

# *Mobilising special forces*

An examination of the *Historia Translationis* of the martyr Gorgon  
and the uses of this saint for the monastery of Marmoutier in the mid-  
ninth century

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## **Preface**

Beginning a research into the history of people's actions and thoughts often feels like searching your way through the dark. The beginning of this research was initiated by my wish to gain a deeper insight in and understanding of the functions of and motivations behind the transfer of Roman martyrs' relics from Rome to the Carolingian empire. In my search for primary sources that could form a starting point and basis for this research, I came across the *Historia translationis* of the martyr Gorgon, an account of the translation of the relics of this saint from Rome to the monastery of Marmoutier in 846/7. This text proved to be a rich source and provided interesting material for my research. At the same time however the text was surrounded with questions marks concerning its origin, context and interpretation, questions which had thus far not received any serious attention. The use of a such a text created a special challenge and also meant that in the first stages the course of my research was anything but determined. This project therefore would certainly not have succeeded without the support, directions and suggestions from many and various sides.

First, I especially would like to thank my supervisor Carine van Rhijn for her support throughout the entire research process. I thank her for reading and commenting on the various drafts of my work, providing me with suggestions and ideas for new directions, for helping me with the interpretation of my primary source, and for pointing out the opportunities of my primary sources and the results of my research. Without her directions and support, this project could have become a never-ending story. I would also like to express special thanks to Janneke Raaijmakers, who was not only prepared to be the second reader, but from the very beginning dedicated much of her time to think along with me in the various stages of my research, supporting my research with her suggestions and her knowledge about relic cults,

helping with the interpretation of my primary source and reading the various drafts of my work.

I also want to thank Mayke de Jong for her help with the translation and interpretation of difficult parts of my primary sources and her other suggestions concerning my research. I want to thank her for providing the opportunity to discuss certain passages of the *Historia translationis* during her Latin tutorial. Furthermore, I would like to thank my fellow students of this Latin tutorial, Dorine van Espelo, Erik Goosmann, Pim Nusselder and Bart Selten for sharing their own translations and views concerning particular difficult passages of the text.

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Many thanks goes to my dear friends Connie Brinksma-Hopkins and Hsin-Chi Berenst for coming up with the idea of participating in International Medieval Congress in Leeds and their organisation of the various sessions, and I thank Marco Mostert for his willingness to chair the sessions. Furthermore, I thank the organisation of the International Medieval Congress for providing me the opportunity to share my research with others on an international platform. I also would like to thank the audience of my paper for their questions, suggestions and their enthusiastic reactions. I especially thank Charles West and Rutger

Kramer for their feedback, their ideas concerning the interpretation of certain passages of my primary source and their other suggestions for my research.

I also thank those people who were prepared to help me in the final stages of my thesis. I thank my husband Arthur for creating the map. I thank Hsin-Chi Berenst for reading through the almost-final version of the thesis and her views and comments on my work. I want to express my special gratitude to John Clay who was prepared and found time to correct my English in a time when he himself was very busy with the last stage of finishing his own book.

I thank my family and friends for their interest and support during my research project. Special thanks to all my fellow students of Medieval Studies with whom I experienced and shared these last two years of study and friendship. I especially thank my dearest friends Maartje van der Most and Hsin-Chi Berenst for their friendship and support.

To my husband Arthur I want to express my love and thank him for his enduring patience in times I was much preoccupied with my work, and for making me realise that there is more to life than this “life’s work”.

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1: the cult of St. Gorgon and his translation to Marmoutier.....	11
1.1 St. Gorgon in Rome and the Carolingian empire .....	11
<i>St. Gorgon in Rome and his translations to the north</i> .....	11
<i>The identities of St. Gorgon</i> .....	14
1.2 St. Gorgon's translation to Marmoutier: a discussion of the text .....	18
<i>The structure and some characteristics of the text</i> .....	19
<i>The apotheosis: St. Gorgon's arrival in Marmoutier</i> .....	24
<i>The malediction of psalm 82</i> .....	31
Chapter 2: Marmoutier and Carolingian politics.....	39
2.1 Marmoutier's earliest history .....	39
2.2 Marmoutier's immunity: royal protection, royal intervention .....	41
2.3 Marmoutier's religious value .....	49
A recapitulation.....	53
2.4 Marmoutier and St. Martin.....	54
2.5 Marmoutier's abbots .....	58
2.6 Marmoutier: a monastery in the line of fire .....	63
Marmoutier in the ninth century: a short recapitulation.....	72
Chapter 3: The protection of St. Gorgon.....	75
3.1 Relics and restorations .....	75
3.2 The mid-ninth century synods.....	80

A recapitulation.....	89
3.3 Dangers for Marmoutier?.....	89
3.4 Restitutions and rhetorics.....	96
3.5 Other threats for Marmoutier?.....	103
Marmoutier in danger? A recapitulation and reflection.....	105
Conclusion.....	108
Appendix.....	116
Abbreviations.....	119
Bibliography.....	121

## Introduction

‘In the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ 846 it happened thanks to divine help, that Rainald, the venerable abbot of the cell Marmoutier, together with some priests and deacons and other clergyman, set off from the aforementioned monastery entrusted to him towards Rome, with the purpose to pray and, if God would permit it, and the Roman or Apostolic power would allow it, to carry away with him the body of a certain martyr of Christ to the mentioned monastery of Saint Martin - which the most precious confessor of Christ himself had erected from its foundations – if God would permit it. And so it was done.[...] When the oratories of the power of the Roman Church were scoured, and having procured [entrance to] whatever treasures they wished, they left Rome on the 14<sup>th</sup> Kalend of June [19 May], taking with them the body of the most blessed martyr of Christ, St. Gorgon, and soon, with the help of God, and with highest delight and upmost joy, arrived at St. Alexander.’<sup>1</sup>

This quote is the beginning of the *Historia translationis*, an account about the translation of the relics of the martyr Gorgon (*Gorgonius*) from Rome to Marmoutier, the monastery founded by St. Martin in the fourth century on the northern bank of the river Loire, near the city of Tours. In the year 846 a group of clergyman left Marmoutier under the leadership of Rainald, abbot of Marmoutier, for an expedition to Rome. This expedition entailed more than a pilgrimage: although the author mentions the intentions to pray in Rome, it appears the

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Anno igitur incarnationis D[omini] N[ostri] Iesu Christi DCCCXLVI diuina administrante gratia contigit, vt Rainaldus Cellæ Maioris monasterij Venerabilis Abba, simul cum aliquibus Presbyteris & Diaconibus reliquisque Clericis ex præfato monasterio sibi commisso causa orationis Romam pergeret, & si Dominus permetteret, & Romana seu Apostolica potestas sineret, corpus alicuius Martyris Christi ad memoratum monasterium S. Martini, quod ipse præciosissimus Confessor Christi a nouo fundamento summo opere ædificauit, secum deferret, sicuti Domino donante & fecit. [...] Peragratis etenim oratorijs Ecclesiæ Romanæ potestatis, & thesauro quem cupiebat impetrato, decimo quarto Kal[endæ] Iunij recedentes a Roma, & beatissimi Martyris Christi Gorgonij corpus secum deferentes, celeriter Domino iuuante, cum summo gaudio summaque lætitia, ad S. Alexandrum peruenerunt’, *De S. Gorgonio Martyre Turonibus in Gallia. Historia Translationis* (BHL 3622), *AASS*, Mar. II, dies 11, pp. 56-9, at p. 56, col. f.

group was primarily interested in acquiring some good relics for Marmoutier. With the permission of the Apostolic See, they roamed the different churches of Rome, found the relics of St. Gorgon and with their new saint happily began the journey home. St. Alexander is the first in a long series of places that was fortunate to witness Gorgon's miracle-working virtues.<sup>2</sup>

According to the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Manuscripta*, four manuscripts are handed down to us that contain this story.<sup>3</sup> The two oldest of these are Rouen, BP Y080 (ff. 010-011<sup>v</sup>) and Paris, BNF lat. 15437 (ff. 174<sup>f</sup>-175<sup>v</sup>), both dated as eleventh century manuscripts, the other two are Paris BNF lat. 14364 (ff. 030<sup>f</sup>-031<sup>f</sup>) and Paris BNF lat. 14650 (ff. 269<sup>v</sup>-273<sup>v</sup>), respectively assigned to the twelfth/thirteenth and fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Despite the late dating of these witnesses, certain characteristics of the *Historia translationis* make a composition of the text a short time after the actual translation probable. This I will discuss more fully later.

Apart from the fact that the *Historia translationis* has been noted and commented upon as evidence that a translation of St. Gorgon to Marmoutier took place, the text has received little attention in scholarly research. The two existing editions of the text, that of the

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<sup>2</sup> For the identification of this and other places on the journey to Marmoutier, see the notes to Map in the appendix, pp. 66-7.

<sup>3</sup> *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Manuscripta. Index analytique des Catalogues de manuscrits hagiographiques latins publiés par les Bollandistes*, Société des Bollandistes (1998); as consulted online at: [http://bhlms.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Nquerysaintsectiondate.cfm?code\\_bhl=3622&requesttimeout=500](http://bhlms.fltr.ucl.ac.be/Nquerysaintsectiondate.cfm?code_bhl=3622&requesttimeout=500) (date of access: 07-10-09).

<sup>4</sup> For a description of the Paris manuscripts: *Catalogus codicum hagiographicorum Latinorum antiquiorum saeculo XVI, qui asservantur in Bibliotheca Nationali Parisiensi*, 4 vols., ed. Bollandists, Subsidia Hagiographica 2 (Brussels 1889-1893), vol. 3, pp. 228-35, 255-62, 317-25; Gasparri mentions that two parts of BNF lat. 14364 (ff. 2-106v and 199-252v), to which the *Historia translationis* belongs (ff. 30-31v), date from the twelfth century: Françoise Gasparri, 'Un copiste lettré de l'abbaye de Saint Victor de Paris au XIIe siècle', in: *Scriptorium* 30 (1976), pp. 232-237, at: 233; another description of BNF lat. 14650 can be found in: Henri M. Rochais, *Un légendier cistercien de la fin du XIIe siècle : le liber de natalitiis et de quelques grands légendiers des XIIIe et XIIIe s.*, 2 vols. La documentation cistercienne 15 (Dissertation, Paris 1975), vol. 1, pp. 75-7. According to the description in Avril's publication on the Rouen manuscripts, the Y080 manuscript (or Rouen, ms. 1383) dates from the third quarter of the eleventh century and is associated with Jumiègue: François Avril, *Manuscrits Normands XI-XIIème siècles Bibliothèque municipale de Rouen*, Catalogue, février-mars 1975, Musée des beaux-arts (Rouen 1975), no. 31, p. 40.



Bollandists in the *Acta Sanctorum*<sup>5</sup> and that of Mabillon in the *Acta Sanctorum ordinis Sancti Benedicti*<sup>6</sup>, do not provide insight into its origin, its possible author, its function, or its political and religious context. This disregard for the text can be explained from the general treatment Marmoutier has received in historiography. In comparison with Marmoutier as a Cluniac monastery (from the late tenth century on), ninth-century Marmoutier has been given little attention. This may be related to the fact that compared to big royal monasteries such as Fulda information about Marmoutier in this period – either in the form of charters, historical narratives or archaeological material - is rather scarce. Furthermore, Marmoutier probably also received little attention because of its less impressive position when compared to the famous monastic community of St. Martin in Tours. This community had developed around the relics of St. Martin that were kept in the basilica in Tours. The possession of these relics made St. Martin of Tours one of the most prestigious communities in Merovingian and Carolingian times.

Still, there are certain publications that provide useful thoughts on Marmoutier's state in the ninth century and cover various sources related to Marmoutier. One of the older publications on Marmoutier's history is that of Dom. Edmond Martène (1654-1739), first published, annotated and completed by Casimir Chevalier in 1874.<sup>7</sup> It provides a useful basic overview of what Martène knew about Marmoutier on basis of charters, legends and histories. However, his research is not entirely conducted according to the criteria of modern scholarship: in many cases references are absent, and the work often does not scrutinise the credibility of the sources. Yet an older publication is partly dedicated to the various churches

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<sup>5</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Historia translationis reliquiarum S. Gorgonii martyris in Majus-Monasterium in Gallia, AASS OSB*, vol. 5 (saeculum IV, part 1), pp. 591-6.

<sup>7</sup> Edmond Martène, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier*, 2 vols., first published, annotated and completed by Casimir Chevalier, *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de Touraine* 24 (Tours 1874/5).

of Tours and provides details about Tours' bishops, abbots, and monasteries, including Marmoutier.<sup>8</sup>

A more recent publication is the work of Charles Lelong.<sup>9</sup> He covers Marmoutier's entire history, from its fourth century beginnings up to and including the early modern period, with a special attention for Marmoutier's archaeological data. He provides interesting thoughts and insights in Marmoutier's situation in the ninth century, although for this period archaeological evidence is very scarce. Lelong also pays attention to Marmoutier in the publication dedicated to the culture and society of medieval Tours.<sup>10</sup> Dom. Guy Marie Oury also provides a discussion of Marmoutier's history, including some interesting remarks on the earliest religious characteristics of the community.<sup>11</sup> The most recent publication that pays attention to the early- and ninth-century history of Marmoutier, with an interesting comparison with the community of St. Martin of Tours, is the work of Sharon Farmer on the religious communities of Tours.<sup>12</sup> Her research, however, primarily focuses on the period from the late tenth century onwards.

This list of publications shows that Marmoutier is not really neglected. Still, it is remarkable that thus far the *Historia translationis* is never seriously involved in the discussion of Marmoutier's history. The story describes an important event in Marmoutier's community and, especially considering the relative scarcity of information on Marmoutier, can provide us with valuable new information and insights into Marmoutier's life and state in this period.

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<sup>8</sup> Bartholomeus Hauréau (ed.), *Gallia Christiana, in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa* 14 (province of Tours) (Paris 1856).

<sup>9</sup> Charles Lelong, *L'abbaye de Marmoutier* (Chambray-lès-Tours 1989).

<sup>10</sup> Charles Lelong, 'Culture et société (IVe-XIIIe siècles)', in: Bernard Chevalier (ed.), *Histoire de Tours* (Toulouse 1985), pp. 49-89.

<sup>11</sup> Guy Marie Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours, de la règle martinienne à la règle bénédictine', in: *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de Touraine* 62 (XVI<sup>e</sup> centenaire de la mort de Saint Martin) (Tours 1997), pp. 41-58.

Another and older work of Oury on the (religious) history of St. Martin and Marmoutier in the Carolingian and post-Carolingian period can be found in: Guy Marie Oury, *Histoire religieuse de la Touraine* (Tours 1975), at: pp. 37-49.

<sup>12</sup> Sharon Farmer, *Communities of St. Martin. Legend and ritual in medieval Tours* (Ithaca 1991).

In this thesis, the first step of a close examination of this text will be made. What I wish to show is that the *Historia translationis*, in combination with other information that can be gathered about ninth-century Marmoutier, can provide insight into the use and importance of a Roman martyr's relics for this monastery, and thereby a deeper understanding of the state and condition of Marmoutier around the mid-ninth century. Before I elucidate this statement, it is necessary first to shortly discuss the use of relics in general and the specific popularity of Roman martyrs' relics in the Carolingian period.<sup>13</sup>

Generally speaking, a relic was regarded as an object of a saint (either bodily remains or an object that had been in contact with him) through which God's power worked. It was believed that the saint, because of his special and close relation with God, channelled God's power during his life on earth, but through his relics continued to do so after his death. As a source of God's power, the relic formed an important object of veneration. The person or community that kept a powerful relic (that is, a relic that testified of the saint's powers through the working of miracles) actually kept a source of prestige, income and protection. The reports of miracles spread the fame of the saint as well as that of the community and could boost a monastery's prestige, cause a new flow of pilgrims and donations, and could function as a

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<sup>13</sup> Much interesting work has thus far been done on the function of relics and their translation for medieval society and monastic communities specifically. Some of the important works are: Martin Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes* Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 33 (Turnhout 1979), with comments on the developments in relic cults and translations, but with a specific focus on translation stories; on the place and use of relics in society and the regulations concerning relics from early christianity on: Nicole Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit* Société d'histoire du droit, Collection d'histoire institutionnelle et sociale 6 (Paris 1975); on the translation and theft of relics in the central middle ages, providing interesting insights in the meaning and importance of relics for communities: Patrick J. Geary, *Furta sacra: thefts of relics in the central Middle Ages* (Princeton 1978); interesting work on the place and importance of Roman martyrs for the Carolingians has been done by Julia M.H. Smith, for example: Julia M.H. Smith, 'Old saints, new cults: Roman relics in Carolingian Francia', in: Julia M.H. Smith (ed.), *Early medieval Rome and the christian West: essays in honour of Donald A. Bullough* The medieval Mediterranean: peoples, economies and cultures, 400-1453, 28 (Leiden 2000), pp. 317-39, and: Julia M.H. Smith, "'Emending evil ways and praising God's omnipotence.'" Einhard and the uses of Roman martyrs', in: Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Seeing and believing* Studies in Comparative History (Rochester 2003), pp. 189-223. For an insight in the motives behind and the context of the development of saint's cults in Late Antiquity, see: Peter Brown, *The cult of saints: its rise and function in Late Antiquity* (Chicago 1981).

protection of a monastery's possessions and privileges against the claims of local noblemen or rival monasteries.<sup>14</sup>

Under the rule of the Carolingian kings in the eighth and ninth centuries, the relics of Roman martyrs in particular became much-desired objects. Their popularity had much to do with the Carolingians' pursuit of a proper observation of christianity and the correction (*correctio*) of those aspects of christian life and society that were not in line with the Bible and the early-christian norms and traditions. This call for *correctio* resulted in regulations for many different aspects of christianity, such as monastic life, ecclesiastical organisation, liturgy and education. Basically, every aspect of christian life, organisation and devotion that was in discord with the early traditions was suspect.<sup>15</sup> In the case of relics, therefore, it was important to be certain that the relics in question belonged to a true saint. During the Carolingian period, all kind of regulations were made to avert or put a stop to any suspicious cults and to thwart swindlers.<sup>16</sup> In the *Admonitio Generalis* (789) for example, Charlemagne forbade the veneration of martyrs by a wrong name, or the veneration of saints with an uncertain tradition; the reform synod of 794 in Frankfurt condemned the veneration of new saints whose holiness could not be confirmed by their virtues of life or their martyrdom.<sup>17</sup> In general, there was a tendency to distrust new saints and to accept only those saints whose traditions – and thereby their authenticity - were already firmly settled, as they dated back to earlier times, that is, the Merovingian period or earlier.<sup>18</sup> One of the most well known ninth-

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<sup>14</sup> For example: Geary, *Furta sacra*, pp. 22-3, 68-71.

<sup>15</sup> Marc van Uytfanghe, 'Le culte des saints et la prétendue "Aufklärung" carolingienne', in: *Le culte des saints aux 9e-13e siècles: actes du colloque tenu à Poitiers les 15-17 septembre 1993* (Poitiers 1995), pp. 151-66, at: p. 157.

<sup>16</sup> For example the pseudo-bishop Aldelbert, who during his life already gave out pieces of his hair and nails as relics: Van Uytfanghe, 'Le culte des saints', p. 157, and: *MGH*, Epp. sel., I, no. 59.

