

St Nicholas News



A communication channel to keep in touch with St Nicholas' Friends around the world

From Fr. Gerardo Cioffari, o.p. Director of the

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May 13, 2011

CENTRO STUDI NICOLAIANI / BARI

A PILGRIMAGE IN THE YEAR 2011 LIKE THOSE OF THE YEARS 1362, 1460 AND 1724

Marcel Janssens and René Gillet **today, like** Jan Walembeke in 1362, Barlaam in 1460 and Vasilij G. Barskij in 1724

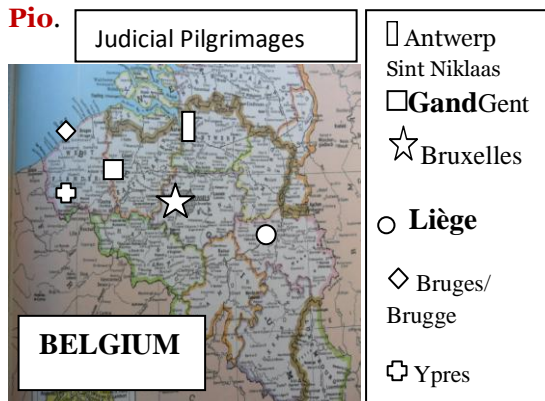
An exceptional pilgrimage arrived May the 7th from Belgium, worthy of being compared to the great pilgrimages of the past centuries.

LIÈGE (BELGIUM)

km 1800 (May 7th 2011)

MARCEL JANSSENS • RENÉ GILLET

May the 7th arrived to Bari **Marcel Janssens and René Gillet**. They had started their "little walk" **from Liège (Belgium)**, a city of 180.000 inhabitants, on the Meuse river. Janssens and Gillet stopped first in Spa, then walked till Bern (Switzerland). Here the authorities convinced them not to cross the Alps Mountains in this period. So they took the train till Milano. And here again walking tirelessly to **Loreto**, where is venerated the house of the Virgin. Afterwards, walking along the Adriatic sea reached the sanctuary of St Michael on the **Gargano Mountain** and from there to the close sanctuary of **Padre Pio**.



Janssens (left) and Gillet (right) arrived to Bari in the afternoon of May the 7th, received by many people who already heard of their extraordinary feat. With Père Jean Pierre Pire, Parish Priest of St Nicholas in Liège-Outremeuse), Hans Peter Rust from Switzerland, and James Rosenthal from England, they were gladly received in the St Nicholas Library by my assistant Francesco Innamorato.

GAND / GENT (BELGIUM)

km 1900 (August 28th year 1362)

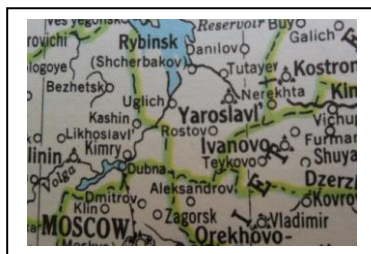
JAN WALEMBEKE

In this day the canons of St Nicholas certified that **Jan Walembeke** had arrived to Bari and said the prayers at the sepulchre of the Saint, accomplishing this way the judicial pilgrimage as penance for having been among the killers of **the brothers Alin**.

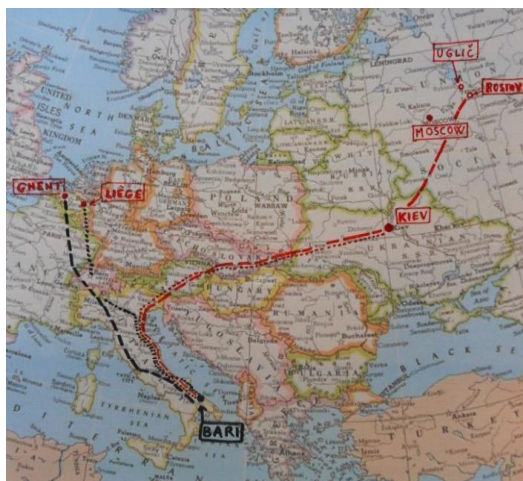
Similar cases are documented for **Antwerp, Bruxelles, Ypres and Bruges**.

