other large buildings in this work).<sup>22</sup>

After the 'Hall of King Diocletian', there is the 'Maríukirkja', identified by Magoun (1940, 283) as Santa Maria in Domnica. This church is commonly mentioned in the *Indulgentiae* (e.g., Faustina B.VII, f. 16<sup>va</sup> and Schimmelpfennig, 656-657), but Nikulás may simply have picked from the list a name familiar to him. The same could possibly have happened with the next church we come to, Santi Giovanni e Paolo. Nikulás describes these saints as two court officers of Constance (daughter of Constantine): *Þá er kirkja Johannis et Pauli martirum. Þeir voru hirðmenn Konstantíu*. A similar definition belonged to the hagiographic tradition. We find it for instance in Bede's *Martyrologium: Romae Joannis et Pauli fratrum, quorum primus praepositus, secundus primicerius fuit Constantiae virginis, filiae Constantini* (PL, XCIV, 956).<sup>23</sup>

After Santi Giovanni e Paolo, the church of All Saints, i.e. the Pantheon, is mentioned. It is large, beautiful and open on top like the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem: *Þa er Allraheilagrakirkja, mikil og dýrleg og er opin ofan sem Pulkrokirkja í Jerúsalem*. Even though, as Magoun (1940, 283) points out, there is no church in Rome of this name, we should bear in mind that in the *Mirabilia* the name is explained in connection with the Christianization of the temple:

[Agrippa] Rediens Romam fecit hoc templum, et dedicari fecit ad honorem Cibeles, matris deorum, et Neptuni, dei marini, et omnium daemoniorum, et posuit huic templo nomen Pantheon. ... Venit Bonifacius Papa tempore Focae Imperatoris christiani. Videns illud templum ita mirabile dedicatum ad honorem Cibeles, matris deorum, ante quod multotiens a daemonibus christiani percutebantur, rogavit papa imperatorem ut condonaret ei hoc templum; ut sicut in kalendis novembris dedicatum fuit ad honorem Cibeles, matris deorum, sic illud dedicaret in kalendis novembris ad honorem beatae Marie semper virginis, quae est mater omnium sanctorum. (VZ, III, 35)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> VZ, III, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> 'Palatium Diocleciani' in the *Mirabilia* in Faustina B.VII (16<sup>v</sup>) is in the list of 'Palatia'. Magister Gregorius considered the 'Palatium Diocletiani' important in his *Narratio de mirabilibus urbis* (twelfth-thirteenth centuries, probably written in England): VZ, III, p. 155; see also Miedema (1996), pp. 257-258.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the *Passio* of Saints John and Paul (*Acta sanctorum*, Junii, VII, pp. 33-34) and the *Gallicanus* of Hrotsvit von Gandersheim, PL CXXXVII, cols 975-994.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Magister Gregorius, *De Mirabilibus* (VZ, III, pp. 158-159): 'Pantheon autem brevi transitu praetereo, quod quondam erat idol[i]um omnium deorum, immo daemonum. Quae domus nunc dedicata ecclesia in honore omnium sanctorum Sancta Maria Rotunda vocatur, autonomastice quidem a prima et pociori parte cum sit omnium sanctorum ecclesia'.

Reference in the *Indulgentiae* to the dome's opening is usual: *Habet in medio centri in cacumine aperturam rotundam magnam, nec habet aliam fenestram.* (VZ, IV, 82)

Next on the itinerary, the church of San Paolo is to the west, outside the city: *Vestur frá borginni er Pálskirkja. Þar er munklífi og borg um utan er gengur úr Róma. Þar er staður sá er heitir Catacumbas.* The observation that San Paolo is *frá borginn* is probably taken from the Latin name *extra muros*. Once again, in the *Indulgentiae* tradition we find significant similarities; there is a reference to a Cistercian monastery: *... est ibi etiam monasterium antiquum monachorum nigrorum et bene devotum et pulcherrimum claustrum et mirifice operatum ...* (VZ, IV, 86) The expression *staður sá er heitir Catacumbas* is clearly a translation from the common Latin formula *in loco qui dicitur catacumbas*.<sup>25</sup>