<sup>17</sup> Van Uytfanghe, idem, p. 157; *MGH*, Capit. I, no. 42, c. 42, p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> Van Uytfanghe, idem, p. 156-7. Uytfanghe speaks of a 'rareté des saints carolingiens' also referring to the article of Pierre Riché. Riché talks about a 'l'absence de saints carolingiens en opposition à l'abondance des saints mérovingiens', Pierre Riché, 'Les carolingiens en quête de sainteté', in: *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (IIIe-XIIIe siècle). Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome avec le concours de l'Université de Rome "La Sapienza", Rome, 27 – 29 octobre 1988* Collection de l'École française de Rome 149 (Rome 1991), pp. 217-24, at: pp. 221-3.

century regulations concerning relics is that of the capitulary of 811, repeated at the synod of Mainz in 813, where it was stated that no translation could take place without the permission of the bishop or the ruler.<sup>19</sup>

As Patrick Geary points out, these regulations did not result in a decline of the relic cult. On the contrary, ‘the Carolingians’ efforts were directed toward strengthening and expanding the place of relics in Frankish life’.<sup>20</sup> Regulations such as the prerequisite for every altar to contain a relic in fact gave relics growing importance in Frankish society and increased their demand.<sup>21</sup> This however created a challenge: at the one hand there was a growing need for relics, but on the other hand a reluctance to accept relics of dubious, new saints; and Christian martyrs, whose saintliness was guaranteed, were unlikely to be produced in the christianised Carolingian world.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, a shortage of relics arose.

For this problem, the city of Rome provided the ultimate solution. Firstly, Rome was the best place to search for trustworthy relics, as it was here where the earliest and true Christians had died for their faith. Secondly, the city was the cradle and heart of early-Christian culture and tradition; if one wanted to know what was right, one had to turn to Rome. The Carolingians therefore regarded Rome as the ultimate supplier of relics. In the eighth century, a flow of relics of martyrs from Rome to the Carolingian empire took place, and in the second quarter of the ninth century, the popularity of Roman martyrs’ relics intensified once more. Julia Smith in her article ‘Old saints, new cults’, provides an overview

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<sup>19</sup> Van Uytfaenge, ‘Le culte des saints’, pp. 157-8, *MGH*, Capit. I, no. 72, 7, p. 163, *MGH*, Conc. II, 1, no. 36, c. 51, p. 272.

<sup>20</sup> Geary, *Furta sacra*, p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> Geary, *idem*, pp. 42-4. According to the regulations of 801 and 813 every altar that did not contain relics had to be destroyed, Geary, *idem*, p. 42, amongst others referring to: *MGH*, Capit. I, no. 77, p. 170; see also: Riché, ‘Les Carolingiens’, p. 221.

<sup>22</sup> With exception of those who died in those areas that were not yet christianised or suffered under the oppression of non-Christians, such as Boniface, who was killed by the Frisians in 754, and the three martyrs of Cordoba, Gregorius, Nathalia and Aurelius: Riché, ‘Les Carolingiens’, p. 223.

of recorded translations in the eighth and ninth century which gives a good impression of the run for Roman martyrs in this period.<sup>23</sup>

Let me now return to my earlier statement that the *Historia translationis* may tell us something of the use of a Roman martyr's relics for Marmoutier. Considering what has been discussed above, it can be said that with the translation of relics from Rome to Marmoutier, the monastic community of Marmoutier played according to the tune of her time. The "Romaness" of St. Gorgon would have provided this saint with a mark of authenticity and prestige that would certainly have reflected on Marmoutier. However, the notion that St. Gorgon's translation fitted a certain trend does not really answer the question of how exactly this Roman martyr's power and prestige were made relevant and useful for Marmoutier. As Geary points out, relics were only valuable and meaningful when the community where the relics resided ascribed a meaning to them. A relic's meaning – or, in Geary's terms, its specific identity - would, for example, be created and expressed through various media, such as texts (in the form of saint's lives, translation stories, poems), images and architecture.<sup>24</sup> By means of these media, communities went their own ways in making a saint's relic relevant for themselves.

Seen in this light, the *Historia translationis* could be approached not just as a story recording the various events during the translation, but as a text which the author(s) constructed in such a way that it conveyed a specific message with regard to St. Gorgon's translation and his place in Marmoutier, that would have been relevant for Marmoutier at that time, that is, the time around Gorgon's translation in 846. An important hint to a connection between St. Gorgon's use for Marmoutier and the contemporary situation is that the author, in describing the martyr's arrival and placement in Marmoutier, quotes a particular biblical

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<sup>23</sup> Smith, 'Old saints, new cults', pp. 335-9.

<sup>24</sup> Geary, *Furta sacra*, pp. 5-9.

passage that is also employed in certain ecclesiastical debates of the 840s and 850s. Bearing in mind Geary's remark that a relic only becomes meaningful when a community ascribes a meaning to them, the question rises whether there was a reason for the author to quote a particular passage that was used in ecclesiastical discussions around the time of St. Gorgon's translation. Did the author possibly have wanted to connect the saint with ecclesiastical debates? Did these debates had a particular relevance for Marmoutier?

It is the link between St. Gorgon and the issues and circumstances contemporary to the time of his translation that I wish to make the focus of my thesis. The main question I wish to answer is what exactly the text can tell us about the function that Gorgon fulfilled for the community of Marmoutier, and how the text's clues on Gorgon's relevance may be explained from and supported by the situation in which the monastery found itself around the mid-ninth century.

I wish to do this by concentrating on two different points. First, I wish to explore the way in which his identity and function for Marmoutier are described and how these may be fitted into larger context of St. Gorgon's cult in Carolingian times. Secondly, I wish to explore Marmoutier's status and situation in the ninth century, in order to have a context in which the *Historia translationis's* view on Gorgon's importance for Marmoutier may be explained or understood. Through a combination and interplay of these two explorations, I wish to provide an understanding of St. Gorgon's function for Marmoutier's community. Eventually I wish to show that the *Historia translationis* creates a meaning for St. Gorgon that was attuned to the circumstances Marmoutier's found herself in around the mid-ninth century.

In the first chapter, I will focus on the identity of St. Gorgon and the way his translation and arrival in Marmoutier is presented by the *Historia translationis*. First I will shortly touch on

the evidence we have about the cult of St. Gorgon in Rome and the Carolingian empire, in order to identify the possible motives that played a role in the community's choice for Gorgon. In the second part of the chapter I will focus on the *Historia translationis*. I will discuss its content, point out some remarkable features and characteristics, and eventually focus on one particular passage which raises interesting questions about the importance and function of St. Gorgon for Marmoutier. The discussion of this passage is in fact the starting point of my research.

In the second chapter, I wish to provide insight into the political and religious status of ninth-century Marmoutier, which will form the necessary background for my further explorations. Here, I will provide a short overview of the earliest history of Marmoutier and continue with a discussion of her condition and status in the ninth century. I will discuss the various ninth-century charters, the appointments of abbots, and the political situation Marmoutier found herself in around the mid-ninth century.

In the third chapter the observations on the *Historia translationis* made in the first chapter, will be connected to the broader context as described in chapter two. First, I will shortly examine the possible function of St. Gorgon in the context of certain restoration activities at Marmoutier. Then I want to move on to an examination of Gorgon's function in relation to the ecclesiastical debates, and explore the possible relations of this debate with Marmoutier's place in the political circumstances as described in chapter two. It is in this chapter that the connection between St. Gorgon's translation, his function as expressed in the *Historia translationis* and the "reality" of the mid-ninth century for Marmoutier will take shape.



## Chapter 1: the cult of St. Gorgon and his translation to Marmoutier

### *1.1 St. Gorgon in Rome and the Carolingian empire*

In the introduction, I quoted the beginning of the *Historia translationis*, which states that Rainald and his companions found the relics of St. Gorgon after searching through the various churches of Rome. The question arises whether Gorgon was specifically chosen as their saint, for example because he was a well-known saint in Rome or already had a certain fame in the Carolingian world. In order to discover whether St. Gorgon's importance for Marmoutier was in any way related to an existing cult or acquaintance with him, I will therefore first shortly discuss what is known about St. Gorgon's cult in the Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages. The discussion will be mainly based on the work of François Dolbeau and Pascal Boulhol, both of whom deal with questions concerning the cult of St. Gorgon in these periods.<sup>25</sup>

### *St. Gorgon in Rome and his translations to the north*

Boulhol shows that several late antique and early medieval sources – such as the *Depositio Martyrium* (354 AD) and several surviving itineraries - testify to the acquaintance with a St. Gorgon and the presence of a St. Gorgon in the cemeteries of the *Via Labicana* in Rome, at least from the fourth century on.<sup>26</sup> Boulhol points out that, as far as he knows, no church in Rome has been dedicated to Gorgon and he therefore characterises Gorgon as ‘un santo essenzialmente cemeteriale.’<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, there is evidence that on the initiative of two popes translations of St. Gorgon within Rome took place. For the eighth and ninth century

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<sup>25</sup> P. Boulhol, ‘Ricerca sul culto di S. Gorgonio in Occidente fino al X secolo’, in: *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* (1987), pp. 107-65; François Dolbeau, ‘Un panégyrique anonyme, prononcé à Minden pour la fête de Saint Gorgon’, with an edition of the Latin text, in: *Analecta Bollandiana* 103:1-2 (1985), pp. 33-59. For an overview on different cults of St. Gorgon: *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, eds. Iosepho Vizzini et al., 13 vols. (Rome 1961-1969), vol. 7 (1966), pp. 122-129, and vol. 11 (1968), pp. 771-2; see also: J. F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii I. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern 751-918 (926/962)*, vol. 4: Papstregesten, 800-911, part 2: 844-872, section 1: 844-858, adap. by Klaus Herbers (Köln etc. 1999), no. 58; as consulted online at: <http://regesten.regesta-imperii.de/> (date of access: 21-10-09).

<sup>26</sup> Boulhol, ‘Ricerca’, pp. 109-11, 123-8; see also: Dolbeau, ‘Un panégyrique’, p. 37; for a fourth-century reference to St. Gorgon at the Via Labicana, see for example: *Le Liber Pontificalis: texte, introduction et commentaire*, ed. L. Duchesne, 3 vols (2nd ed., Paris 1955), vol. 1, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Boulhol, idem, pp. 126-7.

Boulhol and Dolbeau both mention the translation from the *Via Labicana* to the church of St. Silvester, as mentioned by a certain inscription in this church, that may have taken place during the rule of pope Paul I (757-767).<sup>28</sup> The *Liber Pontificalis* testifies of pope Gregory IV (827-844) translating St. Gorgon together with the martyrs Tiburtius and Sebastian from their cemetery to the church of St. Peter.<sup>29</sup>

The first known translation of a St. Gorgon to the Carolingian empire is that by Chrodegang of Metz in 764/5.<sup>30</sup> At Chrodegang's request Paul I provides him with the relics of the martyrs Gorgon, Nazarius and Nabor.<sup>31</sup> The last two are translated to the monasteries of Lorsch and St. Avold respectively, but Gorgon finds his resting place in Gorze, where he becomes patron saint alongside St. Peter, St. Paul and St. Stephen.<sup>32</sup> As mentioned above, an inscription in the church of St. Silvester testifies of a translation in Rome, that may have taken place under the same pope Paul I. If these were indeed contemporary, the translation in Rome itself may - not accidentally - have been followed by the translation of St. Gorgon to Lorsch, as Dolbeau states.<sup>33</sup>

After this translation, the cult of Gorgon spread from the monastery of Gorze and would concentrate in the region between the Meuse and the Rhine.<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Prinz speaks of a 'Gorgonus-Patronizium' of Gorze that, as well as that of St. Nazarius of Lorsch, knew a

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<sup>28</sup> For the inscription, see: *Monumenta epigraphica christiana saeculo XIII antiquiora quae in Italiae finibus adhuc exstant*, Angelo Silvagni (ed.), 4 vols. (Vatican 1943), vol. 1, plate 37, 1, lines 22-3; Dolbeau, 'Un panégyrique', p. 37; for a discussion of the dating of the inscription: Boulhol, 'Richerche', pp. 123-4;

<sup>29</sup> *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, vol. 2, p. 75.

<sup>30</sup> This translation is testified of by various sources, for example the *Annales Laureshamensis*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH*, SS I (Hannover 1826), pp. 22-39, at: p. 28 and Paulus Diaconus's *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH*, SS II (Hannover 1829), pp. 260-8, at: p. 268. For a full overview of the sources, see: Boulhol, 'Richerche', p. 121, note 66, and Smith, 'Roman relics', p. 335, note 66.

<sup>31</sup> Boulhol, idem, pp. 121-4; Dolbeau, 'Un panégyrique', pp. 37-8; Gerda Heydemann, 'Heiligen aan de wandel. Martelaren uit de Romeinse catacombe *Inter duas lauros* in het Frankenrijk', in: *Millenium* 18: 1-2 (2004), pp. 3-28, at: p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Boulhol, idem, p. 121; Heydemann, idem, pp. 10-1; see also: Friedrich Prinz, 'Stadtrömisch-italische Märtyrreliquien und fränkischer Reichsadel im Maas-Moselraum', in: *Historisches Jahrbuch* 87 (1967), pp. 1-25, at: pp. 20-5.

<sup>33</sup> Dolbeau, 'Un panégyrique', pp. 43-4.

<sup>34</sup> Boulhol, 'Richerche', p. 130.

‘rasch kultischer Verbreitung’.<sup>35</sup> Boulhol points out that the cult settled itself in the area close around Gorze and characterises this first stage of diffusion of Gorgon’s cult as a ‘*espansione territoriale dell’abbazia di Gorze.*’<sup>36</sup>

In the ninth century the name Gorgon was also known in the monastery of Fulda. Hraban Maur’s metric verses on the *tituli* of Fulda’s church of St. Salvator (dedicated in 819) amongst others mentions St. Gorgon.<sup>37</sup> According to Boulhol his relics may have been received from Gorze, as in Hraban Maur’s verse Gorgon is mentioned together with the martyrs Nazarius and Nabor. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the dedication of an altar also actually meant that the relics of the saint mentioned were present in the altar, so we cannot at this point be certain whether his relics were actually there.<sup>38</sup>

Another spread of the cult found place with the translation of Gorgon from Rome to Marmoutier in 846. Like in the case of Gorze, this translation may have been connected with a translation of Gorgon in Rome itself by pope Gregory IV<sup>39</sup>, which may have brought Gorgon to the attention of Rainald and companions. According to Boulhol, the cult of St. Gorgon after the translation to Marmoutier mainly spread towards and in the north-west of France and had a high concentration in the region of Normandy.<sup>40</sup>

The last known important translation of Gorgon in the early medieval period was to Minden in the tenth century. There has amongst scholars been uncertainty about the origin of the relics and the precise date the relics arrived in Minden. It was thought that the relics were from Gorze, but Dolbeau shows that Minden considered the relics to have been translated

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<sup>35</sup> Prinz, ‘Märtyrreliquien’, p. 22 and note 78.

<sup>36</sup> Boulhol, ‘Recherche’, pp. 130-1.

<sup>37</sup> Boulhol, *idem*, p. 125 and note 9; Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH*, AA, Poet. lat. II (Berlin 1884), no. 41, pp. 154-258, at: p. 207.

<sup>38</sup> I thank Janneke Raaijmakers for pointing this out to me.

<sup>39</sup> Dolbeau, ‘Un panégyrique’, p. 37. And see above, note 29.

<sup>40</sup> Boulhol, ‘Recherche’, p. 132 and notes 137- 9.

from Rome, and that they arrived in Minden at the time of the consecration of the Minden cathedral in 952.<sup>41</sup>

Probably related to this translation was the tenth-century production of several new texts concerning St. Gorgon. First of all a *Passio*<sup>42</sup> was composed for the church of Minden (probably by a certain bishop Adalbert) that recounts the martyrdom of Gorgon and Dorotheus of Nicomedia.<sup>43</sup> The monastery of Gorze produced the *Translatio Miracula Gorgonii*<sup>44</sup>, partly based on Paulus Diaconus's *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, and recounts the eighth-century translation of Gorgon to Gorze; this text might have functioned as a reaction to the community of Minden who contested Gorze's claims of possessing the entire body of the martyr.<sup>45</sup>

### ***The identities of St. Gorgon***

Boulhol and Dolbeau show that the name of St. Gorgon can be found back in a variety of late antique and early medieval martyrologies (for example those of Hieronymus, Bede, Hraban Maur, Ado of Vienne and Usuard) and narrative sources. Their examination of these texts reveals an interesting mix-up of at least two different Gorgon-traditions, whereby the commemoration dates and cemeteries with which St. Gorgon was associated got confused.<sup>46</sup>

There is, for example, a tradition that placed Gorgon in the group of martyrs who belonged to the palace of Diocletian – amongst them also a certain Peter and Dorotheus - and who died for their faith in Nicomedia under this emperor's rule. This story is originally told by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but here Gorgon's martyrdom is not described.<sup>47</sup> In the martyrology of Ado of Vienne (d. 875) Gorgon is given a more prominent place: he is

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<sup>41</sup> Dolbeau, 'Un panégyrique', pp. 39-41. See also: Boulhol, 'Recherche', p. 133.

<sup>42</sup> *Passio* (BHL 3617), AASS, Sep. III, dies 9, pp. 340-2.

<sup>43</sup> Heydemann, 'Heiligen', p. 12, and see next paragraph.

<sup>44</sup> *Translatio Miracula Gorgonii* (BHL 3621), AASS, Sep. III, dies 9, pp. 343-55.

<sup>45</sup> Heydemann, 'Heiligen', pp. 12-3; Dolbeau, 'Un panégyrique', pp. 38-9; Boulhol, 'Recherche', p. 126.

<sup>46</sup> Boulhol, idem, pp. 113-20; Dolbeau, idem, pp. 43-8. See also the descriptions of the various Gorgons in the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*: see above, note 25.

<sup>47</sup> Boulhol, 'Recherche', pp. 113-4, 118-9.

taken from the group of Peter and Dorotheus commemorated at the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, and transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> of September. Ado ascribes to Gorgon the martyrdom of Petrus (as described by Eusebius) and reports the translation of Gorgon to a cemetery of the *Via Latina inter duas lauros*; this strand of the tradition would successfully spread in the medieval West, as it found its way in the widespread martyrology of Usuard (d. 877) and that of Notker of St. Gall (d. 912).<sup>48</sup>

Another tradition places Gorgon in the group of the forty martyrs who died under Sebastian of Armenia. As in the other tradition, Gorgon originally does not seem to have had an important place: the martyrologies of Bede and Ado for example incorporate the story, but do not ascribe to Gorgon the primary role.<sup>49</sup> The anonymous *Passio beati Gorgonii martiris una cum sociis numero XL* (BHL 7538d) however assigns Gorgon the most prominent place amongst the forty martyrs and invents a translation of Gorgon to Rome, to the (according to Boulhol and Dolbeau) imaginative ‘via Appia inter duas lauros iuxta ecclesiam sanctae Ceciliae virginis ab urbe Roma miliario secundo.’<sup>50</sup> This tradition would find its way in various manuscripts. Dolbeau mentions twelve witnesses of this tradition, amongst other the martyrology of Hraban Maur, and according to Boulhol, the tradition is especially recurrent in several Belgian manuscripts.<sup>51</sup>

This last tradition is also recurrent in our *Historia translationis*. In the last section of the text St. Gorgon is mentioned as one of the forty martyrs of Sebastian and connected to the cemetery of the *Via Appia*. However, according to Boulhol this last section seems to be a later addition, as it is only recurrent in the youngest Paris manuscript (BNF lat. 14650) and at no other point in the story any reference to the martyr’s death is made.<sup>52</sup> It can therefore not be

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<sup>48</sup> Dolbeau, ‘Un panégyrique’, pp. 43-5; Boulhol, idem, pp. 118 -9; Heydemann, ‘Heiligen’, p. 12.

<sup>49</sup> Dolbeau, idem, p. 45.