The **statutes of Liège** in XIV century run as follows: *If someone irreparably cuts somebody's limb he shall walk to St Nicholas in Bari, shall pay a penalty of 20 pounds and be exiled for 20 years. If the limb is injured he shall walk to Santjago in Galicia with a penalty of 10 pounds and five years of exile.* Further details, Van Herwaarden J., *Opgelegde bedevaarten*, Assen-Amsterdam 1978; and "**Lorenza Vantaggiato, Pellegrinaggi giudiziari**", Pomigliano d'Arco 2010.

ROSTOV / UGLIČ
(RUSSIA) km 3.500
January/Febr. 1460
MONK BARLAAM



The exceptionality of Barlaam's pilgrimage is given not only by the distance **Rostov-Bari** (3.500 + 3.500 km) but also by the context. 20 years before, the **Council of Florence (1439)** had given the Tsar a chance to proclaim in 1448 the **autocephaly** of the Russian Church (on the ground that the Greeks had "betrayed" the Faith by reuniting themselves with Rome). The **atmosphere was strongly anticatholic**, but ... St Nicholas is St Nicholas. No anticatholic feeling can keep a Russian faithful away from St Nicholas. The monk Barlaam left Rostov (at that time one of the most important cities of Russia, today less than 40.000 inhabitants) in 1459 and arrived to Bari in January 1460. Here **he bought an icon**, that he brought back in the neighborhood of Uglič.



From Gand:black hyphens: Jan Walembeke(1362)
 From Liège (black dots): M. Janssens (2011)
 From Rostov (red hyphens): Barlaam (1460)
 From Kiev (red dots): Vasilij G. Barskij (1724)

The little chapel built around this miraculous icon, on the river Ulejma, soon became a monastery, nowadays still existing (Ulejminskij Monastyr).

Source: П. Власий,
Сказание о явлении за р. Улеймою в 1460 г. образа св. Хр. Николая,
 Ярославль 1894.

KIEV (UKRAINA)

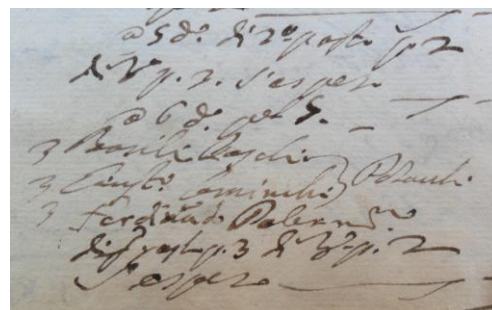
Km 2.400

August 6th 1724

VASILIJ GRIGOROVICH BARSKIJ

Among the most fascinating in world pilgrimage literature is the diary of Vasilij Grigorovič Barskij, a man of extraordinary spiritual life. He walked through **Europe, Asia and Africa** enjoying the contact with the places of faith, in spite of the many **disappointments and the gangrenous leg**. After Bari he went to Mount Athos (where the monks held his **visit to the Pope** against him), Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo, Tripoli, Patmos. Back to Kiev the two of September 1747, here he died October the 7th.

Source: **Пешеходца Василия Григоровича Барскаго** Плаки Альбова **Путешествие к Святым Местам в Европе, Азии и Африке**, Санктпетербург 1819. My translation of the pages dealing with Bari in "*Viaggiatori Russi in Puglia*, Schena, Fasano 1991.



Recording of the three meals (6, 7 and 8 August 1724) offered by the canons of the Basilica of St Nicholas to Vasilij G. Barskij and his fellow pilgrim Justin Lenickij. The canon wrote "Polish". **Barskij's Diary** became a widespread **Guide for the Russian pilgrims**. Especially in XIX century many Russians came to Bari leaving interesting descriptions about their experience. Some of them came from very distant lands (as the two women pilgrims from **Irkutsk**).