After San Paolo, Nikulás observes that all parts of the city described hitherto are *fyrr utan Týfur*; this expression is formed from the Latin *Transtiberim* (beyond the Tiber), which also appears in the beginning of the *Mirabilia*. Nikulás then gives the ancient name of the river: *Hún hét forðum Albana*. The correct Latin name is *Albula*; the erroneous form present in the *leiðarvísir* could easily be due to a misreading by the fourteenth-century scribe rather than by Nikulás himself.<sup>26</sup>

After this topographical summing up Nikulás says that 'on this side of the river' there is Castel Sant'Angelo, which he calls *Kreskentiuskastali*, using the medieval name *Castellum* (or *Castrum*) *Crescentii*,<sup>27</sup> after the powerful Roman family Crescenzi, who owned (and fortified) the Mausoleum of Hadrian until the mid-twelfth century. Nikulás also mentions here a *Kauphús Péturs postula, harðla mikið og langt*. Magoun (1940, 286) believes that this 'Bazaar of Peter the Apostle' is the long portico that connected Castel Sant'Angelo to St Peter's and had shops. In fact, Krautheimer tells us that, in the entire area stretching from the basilica to the bridge over the Tiber, 'were the important traffic lanes and a major shopping centre for visitors and pilgrims.' (Krautheimer, 266)<sup>28</sup>

After the *kauphús*, Nikulás tells us, comes the large and splendid church of St Peter: *Þá er hin göfga Péturskirkja, harðla mikil og dýrleg*. Nikulás adds that in St Peter's, there is full absolution of all 'troubles' for men from all over the world: *Þar er lausn öll of vandræði manna of allan heim*. This a clear reference to the indulgences obtained for pilgrimage there and to remission of all sins (*remissio omnium peccatorum*), which the *Indulgentiae* usually attribute not to St Peter's but to St John Lateran or to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.<sup>29</sup> Nikulás then adds that one must enter St

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Petrus Mallius, *Descriptio Basilicae Vaticanae*: '... et cucurrerunt populus Romanus et comprehenderunt eos [the bodies of Peter and Paul] in locum qui dicitur Catacumba, via Appia ...' VZ, III, p. 436. For the use of *catacumbas*, see Werlauff, p. 46 and Magoun (1940), pp. 284-285.

<sup>26</sup> For *albula*, see Magoun (1940), p. 285 and Kaalund (1913), p. 77.

<sup>27</sup> This denomination is present in the *Mirabilia*, VZ, III, p. 23, together with that of *castellum Adriani*, pp. 45-46. Cf. Magister Gregorius, VZ, III, pp. 145 and 163.

<sup>28</sup> Krautheimer gives us the flavour of the zone: 'Along the streets and on the square were the booths of the vendors of religious souvenirs, the painters of icons and ex-votos ... goldsmiths, and rosary makers; the cobblers, cloth merchants, and sellers of purses; and the small merchants of *generi alimentari* ...' (p. 266)

<sup>29</sup> For instance in Vat. Lat. 687: 'Item dixit papa Bonifatius quod qui devote veniret ad horandum in die consecrationis salvatoris qui visibiliter apparuit omni populo Romano