<sup>50</sup> Boulhol, ‘Recherche’, p. 111; Dolbeau, ‘Un panégyrique’, p. 46.

<sup>51</sup> Dolbeau, idem, pp. 46-7; Boulhol, idem, p. 135.

<sup>52</sup> Dolbeau, ‘Un panégyrique’, pp. 46-7 and note 50.

assumed that the ninth-century community of Marmoutier was acquainted with this particular tradition.

The *dies natalis* by which a saint may be identified is not mentioned in the story either. Martène - and Boulhol follows him in this - states that the *dies natalis* was celebrated on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, but it is not clear on what basis he states this.<sup>53</sup> The Sacramentary of Marmoutier composed in the time of abbot Rainald (abbot of Marmoutier from 843 to at least 846) has a Marmoutier-supplement (Décreaux calls it the ‘propre de Marmoutier’) that contains a liturgical text related to the feast day of Gorgon on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September.<sup>54</sup> This might suggest that the feast of Gorgon was not celebrated on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, but on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, maybe in the earlier mentioned influential tradition of Ado of Vienne<sup>55</sup>, or (as the story itself does not seem to know anything about Gorgon’s identity) according to the martyrology of Jerome.<sup>56</sup> On basis of eighth- and ninth-century sacramentaries Thomas Michels observes that the 9<sup>th</sup> of September as Gorgon’s commemoration day was also celebrated in Tours itself, and in Gellone, Autun, Reims, Corbie, Amiens, and St. Amand.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, all these sacramentaries mention St. Gorgon at or in any case around the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, but the occurrence of his name in these sources is not directly proof of his commemoration. It is in any case an indication that a tradition associating St. Gorgon with the 9<sup>th</sup> of September had spread towards a wide range of places in the Carolingian empire.

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<sup>53</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, p. 172; Boulhol, ‘Recherche’, pp. 131-2.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Décreaux, *Le sacramentaire de Marmoutier (Autun 19bis) dans l’histoire des sacramentaires carolingiens du IXe siècle*, 2 vols. (rev. by Victor Saxer) *Studi di Antichità Cristiana* 38 (Vatican 1985), vol. 2, p. 767.

<sup>55</sup> See above, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Boulhol, ‘Recherche’, p. 109.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Michels, ‘La date du couronnement de Charles-le-Chauve (9 sept. 869) et le culte liturgique de S. Gorgon à Metz’, in: *Revue Bénédictine* 51 (1939), pp. 288-9, at: p. 288, note 3; St. Gorgon’s *dies natalis* can indeed be found in the missals and sacramentaries of these places as collected in by Leroquais: Victor Leroquais, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, 3 vols. (Paris 1924), vol. 1.

Although the *Historia translationis* does not testify of any acquaintance with the history of the martyr and his commemoration in Rome or elsewhere, the spread of Gorgon's cult around Gorze spread Gorgon's name and fame far beyond the Rhine. To join in Gorgon's fame may have been a motive for Rainald and his companions to choose St. Gorgon as their new patron. Gorgon was in any case later in the ninth century a saint of certain importance, as he became associated with king Charles the Bald. Charles's ordination as king in 869 took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, the commemoration day of St. Gorgon at Metz, and Gorgon's name can be found back in the *ordo* of this coronation day.<sup>58</sup>

I believe, however, that St. Gorgon's link with and status in Rome was the most important motive in Rainald's choice for St. Gorgon. The fact that some years before Gorgon's translation to Marmoutier pope Gregory IV transferred St. Gorgon to the church of St. Peter might have provided enough reason for Rainald to choose this martyr as Marmoutier's new saint. As Heydemann points out, the coincidence of a translation in Rome and a translation to the north may be a result of the pope's wish to strengthen the connection between Rome and the Carolingian empire, and we should not neglect the possibility that, although the *Historia translationis* does not mention this, the pope himself provided Rainald with the relics of St. Gorgon.<sup>59</sup> Likewise, the monks of Marmoutier would have seen much profit in accepting a Roman martyr who had recently been promoted to the church of St. Peter in Rome, as this promotion would have made Gorgon even more prestigious. In the discussion that follows it will in any case become clear that, according to the *Historia translationis*, it was the Roman identity of St. Gorgon that really mattered for the community.

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<sup>58</sup> *MGH*, Capit. II, no. 302, pp. 456-8, at: p. 457; Michels, 'La date du couronnement', pp. 288-9; Boulhol, 'Recherche', pp. 128-9.

<sup>59</sup> Heydemann, 'Heiligen', p. 10; that the pope provided the relics is in any case assumed by Martène: Martène, *Histoire*, p. 169.

### ***1.2 St. Gorgon's translation to Marmoutier: a discussion of the text***

The translation of relics has been recorded in many forms. Sometimes it only entails a brief mention in the annals that a translation took place, or the story is incorporated in a saint's *vita* or *passio*.<sup>60</sup> Another type of recording came into being in the eighth and ninth centuries. Along with the popularity of relic translations, this period witnessed the development of a *Historia translationis* as a narrative in itself, an autonomous text that was often provided with its own prologue.<sup>61</sup> The *Historia Translationis* is such a text. Heinzelmann states that it is difficult to ascertain the intended audience for the translation stories. Before the eleventh century they were, even more than other miracle collections, probably primarily meant for a small circle of people (such as the religious community herself), for private reading and instruction, but Heinzelmann also mentions evidence that these kind of texts were meant to reach a wider audience, for example when they were read during the meals of important visitors of the monastery.<sup>62</sup>

Below I wish to start with an examination of the *Historia Translationis*, providing an overview of its contents and commenting on its main features. Most attention will be paid to the passage describing St. Gorgon's arrival and reception in Marmoutier. Here the author gives a detailed description of how and why the martyr was received in the community, which is permeated with a strong awareness of Gorgon's importance for Marmoutier. The discussion of this passage will raise interesting questions about the function of St. Gorgon in his new environment.

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<sup>60</sup> Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, p. 55, 94.

<sup>61</sup> Heinzelmann, *idem*, p. 94; Geary also discussed the features and functions of translation stories: Geary, *Furta sacra*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>62</sup> Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, pp. 116-8.



### *The structure and some characteristics of the text*

The quote at the beginning of the introduction forms the beginning of the story, but is preceded by a prologue, where the author makes his intentions clear.<sup>63</sup> He has recorded the story in order to make visible the deeds and virtues of the saint that are worked through him by God.<sup>64</sup> He also points out that his work covers only a small amount of the many deeds the saint has worked, as his fame is spread across the west (*fama pretiosissimi Gorgonii martyris in Occidentibus partibus usqueque diffunditur*) and his virtues are noticed by many.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, he had wanted to write some of them down, having been witness of most of them (*nobis praesentibus*), so that at least some of the miracles would not be lost to memory.<sup>66</sup>

The author begins his story with the expedition setting off for Rome, without making any reference to the consent given for this by someone of authority. He only mentions that the abbot Rainald of Marmoutier, together with a group of clergyman, went to Rome in order to pray there, and if possible, to take with him the relics of a Roman martyr for Marmoutier. Here the *Historia translationis* is different from those translation stories where the consent of a bishop or king is explicitly mentioned.<sup>67</sup> The author seems to be hinting at a certain new construction in Marmoutier – although his formulation is very vague and does leave room for interpretation - which could mean that relics were required for the dedication of a new church. First the author mentions the erection of the monastery by St. Martin, who had built the monastery from its very foundations (*monasterium S. Martini, quod ipse praetiosissimus*

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<sup>63</sup> The prologue shows some similarities with the prologue of the *Vita Germani*, (bishop of Auxerre (d. 448)): Constantius, *Vita Germani episcopi Autissiodorensis*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH, SSRM VII* (Hannover/Leipzig 1920), pp. 225-83, at: p. 249.

<sup>64</sup> For other prologues, describing similar aims: Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>65</sup> This might be an indication that St. Gorgon's cult had already spread in the West. He might be referring to pre-existing cults at, for example, the monastery of Gorze. The reference to the fame of St. Gorgon could also be referring to the popularity of the cult as it had developed at Marmoutier, which would mean the text has been written a considerable period after Gorgon's arrival.

<sup>66</sup> Heinzelmann also comments on this feature of translation stories: Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>67</sup> Heinzelmann, *idem*, pp. 58-9.

*Confessor Christi a nouo fundamento summopere ædificauit*). The next sentence again refers to a certain new construction, stating that after the festivities of St. Martin ‘in the aforementioned place newly constructed’ the abbot had left for Rome with his men (*et ordinante Deo festiuitate ipsius S. Martini in loco prædicto nouiter constructo celebrata, iam dictus Abba cum suis Clericis Romam perrexit*). As it is rather curious to call a fourth-century monastery a newly-built place the author here probably refers to recent building activities or restorations in Marmoutier. First, a connection between the translation and the dedication of a church a feature recurrent in most of the translation stories.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, as Lelong points out, there are certain other indications, such as a charter from the year 846 that testifies to restorations plans for the oratory of the Virgin in Marmoutier, that make it plausible certain material restorations took place in this period. I will discuss this more fully later.<sup>69</sup>

The author continues by describing the search for relics in Rome. Interestingly enough, whereas the author did not bother to give any sign of authorisation by either bishop or king, he is concerned with the authority of God and Rome. It is with their permission and consent that the churches of Rome were searched and the relics of St. Gorgon retrieved (*si Dominus permitteret, et Romana seu Apostolica potestas sineret, corpus alicuius Martyris Christi ad memoratum monasterium S. Martini [...] secum deferret*). The reference to Rome’s authority here functions as one of the important elements of the author’s justification of Gorgon’s translation, and, as I will show later, becomes even more emphasised in the description of Gorgon’s arrival in Marmoutier.

After the relics were successfully retrieved, the expedition left Rome together with St. Gorgon. At this moment a new phase in the story is reached, namely the description of Gorgon’s journey from Rome to Marmoutier, which forms the largest part of the story. It

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<sup>68</sup> Heinzelmann, *idem*, p. 52.

<sup>69</sup> Lelong, *L’abbaye*, pp. 24-5; for the charter, see: *Ann. OSB*, vol. 2, appendix, no. 66, pp. 694-5; I will discuss this charter later: see below, pp. 75-6. I also thank my fellow students of the Latin tutorial class, Dorine van Espelo, Erik Goosmann, Pim Nusselder and Bart Selten for their suggestions concerning this passage.

recounts how the expedition passed through various cities and villages, where the martyr worked many healing miracles and hereby showed his consent with being transported to a new home.<sup>70</sup> Most of these miracles entail the healing of the sick. St. Gorgon cures people with paralysed or contracted limbs, those who are blind, deaf, mute (even a combination of the three), those with a heavy flue or suffer from kidney pain, and he frees those possessed by a demon. The emphasis on healing miracles is, according to Hedwig Röckelein, typical for translation stories.<sup>71</sup> Similar healing miracles can for example be found in the *translatio* of St. Vit, as Anne van Landschoot shows.<sup>72</sup>

Map 1 in the appendix provides an overview of the places mentioned in the *Historia translationis* and the route the expedition may have followed on their way back to Marmoutier. It is remarkable that the places mentioned have a relative high density in northern Italy. In between Rome and after the crossing of the Alps, fewer villages are mentioned. Röckelein states that the clustering of miracles, whereby at certain stages no miracles are done, while at other stages the miracle density is very high, is a general feature of translation stories. She gives examples of stories where the closer the saint gets to his final destination, the faster the miracles follow each other up, or where the saint only begins to work miracles at the moment the expedition arrives on familiar grounds, or where the saint at particular places refrains from doing miracles so as not to draw any attention. This specific timing and placing of miracles has, according to Röckelein, a special meaning. She mentions for example certain miracles that take place on feast days of important saints and others that are performed at places that belong to the property of the monastery where the saint is

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<sup>70</sup> Heinzlmann, *Translationsberichte*, p. 63; Anne van Landschoot, 'La translation des reliques de saint Vit de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à celle de Corvey en 836', in: *Révue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 74 (1996), pp. 593-632, at: p. 609. About miracles during the journey as a result of the saint being approachable for the lay people, Röckelein, 'Über Hagio-Geo-Graphien', p. 167.

<sup>71</sup> Hedwig Röckelein, 'Über Hagio-Geo-Graphien. Mirakel in Translationsberichten des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts', in: Martin Heinzlmann, Klaus Herbers, and Dieter R. Bauer (republ.), *Mirakel im Mittelalter. Konzeptionen, Erscheinungsformen, Deutungen* (Stuttgart 2002), pp. 166-79, at: p. 167.

<sup>72</sup> Van Landschoot, 'La translation', pp. 606-9. There are only two non-healing miracles during the journey, namely the sudden lighting of the candles on St. Gorgon's bier, another recurrent miracle in translation stories: Röckelein, 'Über Hagio-Geo-Graphien', pp. 169-70.

transferred to.<sup>73</sup> These aspects might also play a role in our *Historia Translationis*. The miracles worked at Pavia for example, might be related to the fact that St. Martin of Tours had certain possessions there, granted to them by Charlemagne in 744.<sup>74</sup> Maybe Marmoutier and St. Martin had several other connections with this region which the author through the miracles of St. Gorgon may have wanted to strengthen and underline. The low density of placenames after the crossing of the Alps may be related to the fight between the brothers Charles the Bald and Lothar in the 840s and 850s.<sup>75</sup> The expedition may not have wanted to draw attention when travelling through dangerous and disputed territories.<sup>76</sup>

The Italian places they pass by in northern Italy, namely Piacenza, Pavia, Vercelli and Aoste, reveal a route almost similar to the medieval pilgrim route via Piacenza, Vercelli and Ivrea (the city between Vercelli and Aoste) as mentioned and provided on a map in the article of Simon Young<sup>77</sup> From Piacenza they probably followed one of the two St. Bernard passes, as mentioned by Raymond Chevallier in his work on Roman roads.<sup>78</sup> The author, by mentioning the various Italian cities and villages, may have wanted to show his acquaintance with this pilgrim route or to stress the pilgrimage character of the expedition.

The marking of place and time is a specific feature of translation stories.<sup>79</sup> The linking of the miracles to specific places (and persons) and the embedding of the story in a certain timeframe may all help to strengthen the credibility of the story, but also functions to underline the saint's power: through his miracles the saint leaves behind a clear trail of his power in time and space. This would not only spread the fame of the saint along the way, but

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<sup>73</sup> Röckelein, idem, pp. 177-9.

<sup>74</sup> *PL*, vol. 97, Carolus Magnus, B,1, no. 17, pp. 931-2; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 186 and note 46.

<sup>75</sup> I will discuss this in chapter two.

<sup>76</sup> See below, pp. 63-72.

<sup>77</sup> Simon Young, 'Donatus, bishop of Fiesole 829-76, and the cult of St. Birgit in Italy', in: Patrick, Sims-Williams (ed.), *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 35 (1998), pp. 13-26, at: pp. 23-5; see also the notes to Map 1 in the appendix, pp. 66-7.

<sup>78</sup> Raymond Chevallier, *Roman roads* (transl. by N.H. Field) (Berkely/Los Angeles 1976), pp. 132-9, and 160-66; and for his comment on medieval uses of Roman roads: p. 170.

<sup>79</sup> Heinzemann, *Translationsberichte*, pp. 56-8.

would also be excellent propaganda for the monastery where the saint would eventually be settled.<sup>80</sup> Good examples of this kind of propaganda are the healing of Eva, the abbess Agia in Pavia<sup>81</sup>, and the miracles taking place near the monastery of St. Maximin near Orléans. By healing people at these particular places St. Gorgon showed that he is as powerful as or even more powerful than the saints already present there. Thus the description of Gorgon's journey provides the author with the opportunity to place St. Gorgon and Marmoutier literally and metaphorically on the map.

Another function of the miracles can be observed at the beginning of the journey. Interestingly enough, the first miracles St. Gorgon performs as soon as he had left Rome were all related to members of the community of St. Martin, either that of Marmoutier, or that of Tours. First, Gorgon cured a horse that belonged to the chief-cupbearer of abbot Rainald. Then, he healed a certain monk Garnerius, who suffered from a quartan fever. After that, a certain priest Gerbertus, explicitly mentioned as 'the one from Tours' (*qui Turonis*)<sup>82</sup>, was healed from a heavy weakness, and following on that, Irmgardus, mentioned as the priest of Marmoutier, was cured from a heavy gout. Hence the first miracles performed by St. Gorgon on his journey to Marmoutier entailed an interaction between him and the members of both religious communities of Tours.<sup>83</sup>

After these healing miracles, another person is cured who does not seem to have been a member of either of St. Martin's communities, but nevertheless travelled along with the

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<sup>80</sup> Heinzelmann also speaks about a 'Verbindung der Translation in Bewusstsein der Zeitgenossen mit einem zeitlich genau fixierten Augenblick', and underlines this with the fact that in certain cases the happening became recorded in for example contemporary annals and charters, Heinzelmann, *idem*, pp. 57-8; Van Landschoot, 'La translation', p. 606.

<sup>81</sup> Agia is corrected as Asia in the edition of Mabillon: *Historia translationis*, *AASS OSB* vol. 5, p. 594; Asia was abbess of the monastery St. Maria Theodota. She is mentioned as abbess in at least four charters issued by Lothar I concerning privileges and property of this monastery, the oldest one issued in Pavia in 833, the most recent in Aachen in 841: *MGH*, *DDLol/LoII*, no. 12, p. 76, and no. 59, p. 165. She is again mentioned as abbess of this monastery in a charter issued by Louis II in Benevento in 871: *MGH*, *DDLII*, no. 52, p. 170.

<sup>82</sup> The addition *qui Turonis* could be just the priest's nickname and not be an indication that he was part of the community of St. Martin of Tours. This seems however less likely considering the fact that after this miracle another priest is explicitly said to be from Marmoutier.

<sup>83</sup> For more comments on the relation between the two monasteries of St. Martin, see below, pp. 39-41, 54-8.

expedition. Milo, a *vicarius* of the *oppidus Bridacensis* was unable to walk or to ride his horse because he suffered from kidney pain. After having prayed to St. Gorgon he was cured and is said to have continued the journey together with his companions (*comitibus*) Regrettably I was not able to determine the identity of this man or his *oppidus*. The man may be related to the ninth-century Milo's who fulfilled the office of count of Langres, a region that belonged to Charles the Bald's territory.<sup>84</sup>

In any case, Gorgon's first miracles were specifically performed for the benefit of the people who took part in the translation. In this sense these miracles seem also to have had the purpose of averting any delay of the expedition: a fainting horse, a dying priest (Gerbertus explicitly asks his companions to find him a place to die), and a priest with gout would certainly have delayed the journey home. Gorgon's intervention thus not only showed his consent and personal concern with the communities, but also testified of his active participation in the expedition and his eagerness to be brought to his new home.

### ***The apotheosis: St. Gorgon's arrival in Marmoutier***

The arrival of St. Gorgon at the monastery of Marmoutier forms the apotheosis of the story: after a long journey the saint reached his final resting place, the monastery of Marmoutier.<sup>85</sup> With the arrival, the author changes the focus and style of his narrative. Where in the earlier parts of his story the author was concerned with enumerating the many miracles, underlining

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<sup>84</sup> There are various references to a Milo in the Carolingian empire in the ninth century, but these cannot be definitely linked to this *vicarius* of *Bridacensis*. The family of 'Milo's' in the ninth century often held the county of Langres, that belonged to the territory of Charles the Bald: Louis Dupraz, 'Le capitulaire de Lothaire I, empereur, *De expeditione contra Sarracenos facienda* et la Suisse romande (847)', in: *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Geschichte* 16 (1936), pp. 241-93, at: p. 278; for a genealogy of the Milo's and their offices in the ninth century see: Maurice Chaume, *Les origines du Duché de Bourgogne*, 4 vols (repr. of 1925-37 edition; Aalen 1977), vol 1: *Histoire politique*, pp. 538-9; in one of Charles the Bald's charters a certain Milo is named as his *fidelis* and given certain properties in the southern Francia: *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 15, p. 38. the *Capitulare missorum Silvacense* of 853 mentions a certain county of Milo (*comitatibus Milonis*), with the bishop Teutboldus of Langres and Ionas of Autun as *missi*: *MGH*, Capit. II, p. 267; the Annals of St. Bertin also mention a count Milo: *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH*, SS I (Hannover 1826), pp. 419-516, at: p. 468.

