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**From Thaumaturgus to Gift Bringer  
The Influence of the Role of Children in Hagiography and Folk Practices  
on the Iconography of Saint Nicholas**

This paper demonstrates how Saint Nicholas developed from a wandering miracle worker to the benefactor and protector of children. It shows the development in the Western pictorial tradition from the translation of the relics onwards, and showcases the changes that concern children. The West developed a unique iconography of its own, supplementing the traditional Greek model of depiction with new additions to the legend, many of which concerned the rescue and well-being of children. These new additions to the legend granted Saint Nicholas an aptness for being incorporated into children's celebrations, folk customs and youth culture, and previous research has shown how from the twelfth and thirteenth century onwards, the customs surrounding the feast day of Holy Innocents gradually migrated to and intermingled with the customs of the feast of Saint Nicholas on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December. The influence of the presence of medieval children and their customs made them into 'iconological agents'. They gave rise to new types of Saint Nicholas' iconography, such as the depiction of Saint Nicholas as a child bishop himself, the depiction of significantly younger children as the students pickled in the vat, and the depiction of Saint Nicholas with three apples as his attribute. These three iconographic types would not have been possible to identify by relying on the classical iconological methodology. The origins of these types can only be thoroughly explained through the interdisciplinary approach of new iconology, an approach that combines iconology, visual studies and historical anthropology. The author uses an integration of folklore studies and iconology to produce these new insights.