Peter's from the east, that under the altar, in the middle of the church, is St Peter's sarcophagus, and that in this area he was held in prison: *og skal austan ganga í Péturskirkju, og altari í miðri kirkju. Þar er Pétursörk undir altara og þar var hann í myrkvastofu.* Peter and Paul were actually incarcerated in the Mamertine Prison by the ancient Forum, where the church of San Pietro in Carcere stands. References to the altar and to St Peter's sarcophagus are common in the *Indulgentiae* corpus: *Primo est ibi altare maius in capite ecclesie, in quo nullus audet celebrare nisi Summus Pontifex. Et subtus altari est corpus sancti Petri, vel maior pars et beati Pauli, consocii sui.* (VZ, IV, 79-80). The dimensions of the church, as mentioned above, are given in Latin: *Ecclesia Petri quadringentorum et sexaginta pedum a foribus longa ad sanctum altari sed lata ducentorum et triginta.* The measurements are roughly correct and, although an exact match cannot be found in the sources, a similar formula appears in the *Indulgentiae*: *Item tenet in longitudine dicta ecclesia, a cathedra sancti Petri usque ad portale, palmos DCXV; in latitudine CCCXXX.* (VZ, IV, 80). Nikulás adds further that near the altar was the place where St Peter had been crucified: *og því nær stóð kross Péturs þá er hann var pindur sem nú er háaltari,* information of common knowledge, but which we also read in the *Indulgentiae*: *in eodem loco constructa, ubi sanctus Petrus apostolus fuit crucifixus pedes desuper ...* (Schimmelpfennig, 649) Nikulás also tells us that under the altar there are half the bones of Sts Peter and Paul, while the other half is in the church of St Paul: *Í þeim eru hálf bein Petri et Pauli guðs postula og hálf hvorteggi eru í Pálskirkju.* A very similar formulation of this tradition is traceable in the *Indulgentiae*. In Hulbert's edition (p. 407) we have: *Item medietas corporum Petri et Pauli requiescit ad sanctum Petrum, reliqua vero medietas ad sanctum Paulum,* while Huelsen's edition gives more detail:

... in ecclesia b. Petri apostoli iacet medietas corporis eius et medietas sci. Pauli [apostoli], quae inventa fuerunt in uno tumulo, et dubitatio erat universo populo quae [erant] ossa sci. Petri et quae erant ossa sci. Pauli, et ideo ponderaverunt ossa pondere, et posuerunt unam medietatem in ecclesia sci. Petri apostoli et aliam medietatem in ecclesia sci. Pauli sub maiore altare. (Huelsen, 138)

I could not find an exact reference in the Latin sources to the 'twenty-five bones of those disciples of Christ who followed Peter to Rome' which, immediately after, are said to be concealed under the altar. Nikulás concludes the description of the church interior by mentioning that there are the altars and tombs of Popes Sylvester I and Gregory the Great: *Í Péturskirkju er altari Silvestri pape þar sem hann hvilir. Gregoriusaltari er í Péturskirkju þar sem hann hvilir.* We know that Pope Sylvester's altar was in an oratory, and we have an explicit indication of Pope Gregory's altar and his sepulchre in the *Indulgentiae*: *Et V altaria sunt in dicta ecclesia privilegiata ... altare beati Gregori pape iuxta sepulchrum eius ...* (Schimmelpfennig, 649-650)

After the last note on the interior of the basilica, Nikulás gives us the position of the obelisk 'of St Peter', saying that it is outside to the west, *Péturs nál er hjá úti fyrir vestan.* The word used in this passage for obelisk, *nál*, appears to be a translation of the medieval Latin *agulia*, originally meaning 'needle', a form which appears in the *Mirabilia*: *Iuxta quod est memoria Caesaris, id est agulia, ubi splendide cinis eius in suo sarcophago requiescit ...* (VZ, III, 43)

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haberet remissionem omnium peccatorum suorum ...' See also Hulbert, pp. 406 and 408; Schimmelpfennig, p. 650; and WeiBthanner, pp. 60-61.

From this analysis of the Roman itinerary of Nikulás, we can conclude that material from written sources contributed to the Roman section of the *leiðarvísir*. The use of Latin and particular Icelandic terms interpreting Latin, as well as correspondences between the *leiðarvísir* and sources on Rome, strongly suggest a reliance on these texts, even though it cannot be said for certain which ones Nikulás may have used. I have cited a variety of sources on Rome in my analysis; some of them, in fact, already appear together in manuscripts in the second half of the twelfth century, sometimes copied by a single hand.<sup>30</sup> This means that Abbot Nikulás could conceivably have drawn from several sources, even with relatively few books to hand, with the purpose of composing a rich and accurate account of the city of Rome.

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<sup>30</sup> For example, MS Faustina B.VII; see also n. 17.

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