<sup>85</sup> There is no mentioning of an *occursus* – a large crowd of people flocking together to receive the saint - taking place. The author may have wanted to turn the attention directly to the saint's arrival at Marmoutier. About the *occursus* as a common feature in translatio stories: Heinzelman, *Translationsberichte*, p. 75.

the martyr's power and Gorgon's approval with his transfer, now the focus shifts to the exact proceedings of the placing of the martyr in his new environment. At this point, Gorgon is no longer the one who decided, acted and approved, but the one who was to be approved and decided over, first of all by the community of Marmoutier's saints. Gorgon was first placed in the centre of the monastery's church, with the intervention of St. John the Baptist and the permission of St. Peter the apostle:

So, God willing, the most blessed martyr of Christ was transported with the highest honour and reverence to the monastery of St. Martin, that is called Maius, and he was placed in the centre of the church, where through the intervention of John the Baptist, who in the church of the Lateran, which is inside the walls of the Roman city, is venerated and worshipped, and above this [place where the relics were placed?] we embellished [it], and with the permission of the blessed apostle Peter, he was placed [or: introduced] in the vigils of St. Martin on the fifth none of July [3 July], of whom through the love and consultation of God it was received that he should not be taken away from there earlier than the first none of this same month [6 July].<sup>86</sup>

Although it is not explicitly stated, the church in which Gorgon was placed was most likely the basilica dedicated to St. John the Baptist, built and consecrated by bishop Volusian of Tours at the end of the fifth century.<sup>87</sup> It is this saint who now had to intervene for Gorgon's first entrance and temporary place in the church. After the intervention of St. John, it is with

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<sup>86</sup> 'Igitur Domino favente, ad monasterium S. Martini, quod vocatur Maius, beatissimus Christi Martyr cum summo honore ac reverentia deportatus est, atque in medio ecclesiae gremio positus est, ubi interveniente Ioanne Baptista, quem in Lateranensi ecclesia, quae intra mœnia Romanæ civitatis veneratur & colitur, super hoc exornavimus, & B[eato/eatissimo] Petro Apostolo permittente, in vigilia S. Martini missus est quinto Nonas Iulii, cuius dilectio a Deo & deliberatio habebatur, ut non antea illuc deferretur, quam pridie Nonas eiusdem mensis.', *AASS*, Mar. II, dies 11, p. 58, col. b.

<sup>87</sup> Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 16; Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum* X, X, 31, 7, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH*, *SSRM* I,1 (Hannover 1937), p. 531.

the help of St. Peter, one of the other saints of Marmoutier<sup>88</sup> and through God's will that during the vigils of St. Martin the community by God informed about the time of Gorgon's removal from the church to his new resting place.<sup>89</sup>

It is interesting to see how at this important moment the Apostolic Roman power once again showed its approval. Peter the apostle, regarded as the first bishop of Rome, is naturally the ultimate representative of the Roman Apostolic See, but John the Baptist's Roman status is also emphasised, as the author directly links him the prestigious church of St. John, located next to the Lateran palace in Rome. This church (commonly known as the St. Giovanni in Laterano), built by emperor Constantine, was the cathedral of the pope and from Late Antiquity on, throughout the early and high middle ages, was the centre of the Roman Church and the symbol of papal power.<sup>90</sup> By mentioning St. John the Baptist's veneration at the Lateran palace, the author thus emphasises this saint's Romanness and the Apostolic power he represents. Thus, just as at the beginning of the journey, the approval of Rome is referred to, but is now directly linked to Marmoutier. The two top-class saints Peter and John seem to have functioned as Roman ambassadors in Marmoutier to confirm that the *translatio* was now fully transacted. At both sides of the journey the new resting place of Gorgon has received the Roman stamp of approval. Furthermore, the emphasis on Rome's approval can also be seen as a confirmation of the martyr's Roman origin and identity.

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<sup>88</sup> St. Martin built and consecrated a church in Marmoutier to the saints Peter and Paul: Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 17, referring to: Gregory of Tours, idem, X, 31, 3, in: *MGH, SSRM I*, 1, p. 527.

<sup>89</sup> Later in the text the author comments upon St. Gorgon's eventual transfer to another resting place, see below, pp. 33-4 and note 115. The idea that the relics were first placed in another church, where vigils would be held in preparation of the final *depositio*, can be traced back to the seventh-century *Ordo* of St. Amand: Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, p. 52.

<sup>90</sup> Walther Buchowiecki, *Handbuch der Kirchen Roms. Der Römische Sakralbau in Geschichte und Kunst von der altchristlichen Zeit bis zur Gegenwart*, 3 vols. (Wien 1967-74), in: vol. 1, p. 61. Buchowiecki here states that the S. Giovanni in Laterano was in the Early- and High Middle Ages 'Symbol und Repräsentant päpstlicher Macht und Weltpolitik.' The church was dedicated to the Saviour, but also to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist: Roloff Beny and Peter Gunn, *The churches of Rome* (London 1981), p. 42. For an overview of the ninth-century popes arranging new building activities at the S. Giovanni in Laterano: Peter Cornelius Claussen, *Die Kirchen der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter 1050-1300*, vol. 2: S. Giovanni in Laterano. *Corpus cosmatorum II*, 2 (Stuttgart 2008), p. 29.



During the vigils of St. Martin on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July it was made known that the martyr Gorgon was not to be moved from the church before the 6<sup>th</sup> of July. In this short period Gorgon's relics would have been on display for all those present in the monastery's church. This arrangement perfectly coincided - not accidentally - with the celebrations on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the feast day of St. Martin's ordination as bishop and his translation to a new church in Tours.<sup>91</sup> The author himself makes an allusion to this, stating that:

but because we believe that this is done through the will of God, so that where he has to be buried, and venerated and in eternity remain, cannot be changed, but that on the feast day of the most precious confessor of Christ, by whom he had to be united [with the community]<sup>92</sup>, it would happen that it would be clear to all, that it pleases him to stay [there] in eternity.<sup>93</sup>

Here it is made clear that it was necessary to publicly present St. Gorgon on the feast day of St. Martin so that all could witness St. Gorgon's wish to stay forever and that this wish was also approved of by St. Martin himself.<sup>94</sup> Here the phrasing 'cui sociandus erat', which I

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<sup>91</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, p. 23; Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, p. 52, note 31, referring to: Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum*, II, 14, *MGH*, *SSRM* I,1, pp. 63-4. See also: idem, X, 31, pp. 529-31. According to Gregory, it was bishop Perpetuus (c. 460-490) who arranged the celebrations of the fourth of July, in celebration of the translation of St. Martin to the new-built church, and in commemoration of St. Martin's ordination as bishop.

<sup>92</sup> 'socio, -are' has various meanings, all related to uniting or associating oneself with something or someone. Blaise Patristic also gives the meaning (when the word is combined with 'ecclesia' or 'communio') of entering the church as a member or making part of a community, which would perfectly fit in this specific context. Blaise Medieval also gives the following meanings: to allocate or allot something ('attribuer'), or to appropriate (sibi socio: s'approprier). See: Blaise, A., *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (1967), and Blaise, A., *Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi* (1975), both consulted online in the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (produced by the Centre *Traditio litterarum occidentalum*, Turnhout 2005 – present), of the Brepolis Database (Turnhout 2002-2009, Brepols Publishers NV), at: [http://www.brepolis.net.proxy.library.uu.nl/BRP\\_Info\\_En.html](http://www.brepolis.net.proxy.library.uu.nl/BRP_Info_En.html).

<sup>93</sup> 'Sed quia id [that is, that St. Gorgon is not to be moved before 6 July] nutu Dei factum esse credimus, vt vbi sepeliendus & venerandus seu in perpetuum permanendus erat, mutari non potuit, quin diem festiuitatis pretiosissimi confessoris Christi, cui sociandus erat, praeueniret, vt cunctis appareret, vbi ei in perpetuum manere placeret.', *AASS, Mar.* II, dies 11, p. 58, col. b.

<sup>94</sup> The author portrays St. Martin as a key element in the proceedings: it is this saint who is responsible for the integration of St. Gorgon in the community. This is a very interesting formulation, as it gives some insight in how exactly a new saint could be incorporated into a community that already had a powerful saint. I will return to this in chapter three, see below, pp. 75-9.

translated as ‘by whom he had to be united’, may not only indicate a link between St. Gorgon and the community, but may possibly also be translated as ‘with whom he had to be united’, and would then resonate a special bond between St. Martin and the newly acquired saint.<sup>95</sup> In any case, the making public of St. Gorgon is necessary not only to make known that a new saint has been acquired, but also to underline the irrevocable link between the saint and the monastery of Marmoutier.

The time of St. Gorgon’s relocation being determined, it had also to be decided where *exactly* he was to be placed. First, the author once again evokes the Roman authority and the approval of Marmoutier’s saint St. Martin: it is through the prince of the Apostles (*de medio Principum Apostolorum*) that Gorgon, of his own free will (*sponte*), was taken from his former resting place – that is, Rome – and was now worthy to be buried next to St. Martin (*iuxta summum Confessorem Christi*). Here, the author does not refer to the resting place of St. Martin in Marmoutier, as her founder’s relics were kept safe in the basilica of the community of St. Martin in Tours.<sup>96</sup> The author specifies:

namely in that place, where the appearance of the blessed mother of God and Virgin Mary, thanks to her visit to this same confessor of Christ, is up till present venerated and [where], in entourage<sup>97</sup> of the apostles Peter and Paul and the saints Agnes and Thecla, this visitation and conversation is commemorated, [it is here that] the body of the most precious martyr is buried.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> For the translation of ‘socio’ with a dative: Forcellini, ‘socio, -are’, 1b: Forcellini, E., Furlanetto, G. Corradini, Fr., and Perin, J., *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis* (1771-1940), as consulted online in the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (produced by the Centre *Traditio litterarum occidentalum*, Turnhout 2005 – present), of the Brepolis Database, for a full reference, see note 92.

<sup>96</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, p. 14.

<sup>97</sup> *Obsequium* can also mean compliance or obedience, but ‘entourage’ is more logical in the context of this sentence, see: Blaise Patristic, for a full reference to this dictionary, see note 92.

<sup>98</sup> ‘in loco scilicet, vbi aduentus B[eatus] Dei Genitricis & Virginis Mariæ visitandi gratia eundem Christi Confessorem vsque in præsens veneratur & in obsequio Apostolorum Petri & Pauli & SS. Virginum Agnetis & Theclæ eadem visitatio & collocutio recolitur, corpus pretiosissimi Martyris humaretur.’, *AASS*, Mar. II, dies 11, p. 58, coll. b-c.

The author here refers to the place where the visitation of St. Martin by Mary, the apostles Peter and Paul and the saints Agnes and Thecla was being commemorated. This story is not recorded by Sulpicius Severus, but is in any case commented on by Alcuin in his work on the life of St. Martin.<sup>99</sup> As I will show in chapter three, there is a charter from this period that shows that an oratory of the Virgin Mary did indeed exist in Marmoutier. It was founded by St. Martin himself and was a sort of crypt inside the monastery near the walls.<sup>100</sup> It is likely that this place where St. Martin was visited and where he had held conversations with the saints was used as a substitute for the relics of St. Martin. It was in any case decided that next to this important place of commemoration St. Gorgon was to be buried.

After having made clear the time and place of Gorgon's *depositio*, the author for the first time directly elucidates the intentions that were behind the *translatio* in the first place, as he continues:

‘so that the place as well as the worship [or: the religious life of the monastery] through him were worthy to be restored in whatever it lacked; because at the place from where he was carried away, such a promise was made, and for that reason it was, through the intervention of the blessed Martinus, so easily achieved.’<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> ‘Idem quoque sanctus Martinus cadens per gradus, graviter pene totus attritus membris, nocte ab angelo ad integram recreatus est sanitatem: saepiusque angelicis visitationibus et familiari locutione fruebatur. Quodam vero die beatissimae Genitricis Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli; nec non sanctarum virginum Theclae et Agnetis visitatione vir Dei honoratus et confortatus est.’ Alcuin, *Opusculum primum scriptum de vita s. Martini Turonensis*, c. VIII, in: *PL*, vol. 101, pp. 657-64, at: p 661, coll. a-b.

<sup>100</sup> We know this from a charter from 846 concerning the restoration at the oratory of the Virgin: *An.OSB*, vol. 2, appendix, no. 66, pp. 694-5. This charter will be discussed in chapter three. See also Lelong's discussion of the chapel of the Virgin Mary in Marmoutier: Lelong, *L'abbaye*, pp. 17, 25.

<sup>101</sup> ‘ut et locus et religio per eum in quibuscumque indigebat, redintegrari mereretur; quia in loco, unde allatus est, talis fuit promissio, & ideo interueniente B[eato] Martino tam facilis fuit impetratio.’ *AASS*, Mar. II, dies 11, p. 58, col. c.

According to the author, the the monastery and her religious life were in want of certain things. Remembering that the acquisition of a new saint could result in a new flow of pilgrims and donations, and a boost of monastic prestige, these may have been some of the things the author had in mind when talking about restoration; both Lelong and Martène in any case interpret this passage as a need for new incomes and resources.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, a new flow of incomes would – in an ideal world - mean a growing independency of the monastic community, increasing the monastic isolation and thereby the quality of the monks' prayers. In any case, the author emphasises that it was on the condition of restoration that Gorgon had succesfully been taken along. The mentioning of the promise being made not only fits into the author's earlier efforts to justify St. Gorgon's translation to Marmoutier and to bind the martyr to his new and eternal home, but also functions to relate St. Gorgon directly to the restoration the community was in need of.

Having stated the terms and conditions of Gorgon's *depositio* the author suddenly changes his tone, and warns all those who dare to remove St. Gorgon from his place:

‘So that he is not, God forbid, concealed in a lower place, where by a succession of heirs he is made to go away [or: is succeeded] <sup>103</sup>; may it happen to them who might do or might assent to this, what the prophet in the Psalms imposes, saying about those, who have said: ‘Let us as inheritance take possession of the sanctuary of God; my God, place them like a wheel and like a reed before the face of the wind; like a fire, that destroys the forest, and like a flame destroying mountains, may you so persecute them in your storm, and disturb them in your anger; fill their faces with dishonour, and

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<sup>102</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, p. 169; Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 24-5 and note 79.

<sup>103</sup> Here, the term ‘succederetur’ is used. This may not exactly mean that ‘he is succeeded’, but may be read in the stronger sense of ‘he is made to go away’, or ‘is withdrawn’, or even stronger: ‘is made to disappear, pass away, die’. See for example the definition of Du Cange: ‘cedere’, ‘abire’: Fresne, C. du (‘Du Cange’), *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (1883-1887), as consulted online in the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (produced by the Centre *Traditio litterarum occidentalum*, Turnhout 2005 – present), of the Brepolis Database, for a full reference, see note 92; I thank Charles West for pointing out to me the possible various meanings of this word.

may they seek your name, Lord. May they blush from shame and may they be dismayed for ever, and be ruined and pass away, forever, etc.’<sup>104</sup>

The author uses the last verses of psalm 82 to make clear that those who move Gorgon’s relics to another place are similar to people who take possession of God’s sanctuary (or in other words, steal from God) and will suffer His wrath. Here it becomes clear that the author wanted to secure St. Gorgon against all possible future initiatives to discard St. Gorgon to an inferior place, which would mean that he would lose his important position next to St. Martin, maybe even being substituted for another saint.<sup>105</sup> It appears the author once again found a way to underline the importance of St. Gorgon for Marmoutier.

The use of the psalm in this passage is interesting. The book of Psalms was in the monastic milieu an important source for maledictions. Certain psalm verses, such as the one employed by our author, were used to protect a monastery against unlawful intrusions and robbery of her property. Did the author specifically want to resonate this protective and maledictory function, and hereby give an extra undertone to St. Gorgon’s installation in Marmoutier?

### ***The malediction of psalm 82***

There are many examples of monastic communities struggling to defend their rights of possessing particular relics. In order to protect and justify their claims on a saint’s body it was necessary to emphasise that it was the saint’s wish to be translated, and that it was not the community, but the saint himself who had chosen this monastery as his new home. A good

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<sup>104</sup> ‘ne forte, quod absit, infimo reconderetur in loco, ubi per successiones haeredum succederetur, eveniret eis qui fecerint vel qui consenserint hoc, quod in Psalmo Propheta intulit, dicens de his, qui dixerunt: haereditate possideamus sanctuarium Dei, Deus meus pone illos ut rotam et sicut stipulam ante faciem venti, sicut ignis, qui comburit sylvam, et sicut flamma comburens montes, ita persequeris illos in tempestate tua, et in ira tua turbabis eos, imple facies eorum ignominia et quaerent nomen tuum, Domine, erubescant et conturbentur in seculum seculi et confundantur et pereant, et reliquia.’, *AASS*, Mar. II, dies 11, p. 58, coll. c-d.

<sup>105</sup> I thank Carine van Rhijn for suggesting this interpretation of the passage.

example of constructing such a justification can be found in the work of Adrevald of Fleury: not only does this author show that through miracles St. Benedict expressed his own will to be translated, but also acted as an active defender at a time when other parties – the monks of Monte Cassino with the help of the Archbishop of Rouen - wanted to claim his body as their own. Adrevald recounts how at the moment the party entered the church and approached the grave to take away the relics, they were struck down by a blinding light.<sup>106</sup>

Likewise, miracles could also function to show the saint's approval, as I showed in the discussion of the miracles Gorgon performed along the way to Marmoutier. What is interesting, however, is that with the description of Gorgon's arrival and integration in Marmoutier his translation is no longer justified through miracles. Instead of describing more miracles whereby the saint could have shown his approval with Marmoutier and/or God could have made known the exact place of his *depositio*<sup>107</sup> - the author deemed it more important to show that through the deliberation by a community of saints and holy authorities the terms and conditions of his placement were decided.

There are several other elements in this passage that support the idea that the author consciously resolved to describe the process of Gorgon's integration in Marmoutier in legal terms.<sup>108</sup> One of these elements is in fact the use of the malediction of psalm 82. Lester Little in his work on Benedictine maledictions shows that curses, amongst which psalms, could be employed to defend the monastery against certain threats, and were for example evoked as a

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<sup>106</sup> Adrevald of Fleury, *Miracula S. Benedicti* (BHL 1124), *PL*, vol. 124, pp. 909-948, at: p. 919, col. b; Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the cult of saints. The diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought, 4th series, 14 (Cambridge 1990), p. 142.

<sup>107</sup> Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, p. 52; Röckelein, 'Über Hagio-Geo-Graphien', pp. 172-3. Röckelein also points to the example of Einhard's saints Peter and Marcellinus: Einhard had them placed in a new-built church near Michelstadt. From the moment they are installed there, they no longer perform healing miracles; then, two doves enter and leave the church, accompanied with a voice, saying the saints need to be brought to another place. Another example where the exact burial place is indicated is described by Adrevald of Fleury: St. Benedict intervened when abbot Mummolus decided to bury him in the church of St. Peter: a storm and a flash of light coming from the church of the Virgin was a sign of God to show the abbot the right place: Head, *Hagiography*, p. 141.

<sup>108</sup> I thank Janneke Raaijmakers and Mayke de Jong for pointing out to me the charter-like elements of the passage description of St. Gorgon's arrival in Marmoutier.

liturgical clamor invoking God's help or as a maledictory formulation in charters.<sup>109</sup> In the charters they take the form of so-called 'sanction clauses', in most cases starting with the formulation 'si quis' (if someone), and meant to underline the terms set in the charter and to pose a punishment against the violation of these terms.<sup>110</sup> The use of psalm 82, directly following the terms and conditions set for Gorgon's place in Marmoutier, strongly supports the idea of the passage functioning as a legal statement.

Another legal element can be found at the end of the passage. Just as in a charter where those present as witnesses confirmed the statements in the charter with their own signature<sup>111</sup>, the author for the first time gives us the names of the local authorities that had their say in the proceedings:

Then, after the vigils were held and the Mass was celebrated, they considered, the clergymen, as well as the monks, together with Landrannus, the archbishop of the city Tours<sup>112</sup>, and Aitardus, the co-bishop of the city Nantes<sup>113</sup>, and lord Rainald, the venerable abbot of this place [Marmoutier], and Vivian, the illustrious count and rector of the monastery of St. Martin<sup>114</sup>, that temporarily he would be carried off to a public place outside the monastery's walls for the assembly of both sexes; which is done with

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<sup>109</sup> Lester K. Little, *Benedictine maledictions: liturgical cursing in romanesque France* (Ithaca 1993).

<sup>110</sup> Little, *idem*, pp. 53-4.

<sup>111</sup> These witnesses could be called upon in case of inquiries, and then the charter would work as a reminder for the witnesses themselves, Little, *idem*, pp. 52-3.

<sup>112</sup> This is Landrannus II, according to the *MGH* consecrated as bishop of Tours in November 846 (so, probably a few months before the expedition left), and bishop until February or March 851: *MGH*, Epp. Kar. IV, 1, no. 84, p. 75, note 1. According to Smith bishop in the period c. 847-50: Julia M.H. Smith, *Province and empire: Brittany and the Carolingians* (Cambridge 1992), p. 53.

<sup>113</sup> This is Actardus, bishop of Nantes; mentioned in the *MGH* as bishop of Nantes from about 840 to 870, and archbishop of Tours from 871 to 875, compare: *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 34, p. 370, note 36 (Nantes: 837 - to 879), and *MGH*, Conc. IV, no. 18, p. 166, note 13 (Nantes: 843/4 - 870, Tours: 871-75). Gams divides his episcopacy of Nantes in two periods: 843-846, 853-871: Pius Bonifacius Gams (ed.), *Series episcoporum Ecclesiae catholicae quotquot innotuerunt a beato Petro apostolo* (Regensburg 1873), vol. 1, p. 581; Smith, *Province*, p. 160 and note 53. The synodal letter of Soisson 866 mentions in direct relation to the diocese of Tours the bishop Herardus of Tours as 'Herardus Turonicus metropolitanus', and the one of Nantes as 'Nanneticus Actardus'. *MGH*, Conc. IV, no. 23, p. 218. This might suggest that the episcopate of Nantes fell in the territory of the diocese of Tours, and that in was in this condition that Actardus was as co-bishop involved in important business in Tours, such as the translation of St. Gorgon.

<sup>114</sup> For the abbacies of Rainald and Vivian, see below, pp. 59-61.

the highest honour by the priests and the Levites and the rest of the people and the crowds of clergymen; namely to [a place called] Salictus, a territory next to the walls of this monastery, until the time would arrive of his burial in the church constructed next to this same monastery, as ordered by Christ.<sup>115</sup>

It is not explicitly stated that these officials were present during the vigils when the decisions were made. Still, the fact that these people are mentioned directly after the description of terms and conditions as decided over in the vigils, makes it likely that they had indeed attended this session and that in any case the author wanted to present them as human witnesses of the proceedings.<sup>116</sup>

Of course, the comparison with a charter does have its limits as specific aspects and structural elements of a charter are not present here. It can in any be said that the author had wanted to give his description of the proceedings the air of a legal document, to record the agreement over the decisions made by all the parties involved, that is, God, the community of Marmoutier, including all its prestigious saints, the authority of Rome, the archbishop, co-bishops and abbots, and, of course, St. Gorgon himself.

However, the observation that the passage has some legal characteristics is not enough in itself. It still leaves room for the question of why the author would have wanted to describe St. Gorgon's integration in Marmoutier in this way. First, it is important to recognise the broader context of the use of curses in a monastic (or, more generally, in the ecclesiastical) milieu. In many cases, the use of a curse by a monastic community was intended to protect the

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<sup>115</sup> 'Peractis igitur vigiliis et celebratis Missis consideraverunt tam clerici quam monachi simul cum Landranno, Turonensis civitatis Archiepiscopo et Aitardo Nannetensis ecclesiae coepiscopo et domno Rainaldo eiusdem loci venerabili abbate seu Viviano illustri comite et monasterii S. Martini rectore, ut in aperto extra moenia monasterii loco pro utriusque sexus concursu ad tempus deferretur: quod cum magno honore a Sacerdotum ac Leuitarum reliquorumque populorum ac Clericorum turmis actum; in Salicto videlicet vel territorio iuxta præfata mœnia eiusdem monasterij, quousque eius tempus sepeliendi in ecclesia iuxta idem monasterium, Christo disponente, constructa euenerit.', *AASS*, Mar. II, dies 11, p. 58, col. d.

<sup>116</sup> Compare for example with Little's statements about the memory function of charters: Little, *Benedictine maledictions*, p. 52 and note 1.



monastery and its possessions against threats of unlawful intrusion and robbery. Rosenwein, in her work on immunities and exemptions, for example shows how at the council of Tours in 567 a ritual was recommended against people who continued to confiscate church property. The council stated that a convocation of abbots, priests and clerics had to chant psalm 108 and so invoke a curse over the persistent wrongdoers.<sup>117</sup> Another interesting example provided by Little is the maledictory formula of the monastery of St. Wandrill, that amongst other biblical citations includes the same passage from psalm 82.<sup>118</sup> This formula is preceded by a description of its origin history: it tells about the erection of the monastery in the seventh century, the subsequent visit to Rome, where the abbot requested the pope's confirmation of the new-built monastery and all its possessions. The pope consented to this, providing him with the relics of saints Peter and Paul and some other martyrs, and giving him 'a promise of perpetual apostolic benediction'. Furthermore, the pope provided the abbot with a papal malediction that was to be used in case 'the possessions, rights and liberties of said monastery be disturbed by troublemakers.'<sup>119</sup> According to Little, the features of the text – describing the abbot travelling to Rome and asking for the pope's confirmation, and the acquisition of Roman relics make it likely to be a ninth-century product.<sup>120</sup> If this is so, this text shows us a ninth-century monastery<sup>121</sup> that combined the acquisition of Roman relics with a list of curses, in order to underline her rights and privileges.<sup>122</sup> Might a similar idea have played a role for the monastery of Marmoutier? Could they also have wanted to give an extra protection to

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<sup>117</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating space: power, restraint, and privileges of immunity in early medieval Europe* (Ithaca 1999), p. 43.

<sup>118</sup> Little, *Benedictine maledictions*, pp. 107-8. Here, Little refers to his earlier publication on maledictions, where an edition of this malediction formula can be found: Little, Lester K., 'Formules monastiques de malédiction aux IXe et Xe siècles', in: *Révue Mabillon* 58 (1970-5), pp. 377-99. The various verses of psalm 82 are recurrent throughout the formula: pp. 392-8.

<sup>119</sup> Little, *Benedictine maledictions*, p. 108.

<sup>120</sup> Little, *idem*.

<sup>121</sup> The text was also used in later, post-Carolinian times, against enemies of the monastery: Little, 'Formules monastiques', p. 377.

<sup>122</sup> Little provides another example of the use of maledictions as a protection of a monastery, namely a formula – possibly from the ninth-century – at the end of the first Bible of St. Martial of Limoges, where the curse of psalm 82 is also quoted: Little, *idem*, pp. 377-78, 386.

their monastery through combining the prestige of a Roman martyr with the threat of a malediction?

At first sight the verses of psalm 82 seem primarily employed to protect St. Gorgon's relics. However, an examination of the use of this particular psalm passage in the ninth century reveals that it was a favourite quotation at the synods held in the 840s and 850s where secular abuse of and unlawful claims on church property was condemned, as Susan Wood also notes.<sup>123</sup> This is not to say that this malediction was not used or did not remain in vogue in later periods: Wood gives examples of the malediction also being employed in discussions concerning the church and her possession(s) in the tenth- and later centuries.<sup>124</sup> Likewise, the psalm may have continued to be used in the later ninth century as well.<sup>125</sup> Still, the fact remains that the psalm was especially popular in the mid-ninth century, just around the time of St. Gorgon's translation. Did the author here make a specific choice by not just invoking a curse as a general protection, but actually using a quote that resonates and relates to contemporary ecclesiastical debates?

The possible link with the synods of the 840s and 850s puts the questions about the intentions of the author in a new light. As said, the author places much emphasis on the irreversibility of St. Gorgon's integration and veneration in Marmoutier, expressing the importance of the relics for the community. But at the same time the author seems to link all this to the broader message of protecting church property. This raises some further questions about the actual function of St. Gorgon for the community. Might there be an interplay of different messages? Is the psalm not only relating to the protection of St. Gorgon's relics, but also referring to a broader theme of protection of monastic rights and properties? If this is so,

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<sup>123</sup> Susan Wood, *The proprietary church in the medieval West* (Oxford 2006), pp. 796-7 and note 53.

<sup>124</sup> Wood, *idem*, p. 663 and note 25, pp. 836-7, 860-1, 880, 885 (for more examples see the index at the back of Wood's publication, under the keyword 'Psalm 82'). Wood also remarks that in the twelfth century the quote was not so much used to condemn lay people stealing from the church, but to condemn lay people's claims to own the church as a whole: Wood, *idem*, p. 797.

<sup>125</sup> The *Vita S. Donati* (d. 876) also quotes this particular psalm in the context of seculars claiming property of the church, but I am not sure about the dating of this text: see below, pp. 103-4 and note 371.

what actually is St. Gorgon's role in this? As pointed out earlier, the acquisition of a new saint would mean a boosting of prestige and an improvement of protection. The new saint was to act as the new powerful patron, warding off any attempts to rob the monastery of its lands, or infringe in any of its business.<sup>126</sup> Might there be a relation between this idea of a protecting saint and the quoting of the psalm? And can this in turn be another explanation for the author's reference to the community's need to be restored in whatever she lacked?

While asking these questions, we must remember that author places much emphasis on the Roman identity of Gorgon. Apart from the last section where the saint is mentioned as one of the forty martyrs of Sebastian and which is probably a later addition<sup>127</sup>, the story does not provide any details on the actual identity of St. Gorgon than that of his Romaness. I have mentioned how much the author emphasises the Roman approval of Gorgon's translation (in Rome as well as in Marmoutier) and which seems to function to surround the martyr with a Roman aura. It is this emphasis on the Rome-factor of St. Gorgon and its importance for Marmoutier that need to be kept in mind when examining St. Gorgon's function for Marmoutier.

The psalm provides the possibility of examining the implications of the curse in relation to St. Gorgon, to explore what kind of images or themes the author may have wanted to invoke in relation to the function of the newly acquired Roman martyr. Examining some of the synods and related material that use the psalm and looking at the meaning they give to it might provide new insights and provide opportunities to compare it with similar situations in other monasteries. But before exploring the use of the psalm it is important to have a context in which to place St. Gorgon's translation. In chapter two I therefore first wish to discuss the state and status of ninth-century Marmoutier and examine her place in the political and

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<sup>126</sup> See above, pp. 5-6.

<sup>127</sup> See above, p. 15-6.

religious landscape in the mid-ninth century.

## Chapter 2: Marmoutier and Carolingian politics

### 2.1 Marmoutier's earliest history

The monastery of Marmoutier had an impressive foundation history. It was none other than St. Martin, the ‘apostle to the Gauls’<sup>128</sup> and one of the most prominent and prestigious saint in Merovingian and Carolingian periods, who laid the spiritual and material foundations of what already in Gregory of Tours’s time would be known as *Maior Monasterium*.<sup>129</sup> It was not the first community he founded. Before his appointment as bishop of Tours in 370 he had already started a community of hermits at Ligugé near Poitiers.<sup>130</sup> But even after his election as bishop of Tours he still did not give up his longing for reclusion. He combined his ecclesiastical duties with the life of a hermit in a cell near the episcopal church, and soon started a community about two kilometers from the city, at the northern bank of the Loire, which formed the beginning of what would later become Marmoutier.<sup>131</sup>

Here St. Martin lived in a cell built of wood and was followed by others who installed themselves in nearby caves. When Sulpicius Severus visited the community at the end of St. Martin’s life the group consisted of 80 disciples.<sup>132</sup> There is no indication that the community followed a specific rule of life<sup>133</sup>, but the works of Sulpicius on St. Martin (St. Martin’s *Vita* as well as his *Dialogi*) in any case portray the community as living in the style of that of the hermit communities in the Egyptian deserts. St. Martin functioned as a kind of spiritual father and each member lived in solitude in his own cell, only temporarily exchanging this isolation

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<sup>128</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, pp. 16, 21; Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi*, III, 17; II, 5, *PL*, vol. 20, pp. 183-222, at pp. 222, coll. c-d, 204, col. d – 205, col. a.

<sup>129</sup> Lelong, *L’abbaye*, p. 22; Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum*, X, 31, 3, ed. Krusch, *MGH*, SSRM. 1,1, p. 527.

<sup>130</sup> Oury, ‘À Marmoutier-lès-Tours’, p. 42.

<sup>131</sup> Lelong, *L’abbaye*, p. 14.

<sup>132</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *De Vita Beati Martini*, *PL*, vol. 20, pp. 159-76, at: p.166; Lelong, *idem*, p. 13; Oury, ‘À Marmoutier-lès-Tours’, p. 42.

<sup>133</sup> Oury, *idem*.

for the communal celebrations of the offices and the sharing of meals.<sup>134</sup> Despite its isolation from the world, a link between the community and the city of Tours was – necessarily – maintained: Oury points out that in order to survive and continue her ascetic lifestyle the community could always count on sustenance from the church of Tours.<sup>135</sup>

With St. Martin's death, the community was deprived of her leader in more than one way, as the body of St. Martin was brought to Tours and buried there. The tomb must soon have had a special attraction for Tours' bishops as Gregory tells us that St. Martin's successor Bricius had a small church erected over his tomb and that his successor Perpetuus (c. 458-88) replaced it by a bigger church.<sup>136</sup> According to Farmer it is thanks to Perpetuus's efforts that St. Martin's cult started to flower, building a bond between the relics of St. Martin and the city of Tours, something that was continued feverishly by Gregory of Tours.<sup>137</sup>

Meanwhile, St. Martin's community at the northern bank of the Loire had to do without its founder and leader as they were lacking his primary relics.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, despite the relative silence about the fate of the community throughout the fifth and sixth centuries, there are indications that the community continued to exist, became a place of pilgrimage and a direct link between the monks and the bishop of Tours was maintained. Gregory of Tours tells us that bishop Volusianus (488-496) enriched the community with a new building. Beside the pre-existing basilica built by St. Martin dedicated to St. Paul and St. Peter the community now also had a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist.<sup>139</sup> Furthermore, as Farmer points out, Paulinus describes how with the Easter celebrations, the inhabitants of Tours would go on pilgrimage to Marmoutier by boat in order to venerate the cell where St.

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<sup>134</sup> Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 14; Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', p. 43; Farmer, *Communities*, p. 21; Sulpicius Severus, *De Vita Beati Martini*, *PL*, vol. 20, pp. 159-76, at: p.166; Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi*, *PL*, vol. 20, pp. 183-222.

<sup>135</sup> Oury, *idem*, p. 43.

<sup>136</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, p. 22-23. Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum*, X, 31,6, ed. Krusch, *MGH*, *SSRM* I,1, p. 529.

<sup>137</sup> Farmer, *idem*, pp. 22 – 9.

<sup>138</sup> *Idem*, p. 16.

<sup>139</sup> Lelong states it cannot be ascertained where this basilica built by St. Martin was situated, Lelong, *L'abbaye*, pp. 16-8, 22; Gregory of Tours, *Libri Historiarum*, X, 31, 3, *MGH*, *SSRM*. 1,1, p. 527.

Martin had spend his meditative moments of praying and fasting.<sup>140</sup> Gregory of Tours himself visited the place in order to pray and to help the abbot with the instructions of the disciples.<sup>141</sup> There are indications that the religious life had taken a somewhat new form by the second half of the sixth century. Oury shows that the story of the recluse Leobardus (or Liphard) who lived at the outer rim of the monastery territory, suggests that in general the individual isolation was replaced for a more organised communal life.<sup>142</sup>

The history of Marmoutier from the end of the sixth and towards the ninth century is shrouded in mystery.<sup>143</sup> It is only in the ninth century that Marmoutier actually resurfaces: several, mostly royal charters relating to the monastery are handed down to us that provide some insight in Marmoutier's political and spiritual status. In this chapter, I wish to discuss these charters and relate them to the question of the kings' personal involvements in and concerns for Marmoutier's material and spiritual state; then I wish to provide a short discussion of Marmoutier's relation with St. Martin of Tours and give an overview of the appointed abbots of these monasteries. Finally, I want to have a look at Marmoutier's situation from a broader context, exploring the position of the monastery within the landscape of Carolingian politics.

## ***2.2 Marmoutier's immunity: royal protection, royal intervention***

Several charters contain privileges that had once been granted by Charlemagne and which were later reaffirmed by his son Louis the Pious and his grandson Charles the Bald. These privileges grant the monastery the protection of the king and exemption from any interference by state officials in monastic business. Charlemagne's charter is regrettably not handed down

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<sup>140</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, p. 24; Lelong, *idem*, p. 21 and note 5.

<sup>141</sup> Farmer, *idem*; Lelong, *idem*, pp. 20-3,

<sup>142</sup> Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', pp. 44-5, Gregory of Tours, *Liber Vitae Patrum*, c. 20, *PL*, vol 71, pp. 1009-96, at: 1092-6; Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 23.

<sup>143</sup> Lelong, *idem*, p. 24.

to us<sup>144</sup>, but is referred to in the charter of Louis the Pious of 814.<sup>145</sup> This document states how Jeremias<sup>146</sup>, abbot of Marmoutier, had presented Louis particular documents whereby Charlemagne had once granted the monastery immunity. Louis in turn, at the request of the abbot, reaffirms this immunity, and includes a formulation characteristic for immunity charters<sup>147</sup>, namely that none of the public officials or any of the king's loyal men is to interfere in monastic business and property, neither judicially nor financially, for example through hearing cases, exacting penalties, keeping lodging, taking away the people that belong to Marmoutier, either freeborns or slaves, or claiming retributions.<sup>148</sup> The abbot and his successors alone have the say-so over all that concerns monastic business and pertains to their territory, under the protection of the king and entirely free from any judicial power (*remota totius judicariae potestatis*).<sup>149</sup> Furthermore, Louis states that he has returned to Marmoutier all that the fisc had withdrawn from the monastery, this in order that the monks will be able to fulfill their duty: to perform the service of God and pray for the king, his wife, his offspring and the stability of the kingdom.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> As stated in the introductory comment on Charles the Bald's immunity charter: *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 31, p. 80.

<sup>145</sup> *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 17, pp. 998-9. See also Martène's short discussion of the charter: Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 1, pp. 161-2.

<sup>146</sup> I have only found his name in the immunity charter of 814; I do not know since when and how long he has been abbot of Marmoutier; see also: Martène, *Histoire*, p. 162.

<sup>147</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, p. 90; Franz J. Felten, *Äbte und Laienäbte im Frankenreich: Studie zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche im früheren Mittelalter* Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 20 (Stuttgart 1980), p. 205.

<sup>148</sup> '...praecipimus atque jubemus ut nullus iudex publicus, neque quislibet ex iudicaria potestate, aut ullus ex fidelibus nostris, tam praesentibus quam et futuris in ecclesias aut loca vel agros, seu reliquas possessiones [...] ad causas audiendas, vel freda exigenda aut mansiones vel paratas faciendas, aut fidejussores tollendos, aut homines ipsius monasterii, tam ingenuos quam et servos, super eiusdem terram commanentes distringendos, nec ulla redhibitiones aut illicitas occasiones requirendas, nostris nec futuris temporibus ingredi audeat, vel ea quae supra memorata sunt, penitus exigere praesumat.', *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 17, pp. 998, col. c -999, col. b. An early Carolingian example can be found in the charter of Pippin of 768 regarding the confirmation of an immunity to abbot Bertinus, abbot of the monastery of St. Hilary at Poitiers, *MGH, DD Kar. I*, no. 24 ; Compare for example with the earlier Paris edict from 614 where royal agents are explicitly said to be allowed to interfere in order to protect the church property against intrusions: Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, pp. 60-1.

<sup>149</sup> 'Sed liceat praefato abbati suisque successoribus res ejusdem monasterii, cum rebus vel hominibus ibidem aspicientibus vel pertinentibus, sub tuitionis atque immunitatis nostrae defensione, remota totius judicariae potestatis inquietudine, quieto ordine possidere.', *PL*, vol. 104, p. 999, col. b.

<sup>150</sup> 'Et quidquid de praefatis rebus monasterii jus fisci exigere poterat, in nostra elemosyna in integrum eidem concessimus monasterio...', *ibidem*.



In 843 Charles the Bald, following the example of his grandfather Charlemagne and father Louis, reaffirms this immunity at the request of abbot Rainald, using similar formulations. Charles however adds some extra specifications about the returning of property, stating that he has decided that residences or estates (*mansuras*) are also inviolable, specifying that he has saved these estates from the ‘corrupt unlawful attacks and crafty pretenses’ (*a pravorum inlicitis infestationibus et a callidis occasionibus*) to which they had fallen prey.<sup>151</sup> Clearly, the king had been directly involved in the restoration of some of Marmoutier’s property. It seems that that in this case immunity was not just a theoretical warning and preventive statement, but could also mean the active interference of the king when the situation called for it. In order to understand the implications the immunity could have had for Marmoutier I will now shortly discuss the meaning of immunity for a monastery in Carolingian times.

Just what can the immunity granted and reaffirmed by the Carolingian rulers tell us about Marmoutier’s status? At first sight, this seems hard to say, as immunities did not have one unequivocal meaning throughout medieval times. Rosenwein shows that the implications and motivations related to an immunity transformed through the Merovingian, Carolingian and post-Carolingian periods.<sup>152</sup> The basic idea expressed in a royal immunity - as summarised by Felten- is that royal agents such as counts, are prohibited to interfere in any monastic business and that the monastery is warded free from all fees and taxes.<sup>153</sup> These conditions at first sight appear to put a restriction on the king’s power. However, an immunity never only meant the protection of a monastery from all worldly interference. On the contrary, as I wish to clarify here, an immunity was in either one way or the other a tool for the king to organise

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<sup>151</sup> ‘...ordinatas inviolabiter decernemus mansuras et a pravorum inlicitis infestationibus et a callidis occasionibus redderemus securum’, *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 31, p. 80.

<sup>152</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, p. 3; Wood, *The proprietary church*, pp. 251-9.

<sup>153</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, p. 205.

and distribute power, and because of this a monastery that was granted an immunity would in some way or another be connected to the secular world.

An important development in the implications of immunities took place under the rule of the Carolingians. Rosenwein shows how the kings adopted the old practice of immunities but transformed it in a tool to place churches and monasteries under their control.<sup>154</sup> The kings for example began to withdraw monasteries from the bishops' power, making the communities 'subject to the royal *potestas*'.<sup>155</sup> And as immunities put restrictions on royal agents, they could also be used to diminish the influence local lay nobility, and were for example employed to counteract the power of a count.<sup>156</sup> The appearance of the word *tuitio* (protection) in these charters is for Rosenwein a sign of the king's new employment of immunity. By acting as protector of a certain monastery that had no other forms of protection against possible harassment of local power, the kings in fact bound the monasteries to their person and could justify their involvement in monastic business.

Related to this, Rosenwein talks about a 'new Carolingian conception of government', where the kings saw themselves as chosen by God and responsible for its welfare, an idea which went hand in hand with the kings' growing influence in ecclesiastical business.<sup>157</sup> The granting of immunities was still based on the idea that monastic communities needed to be protected against worldly interference so that their sustenance would be secured and their duties of prayer and intercession would remain undisturbed. The idea of 'general theocratic protection' as Wood calls it, was a recurrent theme in Carolingian immunity charters.<sup>158</sup> This idea was also strongly connected to the Carolingians' employment of monasteries as places of prayer. As Mayke de Jong shows, the primary function of royal monasteries was the

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<sup>154</sup> Rosenwein regards this as a transformation 'from prohibition to control': Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, pp. 97-101.

<sup>155</sup> Mayke de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism: the power of prayer', in: McKitterick, R. (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II, c. 700 – c. 900* (Cambridge 1995), pp. 622-53, at: p. 624.

<sup>156</sup> François L. Ganshof, 'L'immunité dans la monarchie franque', in: *Les liens de vassalité et les immunités* vol. 1, Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin (Brussels, sec. ed., 1985), pp. 171-216, at: p. 215.

<sup>157</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, p. 97.

<sup>158</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 251.

performance of intercessory prayer for the king, his family and the stability of the kingdom, and it was under the Carolingians that this idea became fully exploited. Royal monasteries became, to use the phrasing of De Jong, actual ‘prayer mills’ that were even ordered to work double time in particular troubled periods.<sup>159</sup>

Though the religious aspects of immunities as expressed in the charters were serious business for Carolingian rulers, they must not distract us from the practical uses and political benefits of immunities. The kings, being part of the church and responsible for its protection, saw themselves – to use the formulation of Rosenwein - as ‘stewards’ of the church, having the right to decide over her property.<sup>160</sup> As protectors they had to guarantee the church’s ‘necessary minimum’<sup>161</sup>, but could use the remainder for state affairs, such as the raising of armies and the rewarding of their loyal men through the distribution of *honores*, for example in the forms of the office of (lay) abbot.

This kind of lay involvement could have major implications for royal monasteries, especially in times of war and political instability, for example when monastic lands were used to secure provision for the troops. As De Jong points out, to have ‘direct access’ to the monastic resources the king often appointed his *fideles*, his loyal men, as abbots over monasteries, and despite the stipulation in 818/9 that every royal monastery was to enjoy the right to choose its own abbot, the king kept the habit of appointing men of his own choice.<sup>162</sup> Moreover, even if a monastery had gained the privilege to choose its own abbot - this was then explicitly states in the charter - the king still had the power to abandon these precepts and appoint his own man, as for example happened with St. Martin of Tours.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> De Jong, ‘Power’, p. 650.

<sup>160</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, pp. 100-1.

<sup>161</sup> Rosenwein, *idem*, p. 101

<sup>162</sup> De Jong, *idem*, pp. 634-5 For an overview of the military uses to which monasteries and clerics were put, see for example: Friedrich Prinz, *Klerus und Krieg im früheren Mittelalter. Untersuchungen zur Rolle der Kirche beim Aufbau der Königsherrschaft*. Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 2 (Stuttgart 1971), chapter 4: ‘Die Militarisierung des Klerus’, pp. 115-146; *MGH*, Capit. I, no. 138 (*Capitulare ecclesiasticum*), c. 5, p. 276.

<sup>163</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 254-5; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 267; De Jong, ‘Power’, p. 632. For the charter giving the community of St. Martin exemption from the power of the bishop and being given the right to choose

The involvement of the king and his men in the church and the secular use of ecclesiastical property was from time to time a point of much debate and criticism from the side of bishops and other ecclesiastics. The first half and the middle of the ninth century witnessed several discussions and series of synods where the secular use of church property was heavily scrutinised. I will later show that these discussions were very relevant for ninth-century Marmoutier. For now, it is important to underline that despite the ecclesiastics' criticism of the king's infringement in the church, they also acknowledged that the church could not do without the king's protection, and to a certain extent needed to come to terms with the king's involvement, as Nelson perfectly summarises: 'Though some churchmen protested, on the whole they accepted royal exactions as the price of protection and corporate power: they saw that the alternative was the wholly *unsystematic* despoilment and privatisation of church property not only by laymen but by individual ecclesiastics too'.<sup>164</sup>

Let us now go back to the question of what Marmoutier's immunities can actually say about its status. It in any case belonged to a larger group of monasteries - such as the monasteries of Fleury, St. Aignan, St. Germain of Auxerre, St. Wandrille and St. Colombe<sup>165</sup> - that had been granted immunity by Charlemagne, but only have later affirmations as a witness of this. Although Wood states that immunity before the reign of Louis the Pious were a sign of value, but not of 'spectacular favour'<sup>166</sup>, Felten makes clear that Charlemagne was rather 'picky' in granting immunities to monasteries situated in the inner regions of his kingdom where his rule was already firmly settled; he did not even reaffirm immunities to certain monasteries that had

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her own abbot, see below, p. 55 and note 203; and for the subsequent appointment of lay abbots by the king, see below, pp. 57-61.

<sup>164</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London 1992), p. 57.

<sup>165</sup> For example, Felten states that from the eighteen immunities granted to monasteries in the inner kingdom - 'Kernraum' - fifteen of these are only known through a later affirmation by Louis the Pious, Felten, *Äbte*, p. 191; I based the names of the monasteries on: Felten, *idem*, appendix, map 6.

<sup>166</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 252.

earlier been given immunities.<sup>167</sup> When we accept that Marmoutier indeed was granted immunity by Charlemagne<sup>168</sup>, this would mean that under his rule the monastery already had a considerable status.

Under Louis the Pious Marmoutier belonged to a large group of monasteries that in the beginning of his reign were affirmed in their immunities.<sup>169</sup> In these charters, Louis also explicitly combined every immunity with the royal protection (*tuitio*), even those monasteries that were originally only granted immunity.<sup>170</sup> This might also have been the case for Marmoutier, although the wordings of the charter of 814 strongly suggest that it was Charlemagne who placed the monastery under his protection.<sup>171</sup> The emphasis on the protection against worldly interference and the density of immunity charters in the beginning of Louis's reign has led scholars to regard them as an expression of Louis's religious policy to protect the communities' religiosity, in accordance with the contemporary Anian reforms.<sup>172</sup> This must not distract us however from the political motives. The granting of immunities in combination with royal protection was according to Ganshof a new administrative tool to delegate the king's power more efficiently, for example to diminish certain duties of the counts, to make them concentrate on other tasks, and to pull monasteries out of the grip of

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<sup>167</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 252, 207-8.

<sup>168</sup> Felten states that in most of these cases there is no reason to believe that the monasteries did not possess immunity from an earlier time: Felten, *idem*, p. 209 and note 139.

<sup>169</sup> During Louis the Pious's reign almost half of the 100 immunity charters issued by him date from the period 814-816, the first years of his reign. Most of these comprise an affirmation of earlier granted immunities of Charlemagne, but also entail some new immunities granted to lesser monasteries: Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 252 and note 3.

<sup>170</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 189-90, Wood, *idem*, p. 235 and note 49. Here Wood also points out that there are only a few cases where both the charter issued by Charlemagne and that by Louis have survived; Ganshof, *L'immunité*, p. 201; According to Semmler he even granted immunity to monasteries that did not belong to the king's property: Josef Semmler, 'Traditio und Königsschutz. Studien zur Geschichte der königlichen monasteria', in: *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 67, Kanonische Abteilung 45 (Weimar 1959), pp. 1-33, at: p. 7.

<sup>171</sup> Louis states that abbot Jeremias gave him the charter of Charlemagne in which Charlemagne explicitly grants *tuitio* as well as defence: 'Proinde comperiat [...] quia vir venerabilis Hieremias abba [...] obtulit obtutibus nostris auctoritatem immunitatis domni et genitoris nostri bonae memoriae Caroli piissimi Augusti, in quae erat insertum qualiter idem genitor noster eundem monasterium [...] semper sub plenissima tuitione et immunitatis defensione consistere fecisset.', *PL*, vol. 104, p. 998, col c. The wordings suggest that Marmoutier had already been placed under the king's protection by Charlemagne.

<sup>172</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 276-7; Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 252 and note 6; De Jong, 'Power', pp. 631-2.

local powers.<sup>173</sup> Felten also shows that under Louis the Pious, in contrast with younger monasteries that were given many privileges, including the right to choose their own abbot, the older monasteries were kept close to the king. They were affirmed in their immunities and protection, but were denied the privilege of free election.<sup>174</sup> Marmoutier was probably one of these old monasteries that the king wished to keep close: its foundation dates far back, it could boast of having the prestigious saint Martin as its founding father - with whom the royal family had maintained a special link for centuries<sup>175</sup> - and the king kept Marmoutier, in combination with the community of St. Martin in Tours, under direct control by appointing his closest men as abbots. I will discuss this more fully later.<sup>176</sup>

As already mentioned, in 843 Charles the Bald reaffirmed Louis's immunity charter at the request of abbot Rainald. Although in many ways a repetition of the earlier immunity, Charles's special attention for Marmoutier's is interesting when considering that Charles in fact turned his promise of royal protection into real action in a charter issued in 845. Here Charles, at the request of abbot Rainald, confirms the restitution of several *villulae* and belongings to Marmoutier. It is explicitly stated that these properties are to be used for the sustenance of the community and that the *rectores*<sup>177</sup> of this place, in either the present or future, are not allowed to diminish the property.<sup>178</sup> In a later charter, issued in 852 at the request of the lay abbot (*rector*) Robert a similar kind of arrangement is made.<sup>179</sup> Remembering the implications of immunities as discussed above, one cannot help wondering whether the restitutions of land might have had any relation with certain political interests in Marmoutier. Indeed, I will later show that the particular political circumstances of the mid-

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<sup>173</sup> Ganshof, 'L'immunité', pp. 214-5. Felten talks about 'Herrschaftsinstrumente': Felten, *Äbte*, p. 276.

<sup>174</sup> Felten, *idem*, pp. 276-7.

<sup>175</sup> See below, p. 50 and note 186.

<sup>176</sup> See below, pp. 58-62.

<sup>177</sup> On the terms *rector* and *abbas* as terms to indicate a lay abbot: Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 1, 280-8; in the *Historia translationis Vivian* is indicated as the *rector* of St. Martin of Tours: see above, note 115; and *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 136; in a charter of 846 he states he is given the 'curam atque regimen' of both St. Martin of Tours and Marmoutier: *Ann. OSB*, vol. 2, appendix, no. 66, pp. 694-5.

<sup>178</sup> *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 74.

<sup>179</sup> *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 147.

ninth century provided enough reason for Charles, as well as for the community herself, to express much concern about Marmoutier's material situation.

### ***2.3 Marmoutier's religious value***

Interestingly enough, the restitution charter of 852 also prescribes two special meals to be held in Marmoutier each year, the one in memory of the deaths of Charles's father and mother, Louis the Pious and Judith, and the other in commemoration of Louis's birthday.<sup>180</sup> These special arrangements suggest that Marmoutier had a special connection with the royal family. As said, the primary duty of royal monasteries was to pray for the king and his family, and although Marmoutier consisted of about 150 monks<sup>181</sup>, hence was not as big a community as for example the royal monastery of Fulda (in the 820's about 600 monks, divided over several dependent monasteries)<sup>182</sup> or Corbie (about 350 monks and 112 prebends)<sup>183</sup>, there are indications that Marmoutier occupied a special place in the spiritual landscape.

Indeed, two charters from the beginning of the 830s make clear that the king as well as local nobility had a special regard for Marmoutier that had all to do with the community's link with St. Martin. In 831 or 832 Louis the Pious, at the request of his wife Judith, affirms the sale of the *villa Cambonis* in the region of Dunois by 'a certain consecrated' woman named Oda, wife of *dux* Eodon.<sup>184</sup> The wordings of the charter make clear that Marmoutier was regarded by the king as a prestigious place because of her connection to St. Martin. Although St. Martin was not the only royal patron - bearing in mind the prestige of the royal patron St. Denis - the three words by which the king expresses his love and esteem for St. Martin (*amorem, honorem* and *venerationem*) seem to function as a reminder of the royal family's

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<sup>180</sup> RACC, vol. 1, no. 147; Martène, *Histoire*, pp. 174-5.

<sup>181</sup> Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 27 and note 89; and below, note 189.

<sup>182</sup> Raaijmakers, *Sacred time*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>183</sup> David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian renaissance* (Sigmaringen 1990), p. 26.

<sup>184</sup> Martène states the charter was issued in 831 (the eighteenth year of Louis's reign), Migne assigns the charter to the year 832 (the nineteenth year of Louis's reign): Martène, *Histoire*, pp. 162-3; *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 172, pp. 1215-7.

special connection with St. Martin that existed since the rule of the earliest Merovingian kings (fifth/sixth century).<sup>185</sup> It is furthermore pointed out that Marmoutier is the place ‘where the most illustrious confessor of Christ used to fight his spiritual battle together with a crowd of monks’ (*quo idem ipse praeclarissimus confessor Christi regulariter cum turma monachorum Domino militavit*), and the place where the confessor must be venerated (*ad memoratum monasterium venerandi confessoris Christi sancti Martini*), which seems to underline Marmoutier’s special position and prestige with regard to their famous founding father.<sup>186</sup>

About a year later a certain count Troannus and his wife Bova donate to Marmoutier (*ad monasterium S. Martini, qui vocatur Majus, quod est constructum super alveum Ligeris prope Turonis civitate*), for the care of their own souls and in the honor of Mary, the Apostle Peter and the confessor St. Martin, several of their own estates in the Vendôme (*in pago Vindocinense*), a region to the north of Marmoutier, with its buildings, lands and servants.<sup>187</sup> It is specified that the monastery will nevertheless allow the count, his wife and their son Troandus to enjoy these donated estates and properties during their lifetime and will give them another estate in benefice. In return Troandus, his wife and his son promise to make several donations of money, food and servants, amongst others for the winter feast of St. Martin (*ad festivitatem S. Martini hiemalem*) and the October mass (*missa S. Martini, quae est in mense Octobris*), which are intended for the sustenance of the monks. Although this charter does not express a reverence for St. Martin as strong as in Louis’s charters, the special provisions for St. Martin’s festivities show that this aristocratic family respected Marmoutier for and associated her with its founding father.

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<sup>185</sup> St. Denis was in the Carolingian period the royal patron of the Carolingians, but St. Martin, already under the Merovingians regarded as royal patron, under the Carolingians continued to be an important royal patron as well: Farmer, *Communities*, p. 30; about the high status of both the monastery of St. Denis and of St. Martin in Tours, and St. Martin’s status as *peculiarus patronus noster*: Felten, *Äbte*, p. 229 and note 70.

<sup>186</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, p. 163. About the special status of St. Martin for the Merovingian and Carolingian kings, see for example: Farmer, *Communities*, pp. 21, 25-26, 30.

<sup>187</sup> *Ann. OSB*, vol. 2, Appendix, no. 55, pp. 687-8; Also in: *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Vendômois*, ed. Charles Auguste de Trémault, Société Archéologique du Vendômois (Paris/Vendôme 1893), no. 1, pp. 1-3; Martène, *Histoire*, p. 163.



The two charters show that Louis and his wife Judith and certain nobility with landed property in the locality had a special interest in Marmoutier, which they expressed through (the affirmation of) sales and donations. Here, it is important to realise that probably because Marmoutier enjoyed the special interest of the king, local nobility would have gladly associated herself with the monastery as well. In these two charters the primary duty of intercessory prayer – that was also mentioned in the immunity charter – is here connected to the reverence for and the festivities of St. Martin. This suggests that Marmoutier, because of its link with the prestigious St. Martin, had its own unique status.

Unfortunately, we have no accounts on the monastic life at Marmoutier which could provide more information about the religious condition and status of the monastery. Oury points out that a glimpse of Marmoutier's religious state can be caught in an account about Rorigo, count of Maine and Charlemagne's son in law, who in 820 is said to have requested the help of Marmoutier with restoring his family monastery of St. Maur at Glanfeuil, that had been deserted since 780.<sup>188</sup> Two monks of 'the monastery of the bishop St. Martin' (*de monasterio sancti Pontificis Martini*), Lambert and Ebbo, take part in this project and - eventually - the monastery is restored to a respectable state. If indeed these monks were from Marmoutier (the name might refer to the monastery of St. Martin of Tours) this would be evidence that Marmoutier was respected for its religious life and acknowledged as a community that knew how to live according to the monastic ideals.

In any case, just after the middle of the ninth century Marmoutier experienced a drastic turning point. In 853 the monastery suffered an attack by Normans which brutally disrupted monastic life: the monastery was destroyed, about 120 monks were killed, and the

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<sup>188</sup> Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours, p. 46; Martène, idem, pp. 164-7; Smith, *Province*, p. 54; *De S. Mauro abbate Glannafoliensi, in Gallia, Historia translationis* (BHL 5775), AASS, Jan. I, dies 15, c. 2, 12, p. 1054.

surviving 24 monks were accommodated at St. Martin in Tours.<sup>189</sup> This destruction might actually be one of the reasons that not many charters from the ninth- and earlier centuries are handed down to us.<sup>190</sup> The attack did not mean that Marmoutier ceased to exist or lost her value. In 871 pope Hadrian II writes to Charles the Bald that the bishops need to take care of the spiritual and material restoration of certain monasteries that had been the victim of Viking attacks, amongst which he mentions Marmoutier.<sup>191</sup> Regrettably, there are no contemporary accounts that might give us an inside view in life at Marmoutier after 853. It seems to have continued as a community of canons<sup>192</sup>, but it was probably only with the Cluniac reforms in the late tenth century that Marmoutier's community would be restored to a benedictine life. From that time on it would grow out to become 'one of the most powerful Benedictine monasteries in western Francia'.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 26 and note 89. Lelong here amongst others refers to a Martyrology of Marmoutier that mentions the attack of the Normans and the killing of 126 of the 150 monks, but I was not able to find this martyrology. He also refers to the *Tractatus de reversione beati Martini*, recording the killing of 116 monks, and the survival of abbot Herbernus and 24 monks: *Tractatus de reversione beati Martini Turonensis de Burgundia*, PL 133, pp. 818-837, at: p. 825, col. a: 116. For a discussion of this and other texts recounting the invasions of Normans in the ninth and tenth century, many of which (like the *Tractatus*) dating from the eleventh and twelfth century, see: Émile Mabille, 'Les invasions normandes dans la Loire et les pérégrinations du corps de saint Martin', in: *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 30 (1869), pp. 149-94. At pp. 156-167 he discusses the main sources and the dating of the attacks of the Normans on 8 November 853. See also: Audradus Modicus, *Liber revelationem*, ed. Ludwig Traube, 'O Roma nobilis. Philologische Untersuchungen aus dem Mittelalter', in: *Abhandlungen der Philosophisch-Philologischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 19, 2 (München 1892), pp. 297-395, at pp. 380, 387-8.

<sup>190</sup> Ganz in any case points to a heavy downfall in manuscript production in Tours from the period after 853: David Ganz, 'Mass production of early medieval manuscripts: the Carolingian Bibles from Tours', in: Gameson, Richard (ed.), *The Early Medieval Bible: Its production, decoration and use* Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology (Cambridge 1994), pp. 53-62, at: p. 53.

<sup>191</sup> Lelong, 'Culture et société', pp. 71-2; Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 26; Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', p. 48; for the letter of Hadrianus II: PL, vol. 122, Adrianus II, no. 39, pp. 1317-19; MGH, Epp. Kar. IV, 6, no. 35 and 36. In letter 35 Marmoutier (*monasterium majus*) is not mentioned.

<sup>192</sup> Oury and Lelong in any case point to the appearance of canons in Marmoutier, which might suggest that the earlier community of monks has at some point been replaced for that of a community of canons: Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', p. 48; Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 26 and note 90. Lelong refers to certain charters from the end of the ninth and the tenth century that in relation to Marmoutier talks about canons, referring to a discussion of one of these charters by Martène, but I was not able to find this charter; Martène, *Histoire*, p. 187.

<sup>193</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, p. 19; See also: Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', p. 47-9, and: Lelong, *L'abbaye*, pp. 26-7.

### *A recapitulation*

The charters show that Marmoutier had a special place in the hearts of the Carolingian kings. The kings' interest probably had its foundations in Charlemagne's time, and although Marmoutier seems to have been more or less 'automatically' affirmed in its immunity by Louis, as one amongst many others, it still cannot be denied that Marmoutier hereby could consider itself within the category of respected Carolingian royal monasteries.<sup>194</sup>

Other charters show that Louis the Pious was involved in transactions of land to Marmoutier in the 830s, which reflect the king's and nobility's interest in Marmoutier. Under Charles the Bald the king's involvement in and attention for Marmoutier seems to have grown: not only did Charles twice restore an amount of property to the monastery, but he also seems to have wanted to cultivate the royal family's link with St. Martin by (re)instating special commemorations for his father and mother. By doing this, Charles may have wanted to make it undeniable that Marmoutier belonged to the royal inner circle.

Up to this point, I have mainly concentrated on Marmoutier's charters in order to gain an understanding of its situation and status up to the period around the mid-ninth century. Now it is time to broaden the scope and consider Marmoutier's position in a broader context. First, in order to do justice to a description of Marmoutier's situation, it is necessary to include the nearby community of St. Martin of Tours in the equation. The two communities were much connected to each other, not only in their dependence on St. Martin's fame, but also in legal and political terms. Secondly, there is strong evidence that both these communities were of much importance to Charles the Bald from the 840s on. I therefore now wish to start with a short discussion of St. Martin of Tours' status in the ninth century, then discuss the abbots of Marmoutier (which she mostly shared with that of St. Martin) and then

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<sup>194</sup> Seen Marmoutier's position in a group of respected monasteries, I agree with Lelong who states - although he himself gives no comment on the nature of the immunity - that the immunity testifies of a considerable prestige of Marmoutier, Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 24.

continue with a discussion of the political situation in the region of Tours around the mid-ninth century.

#### ***2.4 Marmoutier and St. Martin***

The two communities of St. Martin share their early, fourth-century origins and their development around and dependency on the fame of St. Martin. Both however went in different directions in their religious life and the cultivation of St. Martin. We have seen that the monks of Marmoutier after St. Martin's death continued to live according to the ideals of monastic life, living in reclusion and poverty. The members of the community of St. Martin of Tours, so Farmer shows, had other business to deal with: their primary duty was to take care of the tomb and provide for the liturgy for the flow of pilgrims that visited the place. The cult around St. Martin's relics, which was in fact the core of the community's existence, made it unavoidable to be in continuous close contact with the world.<sup>195</sup>

It is not exactly clear according to which regulation or rule the community of St. Martin of Tours was organised in the ninth century. Did the monks of St. Martin live the life of canons (secular clergy, who amongst others were not fully bound to the restriction on personal possessions)<sup>196</sup>, or did they in some ways still follow the monastic life as stipulated in Benedict's Rule? Correspondence between Charlemagne and Alcuin (abbot of St. Martin of Tours, 796-804) around 801-2 in any case seems to display a certain ambiguity of the lifestyle at St. Martin in this period. Charlemagne in a letter to Alcuin states that the monks of St. Martin are either called *monachos*, or *canonicos*, or are indicated by neither of these terms

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<sup>195</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, pp. 189-91.

<sup>196</sup> For an introduction to the rule for secular clergy by Chrodegang of Metz and the later stipulations at the council of Aachen: *The Chrodegang Rules. The rules for the common life of the secular clergy from the eighth and ninth centuries. Critical texts with translations and commentary*, ed. Jerome Bertram, Church, faith and culture in the medieval West (Aldershot 2005), pp. 12- 26, 84-95.

(*neutrum*).<sup>197</sup> According to Otto Oexle, the time of Alcuin's successor Fridugisus (904-832) is generally considered as the period that witnessed a turn from this ambiguous way of life to the official rule of canons, in line with the stipulations of the Aachen Councils of 816/817.<sup>198</sup> As Semmler shows, there are indeed indications in charters and other documents that from 815 on the monastery of St. Martin of Tours turned into an official house of canons.<sup>199</sup> Oexle remarks that from 816 on St. Martin's members are in the charters of Louis no longer indicated as *monachi* but as *clerici*, but states that this change of terminology does not necessarily reflect a real change of life in the community.<sup>200</sup> Furthermore, in spite of the regulations that an official canon community had to be placed under the authority of a *praelatus*, usually the bishop<sup>201</sup>, the community continued to have an own abbot.<sup>202</sup> Although this abbot might have been subjected to the bishop's authority, it is remarkable that in 831 at the request of abbot Fridugisus, Louis the Pious explicitly exempted St. Martin of Tours from the power of the bishop and granted her the right to choose her own abbot.<sup>203</sup>

Despite the questions concerning the organisation of their life, the fact that they were referred to as *clerici* and were mentioned as living according to the canonic life in any case shows that the community did not -or in any case not as whole - follow the life of *monachi* as

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<sup>197</sup> Otto Gerhard Oexle, *Forschungen zu monastischen und geistlichen Gemeinschaften im westfränkischen Bereich* Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 31 (München 1978), pp. 122-3, referring to: *MGH*, Epp. Kar. II, no. 247, p. 401; and for Alcuin's response see: *MGH*, Epp. Kar. II, no. 249; See also: Felten, *Äbte*, p. 232.

<sup>198</sup> At Aachen it was decided that religious communities either had to be monastic communities that followed Benedict's Rule, or canonic communities that followed the official rule for canons, see above, note 196. For the Aachen Councils, see: *MGH*, Conc. II, 1, no. 39, pp. 307-464.

<sup>199</sup> Josef Semmler, 'Benedictus II: *Una regula – una consuetudo*', in: W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst (eds.), *Benedictine culture 750-1050* Mediaevalia Lovaniensa, series 1, studia 11 (Leuven 1983), pp. 1-49, at: pp. 14-5 and note 27. He amongst others refers to a charter from 818/9 where the community of St. Martin is indeed described as living the life of canons: 'infra monasterium S. Martini sub serenissimo abbate Domno Fridegiso canonicam pariter vitam degentes': Edmund Martène and Ursin Durand (eds.), *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, vol. 1 (Paris 1717), p. 20.

<sup>200</sup> Oexle, *Forschungen*, p. 132 and note 163; here amongst others referring to: *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 48, p. 1041, and no. 69, p. 1068

<sup>201</sup> Bertram, *The rules*, p. 85 and 91, referring to capitula 38-9 of the *Regula canonicorum*, see: *MGH*, Conc. II, 1, no. 39, p. 415.

<sup>202</sup> See below, pp. 58-62.

<sup>203</sup> Oexle, *idem*, p. 131; *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 164, pp. 1201-2; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 267.

laid down in the Rule of St. Benedict.<sup>204</sup> Although maybe not that famous for the full observance of Benedict's Rule, the community of St. Martin of Tours had much prestige. Under Charlemagne, it was granted immunity and the privilege to levy fees, it was enriched with some extensive donations, and was placed under the leadership of prestigious people who stood very close to the king. All these aspects made St. Martin share the same exceptional position as the royal monastery of St. Denis.<sup>205</sup> Charlemagne's privileges were all affirmed by Louis in 814, and, as mentioned earlier, in 831 the king granted St. Martin the exemption from the bishop's authority and the privilege to choose its own abbot, if a suitable follower was found (although later years would prove that the abbots continued to be chosen by the kings).<sup>206</sup>

The high regard in which the community was held, was based on its possession of St. Martin's relics. The community is in fact identified by the relics it keeps safe, as it is in several charters called *monasterium sancti Martini, patroni nostri, in quo ipse requiescit corpore*.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, St. Martin was not just one patron amongst many others: in several charters for St. Martin of Tours— by Charlemagne as well as Charles the Bald — he is explicitly called *peculiaris patronus noster*, and can in this sense also be compared to the status of St. Denis, (although it must be kept in mind that this monastery was a full-fledged monastic community, and not a community of canons).<sup>208</sup>

The scriptoriums of St. Martin as well as that of Marmoutier were well known for their artistic achievements. Under the leading hand of Alcuin, innovations took place at the school of Tours which made it an important centre of manuscript production, famous for her "Alcuin

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<sup>204</sup> See also the discussion of the situation of St. Martin of Tours by Vaucelle: E.R. Vaucelle, *La collégiale de Saint-Martin de Tours, des origines à l'avènement des Valois (397-1328)* (Dissertation, Paris 1908), p. 70 sqq.

<sup>205</sup> Felten, *Abte*, pp. 229, 267.

<sup>206</sup> See above, p. 45 and note 163.

<sup>207</sup> Probably also specified in this way to distinguish it from Marmoutier, that is in some charters specified as the monastery of St. Martin above the river Loire, as for example in the immunity charters of 814 and 843: *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 17, p. 998 col. c; *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 31, p. 80.

<sup>208</sup> Felten shows that St. Martin was already called 'our special (or: personal) patron' in Charlemagne's charters, one from 774 and one from 775: Felten, *Abte*, p. 229, note 70, referring to *MGH*, *DDKar.I*, no. 81 and 97. Examples from charters of Charles the Bald: *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 20, 62, 80, 141.

Bibles” as well as other manuscripts. It was under the abbacies of Adalard and Vivian in the 830s and 840s that the school of Tours knew its ‘apogée’.<sup>209</sup> A famous manuscript produced in this period is the magnificent “Vivian Bible” – according to Kessler ‘one of the greatest masterpieces of Carolingian art’<sup>210</sup> - created at Vivian’s orders and offered to Charles the Bald.

In summary, it can be said that the two communities differed in terms of wealth and special privileges, but that they were tied together by and shared in the legacy of their saint Martin and in their artistic activities. Still, although it goes too far to say that Marmoutier was entirely overshadowed by St. Martin of Tours, it cannot be denied that the community of Tours, being in possession of St. Martin’s body, found itself in the most favourable position.

Marmoutier was probably not only superseded by St. Martin in wealth and prestige, but was in some way dependent on St. Martin. The author at the beginning of his *Historia translationis* refers to Marmoutier as a *cella*.<sup>211</sup> This word, as Wood states, refers to a monastery that has been ‘transferred permanently into another church’s possession’<sup>212</sup>, and would in the case of Marmoutier mean that it was subject to the monastery of St. Martin of Tours. However, this theoretical status did not necessarily mean that a monastery was in practice really subjected. Wood gives an example of another cell of St. Martin, St. Loup at Chablis, that first was given by Charles in St. Martin’s property, but was ten years later a full fledged community on its own ‘united but not submerged under the great monastery.’<sup>213</sup>

That the two communities of St. Martin were connected and regarded as belonging to each other becomes in any case clear from the fact that the communities were from around the

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<sup>209</sup> Lelong, ‘Culture et société’, p. 68.

<sup>210</sup> Herbert L. Kessler, ‘A lay abbot as patron: count Vivian and the first bible of Charles the Bald’, in: *Commitenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell’alto medioevo occidentale 4-10 aprile 1991*, vol. 2, *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo XXXIX* (Spoleto 1992), pp. 647-79, at: p. 650.

<sup>211</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>212</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 262.

<sup>213</sup> Wood, *idem*. Another monastery subject to or dependend on St. Martin was Cormery: Farmer, *Communities*, p. 190. I thank Rutger Kramer for pointing me to the possible similarity in status between Cormery and Marmoutier in relation to St. Martin of Tours.

mid-ninth century placed under the rule of the same abbot.<sup>214</sup> Oury in this regard even talks about a certain kind of symbiotic relationship.<sup>215</sup> Considering the shared lay abbacy in combination with the use of the word “cell” suggests that Marmoutier was regarded as a part of St. Martin of Tours. On the other hand it must also be kept in mind that Marmoutier was given her own immunity privileges from the time of Charlemagne on. Combining this with the earlier observation that Charles was involved in the restoration of certain property of Marmoutier and that the kings emphasised their special reverence for St. Martin - Charles even installing special celebrations and thereby cultivating the connection between Marmoutier and the royal family - it is clear that least from the 830s on Louis and Charles regarded Marmoutier not only as a part of St. Martin, but as a community with enough importance and a right to exist in itself.

### **2.5 Marmoutier's abbots**

I now wish to continue with an examination of the successive appointment of abbots of Marmoutier. At least from the beginning of the ninth century the abbacy was given in the hands of lay noblemen of much importance. Count Baidulus, lay abbot of Marmoutier in the beginning of the ninth century is, as Oury shows, the first example of this. In the *Translatio* of St. Savinus this man is mentioned as a *clericus palatinus* and abbot of Marmoutier.<sup>216</sup> The next person whom we know to have been abbot of Marmoutier is Jeremias, during whose abbacy Marmoutier was affirmed in her immunity (814).<sup>217</sup> The next known abbot of Marmoutier is Theoto (or Theoton), who was probably also the successor of Fridugis, abbot of St. Martin of Tours. This Theoto was (arch)chancellor of Louis the Pious and last

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<sup>214</sup> According to Oury at least from the 830s on: Oury, ‘À Marmoutier-lès-Tours’, p. 45; I agree with Oury that the practice of placing both communities under the authority of one abbot seem to have continued from Theoto on, although I have not found evidence for a shared abbacy under Theoto’s successor Adalard.

<sup>215</sup> Oury, *ibidem*.

<sup>216</sup> Oury, ‘À Marmoutier-lès-Tours’, p. 46; Aimonus, *Acta Translationis Savini Martyris* (BHL 7450), *PL*, vol. 126, pp. 1049-1056, at: p. 1049, col. d.; See also: Martène, *Histoire*, p. 161.

<sup>217</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, p. 245, note 152; *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 61.



mentioned as abbot of St. Martin of Tours in November 832.<sup>218</sup> Theoto is mentioned as abbot of Marmoutier in the earlier discussed charters from the early 830s. In the *Annals of St. Bertin* he is referred to as abbot of St. Martin, and is said to have died together with other noblemen in the battle of 834 at the side of Louis the Pious against Matfrid and Lambert, men of Lothar, Louis's rebellious son.<sup>219</sup> Seen his records, Theoto is an example of a lay nobleman who belonged to a group of men faithful to Louis, and who in his function of archchancellor would have been very close to the emperor. Adalard, seneschal of Louis the Pious<sup>220</sup>, was probably appointed as successor after Theoto's death in 834, although we have only evidence of him being abbot of St. Martin from several charters after 840.<sup>221</sup> It cannot be ascertained whether he was also the abbot of Marmoutier, but since these abbacies had been combined under Theoto's rule, this is likely.<sup>222</sup>

After Adalard, the rule over the communities seems in some way to have been divided between two noblemen, the brothers Vivian and Rainald. Vivian, mentioned as chamberlain of Charles the Bald in February 843 and made count of Tours in 844, was abbot of St. Martin from at least 844 to his death in 851.<sup>223</sup> He was probably granted this function as a reward for his faithful service to Charles the Bald.<sup>224</sup> His brother Rainald, the one who led the expedition of St. Gorgon's translation, emerges from the charters as abbot of Marmoutier from the end

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<sup>218</sup> Felten, *idem*, pp. 245, 267; Oury, *Histoire religieuse*, p. 43; Philippe Dépreux regards Theoto the archchancellor to be the the same person as the abbot of Marmoutier and probably also that of St. Martin: Philippe Dépreux, *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis de Pieux (781-840)*, with a preface by Peter Johaneck, Instrumenta 1 (Sigmaringen 1997), pp. 387-8.; see also: Martène, *Histoire*, p. 162; Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 24; *The Annals of St. Bertin*, ed. Janet L. Nelson, Ninth-century histories 1 (Manchester 1991), p. 30, note 9.

<sup>219</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, *MGH*, SS I (Hannover 1826), pp. 419-516, at: p. 428.

<sup>220</sup> Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde Franc (VIIe – Xe siècle): essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris 1995), p. 410; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 266 and note 15; Lelong, p. 'Culture et société', p. 69.

<sup>221</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, p. 267. Martène points out that a certain Adalard subscribes the synod of Germinus in 843 with the words *abbas Turonensis* and that he is also mentioned in several charters (842, 843) as abbot of St. Martin, Martène, *Histoire*, pp. 167-8, and *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 1, p. 6 and note 50. See also: Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 24. For the charter of Adalard as abbot of St. Martin issued in February 843: *RACC*, vol. 1, nr. 31.

<sup>222</sup> Martène also thinks it likely, stating that it was not uncommon to combine these abbacies: Martène, *Histoire*, p. 168. According to Le Jan, Adalard held the abbacy of both St. Martin and Marmoutier: Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, p. 410.

<sup>223</sup> Le Jan states that Adalard was lay abbot of St. Martin and Marmoutier up to 844: Le Jan, *ibidem*. Felten mentions the year 844/45 as the beginning of Vivian's abbacy: Felten, *Äbte*, p. 50; compare with: Kessler, 'A lay abbot as patron', p. 650.

<sup>224</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.128. Vivian was probably abbot until his death in 851, as a charter testifies that he was still lay abbot of St. Martin in February 851: *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 136.

of 843 to 845/6.<sup>225</sup> There are some indications that have led scholars to believe that Rainald was not a layman, but a cleric abbot of Marmoutier, while his brother Vivian functioned as lay abbot of both communities.<sup>226</sup> In a charter issued 1 January 846, probably some months before or during Rainald's expedition to Rome<sup>227</sup> Vivian is mentioned as curator of both St. Martin and Marmoutier.<sup>228</sup> This in any case shows that Vivian at some point was in charge of both communities, and it might suggest that in particular cases he was required to act as lay abbot of Marmoutier in a period or a case where Rainald was not able or did not have the authority to act. In any case, with the description of the deposition of St. Gorgon in July 846 Rainald is mentioned as abbot (*abbas*) of Marmoutier, and Vivian as *rector* of St. Martin of Tours, which suggests that with Rainald's return the former situation was restored. Furthermore, the idea of a lay abbot appointing another person as religious abbot over a monastery given to him as benefice was not unheard of. As Wood states, there are examples of lay men being granted the abbacy of a monastery who appointed a man of their own choice as religious abbot, in order to have reforms taking place and thereby having their own prestige boosted.<sup>229</sup> Indeed, we have seen that the *Historia translationis* makes references to certain restorations or recoveries at Marmoutier, and there are sources concerning their period of rule

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<sup>225</sup> *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 31 and 74. The last charter either dates from 30 August 845 or 30 January 846; the editor considers the first option more probable: *idem*, pp. 206-8.

<sup>226</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, p. 168, 173; Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', p. 47; Oury, *Histoire religieuse*, p. 43.

<sup>227</sup> The *Historia translationis* states that the monks started the journey in 846, and the course of the story suggest that the whole journey took place in this same year. The monks leave Rome at the 14th Kalend of June, meaning the 19th of May. As the story suggests that the arrival at Marmoutier was around the time of the celebration of St. Martin's consecration – on the 4th of July – they probably arrive at Marmoutier somewhere in the beginning of July. Thus, the journey home took about two and a half months, which in theory is possible: the journey from Rome to Marmoutier can be made in two months, estimating the walking distance around the 1500 km and assuming they walked about 25 km a day. Assuming that the journey from Marmoutier to Rome took the same amount of time, the expedition left about two months before the 19th of May. This would mean the expedition left Marmoutier around the middle of March, 846.

<sup>228</sup> *Ann. OSB*, vol. 2, appendix, no. 66, pp. 694-5.

<sup>229</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 320: 'The lay abbot might move out, or back, to this position to leave room for a son or brother [...], or for a *fidelis* [...]. Or he might step back in favour of a regular abbot as part of a plan of reform (enhancing his prestige and leaving him with a more princely role than formerly).'

that hint to initiatives of restoration and reform at Marmoutier. I will discuss this more fully in the next chapter.<sup>230</sup>

The lay abbacy of Marmoutier was in 852 in the hands of count Robert the Strong, as the abovementioned restitution charter for Marmoutier of this year testifies. According to Le Jan, Robert received both Marmoutier and St. Martin in combination with the counties of Châteaudun and Angers from count Eudes (Odo) in exchange for the county of Troyes.<sup>231</sup> This would mean that this Eudes had held both abbeys for a certain period between Vivian's and Robert's rule (c. 851-852), although I have not found any charters concerning Marmoutier or St. Martin that provide evidence of this. The restitution charter from this time suggest that with the abbacy of count Robert a concern for the material state of Marmoutier was maintained. Probably Robert also appointed a certain Herbernus as cleric abbot over Marmoutier.<sup>232</sup>

It cannot be said how the interest for Marmoutier from the side of Vivian, Rainald and Robert would have affected the monastery in the long term. As mentioned earlier, in 853 the attacks of Vikings brutally interrupted life and business at Marmoutier. The destructions however did not mean the monastery was no longer of importance. After 853 the rule of Marmoutier is still passed on from the one nobleman to the other. The *Annals of St. Bertin* even tells us that in 865 Charles grants his first-born son Louis the Stammerer the county of Anjou and the abbacy of Marmoutier together with some *villae*.<sup>233</sup> Louis did not held the

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<sup>230</sup> See below, pp. 75-9.

<sup>231</sup> Regine Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, p. 410: '...d'Eudes [...] devenu comte à Châteaudun puis à Angers, et abbé de Saint-Martin et Marmoutier, comtés et abbayes qu'il échangea en 852 avec Robert le Fort contre le comté de Troyes...' Le Jan here refers to: Karl Ferdinand Werner, 'Untersuchungen zur Frühzeit des französischen Fürstentums, 9. bis 10. Jahrhundert, IV', in: Hans Erich Stier and Fritz Ernst (eds.), *Die Welt als Geschichte* 19 (1959), pp. 146-93, at: pp. 152-69. I was however not able to find a reference here that Eudes indeed had been abbot of St. Martin as well as Marmoutier before Robert the Strong.

<sup>232</sup> Martène states that during Robert a monk abbot was present in Marmoutier, possibly basing himself on a later source recounting the attack of the Normans and the translation of St. Martin's relics to a safer place: Martène, *Histoire*, p. 173, and Chevalier's comment in note 1.

<sup>233</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, SS I, p.470; Martène, *Histoire*, p. 184.

abbacy very long as it was in 867 given to Hugo the Abbot, also count of Anjou (867-887).<sup>234</sup> From him the abbacy would continue to be passed down the line of the Robertian family and their descendants, the Capetians; eventually, in 982, Hugo Capet gives the monastery to the authority of the counts of Blois, who place it under the reforming care of the Cluniac abbot Mayeul.<sup>235</sup>

The succession of abbots of St. Martin and Marmoutier from the 830s on shows that Louis the Pious as well as Charles the Bald wanted to keep these communities close to him. Felten states that lay abbacies were always appointed to men who stood close to the king, but he also shows there were degrees in importance: men like Theoto, Adalard and Vivian, who fulfilled positions of respectively the king's chancellor, seneschal and chamberlain were definitely people of the highest level.<sup>236</sup>

Lelong shortly points out that the appointment of these important figures as abbots, had much to do with the strategic position of Tours and its communities.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, although the communities had since long been given in hands of important persons, it was especially from the 840s on that Tours was one of the important strategic places that the king wanted to hold on to in order to strengthen his position in this area. In the following section, I will examine the political context of the period around and after the time of St. Gorgon's translation and show that Charles's interest in Marmoutier was directly related to different kind of threats that existed in and for the region of Tours. This in turn will provide an important context to understand the ways in which he author of the *Historia translationis* had wanted to make St. Gorgon relevant for Marmoutier.

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<sup>234</sup> Lelong, 'Culture et société', p. 72; Martène, idem, p. 185.

<sup>235</sup> Farmer, *Communities*, p. 35; Oury, 'À Marmoutier-lès-Tours', p. 45; Lelong, idem, p. 72; Wood, *The proprietary church*, pp. 314-5.

<sup>236</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 178, 267, 229; Farmer, *Communities*, p. 35; Lelong, 'Culture et société', p. 24;

<sup>237</sup> Lelong, 'Culture et société', p. 69.

## ***2.6 Marmoutier: a monastery in the line of fire***

In an article on Charles the Bald's monastic policy Anne-Marie Helvetius shows that monasteries were especially important for Charles to control when situated in the frontier regions in times of political trouble.<sup>238</sup> She points out that even minor monasteries that are not specifically known to us for their high status, were given in the hands of important political persons. These monasteries although not known for their wealth or prestige, formed an important instrument of rule and power because of their strategic position, situated as they were at the fringes and borders of Charles's territory. In the light of these observations, a monastery like Marmoutier, with a considerable prestige and status and at the same time positioned in the frontier region of Neustria, would have been of even greater importance for Charles. Indeed, I wish to show that from the beginning of Charles's rule in the western empire Marmoutier's location in southern Neustria made it a very important tool in the king's security arrangements for this region.

Even during Louis the Pious's life his sons quarreled over their right on specific parts of the kingdom, quarrels which did not stop after Louis's death in 840. Although Louis had made an arrangement for the division of his empire between his three sons, the subsequent years witnessed anything but a peaceful cooperation. The sons pursued opposing claims and wishes, and their disagreements turned into a long enduring conflict. First between Charles the Bald who was granted the rule over the western part of the Empire with the support of Louis the German on the one side, and Lothar and Pippin II on the other; later, after Lothar's death in 855 Charles also became confronted with enmity of Louis the German.<sup>239</sup> Despite repeating demonstrations of power by Charles and several moments of reconciliation between

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<sup>238</sup> Anne-Marie Helvetius, 'L'abbatiale laïque comme relais du pouvoir royal', in: Régine Le Jan (ed.), *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne (début IXe siècle aux environs de 920)*, pp. 285-99.

<sup>239</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 180.

the brothers, the mid-ninth century was a period characterised by Charles's continuous struggle to secure his power.<sup>240</sup>

The battle between Charles and Lothar was for a good deal staged in the regions of southern Neustria - and more specifically the lower Loire valley - and Aquitaine. Tours and her religious communities located on Neustria's southern border found themselves right in the middle: to the south of Neustria, in Aquitaine, Lothar had an ally in his nephew Pippin II, who claimed the rule of Aquitaine that with Louis's division of the empire had been appointed to Charles.<sup>241</sup> To the west of southern Neustria Lothar had the support of the Bretons: Brittany, bordering Neustria in the west, was not so much a disputed area between the royal sons, but a region that proved not easily to succumb to Frankish rule, a state of affairs which proved very useful in Lothar's fight against Charles.<sup>242</sup> Besides that, Lothar also managed to win the favour of noblemen in Neustria itself.<sup>243</sup>

In these political fights, economical motives were also involved. Jean-Pierre Brunterc'h points out that the Loire-valley was also an important region to keep in control for economical and logistical reasons. The river Loire was 'une voie essentielle de communication, indispensable au négoce et au transport du sel', and therefore fulfilled a 'rôle primordial' in the economic life, at least in the first half of the ninth century. This, in combination with the fact that the Loire valley was a rich region<sup>244</sup>, would have made the area worth fighting for. Furthermore, the Loire-valley was susceptible for Norman raids. The Normans, especially from the mid-ninth century on, formed a hazard for cities and

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<sup>240</sup> The following discussion of the political struggles in this period I especially based on Nelson's publication *Charles the Bald* and Smith's publication *Province and Empire*. For full references, see note 164, and note 112. For an overview of the Breton relations with the Carolingians I used: Martijn van der Kaaij, 'De Bretonse kroon. Karolingen en Bretonse vorsten in de negende eeuw', in: De Jong, Mayke, Bos, Marie-Thérèse, and Rhijn, Carine van (eds.), *Macht en gezag in de negende eeuw* Utrechts Historische Cahiers 16 (1995), vol. 2, pp. 95-114.

<sup>241</sup> Smith, *Province*, p. 91.

<sup>242</sup> Smith, *idem*, pp. 91-2.

<sup>243</sup> Janet L. Nelson, 'The intellectual in politics: context, content and authorship in the capitulary of Coulaines, November 843', in: Lesley Smith and Benedicta Ward (eds.), *Intellectual life in the Middle Ages. Essays presented to Margaret Gibson* (London 1992), pp. 1-14, at: p. 4; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 157-8.

<sup>244</sup> *The Annals of St. Bertin*, ed. Nelson, p. 30, note 8.

monasteries alike, and those situated along the river Loire were very much exposed to their attacks. Head talks about the second half of the ninth century being ‘marked by the devastating raids of the Normans in Neustria’, and shows that Orléans was several times attacked (841, 856, 865, 868), having its city pillaged or burned down.<sup>245</sup> Tours, as pointed out earlier, had a similar experience, the city and its monastic communities being attacked at least one time, in 853.<sup>246</sup> So, Charles would not only have to protect this region against his brother’s attempts to undermine his rule, but also to protect its cities, monasteries and resources against alien attacks.<sup>247</sup>

The different interests of various parties were employed by Lothar to destabilise Charles’s position, and because of this Neustria, Aquitaine and Brittany proved to be potential breeding places of treachery for Charles.<sup>248</sup> The conflict between Charles and his brother was characterised by great uncertainty about whose loyalty lay where and whether this loyalty would endure. Aquitaine was a problematic area because over the past decades it had developed a ‘strong sense of regional identity’ and its noblemen were not likely to give themselves over any kind of overlordship like that of Charles.<sup>249</sup> Neustrian nobleman could form a danger because they were not a uniform group that accepted Charles’s rule, but had their own interests at heart. A part of this Neustrian nobility recognised that their wishes would be better fulfilled with Lothar as ruler and therefore turned to Lothar’s side in his battle against Charles.<sup>250</sup> Furthermore, the battle between Charles and Lothar gave perfect cause for

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<sup>245</sup> Head, *Hagiography*, p. 47.

<sup>246</sup> See above, p. 51-2 and note 189.

<sup>247</sup> Brunterc’h speaks of the necessity in the first half of the ninth century of ‘une protection rigoureuse’ for the lower-Loire region: Jean-Pierre Brunterc’h, ‘Le duché du Maine et la marche de Bretagne’, in: Hartsmut Atsma (ed.), *La Neustrie: les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850 : colloque historique international 2* vol. (Sigmaringen 1989), vol. 1, pp. 29-127, at: pp. 65-6.

<sup>248</sup> Nelson, ‘The intellectual’, p. 1: ‘Lothar had also supporters in the further west, in Neustria (the region between the Seine and the Loire), and especially in the lower Loire valley and in Brittany, longstanding trouble-spots for Carolingian rulers.’

<sup>249</sup> Smith, *Province*, p. 91.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibidem*.

local nobility to fight out her own battles with local enemies.<sup>251</sup> The richness of the Loire valley made the region ‘a cockpit of aristocratic rivalries’<sup>252</sup>, and as we will see later, there also existed enmity between local elites based on old quarrels and dissatisfactions about the distributions of *honores* like the rule over the counties of Tours and Nantes.

One of the great threats for Charles’s position in Neustria was the Breton Nominoë. He was a Breton lord and had been a loyal supporter of Louis the Pious. He was probably appointed *missus* of Brittany in 831 to act as the emperor’s agent, and during Louis’s reign seems to have been able to keep the Breton region under control.<sup>253</sup> However, with Louis’s death Nominoë’s loyalty did not automatically transfer to Charles. On the contrary, Nominoë started to act as his own man and did not accept Charles’s authority. This made him, as Smith states, ‘a vital ally’ for Lothar in his efforts to undermine Charles’s power in Neustria.<sup>254</sup> Indeed, the history of the relation between Charles and Nominoë is one characterised by defection and troublemaking in Neustria. Even at the start of his reign, Charles probably suspected Nominoë for having ties with Pippin: in 841 he was asked by Charles to affirm his loyalty to and recognition of Charles’s authority, to which Nominoë consented.<sup>255</sup> A few years later however, just after the treaty of Verdun in 843, we find him at the side of Lothar in the battle to seize hold of Nantes.<sup>256</sup> After this, so Smith states, ‘he became a persistent and dangerous threat to the security of Neustria.’<sup>257</sup> Even a treaty between him and Charles in the summer of 846, by which Nominoë was probably granted the rule over Brittany in turn for his recognition of Charles’s overlordship, could not secure this man’s loyalty. Already in the

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<sup>251</sup> Smith, *Province*, p. 92; Smith also states that the troubles with Nominoë’s revolt shows how ‘local rivalries and conflicts amongst the Carolingians themselves interlocked’: idem, pp. 99- 100. Nelson describes it as ‘the interconnectedness of local concerns with high-level Carolingian politics’. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 137.

<sup>252</sup> *The Annals of St. Bertin*, ed. Nelson, p. 30, note 8.

<sup>253</sup> Smith, *Province*, pp. 83, 85; Brunterc’h, ‘Le duché’, p. 52.

<sup>254</sup> Smith, idem, p. 91.

<sup>255</sup> Brunterc’h, ‘Le duché’, pp. 52-3.

<sup>256</sup> Brunterc’h, idem, pp. 66-8; Nelson, ‘The intellectual’, p.1; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 111, 137.

<sup>257</sup> Smith, *Province*, p. 94.



winter of 846 Breton attacks resumed. From 849 on Neustria again had to deal with attacks.<sup>258</sup> Nominoë's misbehaviour even led Frankish bishops in 850 to gather and to compose a letter in which they admonish Nominoë to turn from his wicked ways, amongst much else accusing him of pillaging, raping and burning down churches and the relics kept safe there.<sup>259</sup> Nominoë's troublemaking, however, was only to be stopped by his death in 851.

Another notorious defector in Neustrian regions who proved useful for Lothar was the nobleman Lambert (II), who fought for his own position and rule over (the region of) Nantes.<sup>260</sup> This man already had a history of defection: his father or close kinsman Lambert had been count of Nantes under Louis the Pious, but had joined Lothar in the rebellion against Louis, and for this reason was dishonoured by the king. Lambert (II) followed in his kinsman's footsteps. In 840 he supported Lothar, then went over to Charles's side in 841, but in 843 defects to Charles again and joins Nominoë in the battle over Nantes.<sup>261</sup> In 845 Lambert, together with Pippin makes his peace with Charles and he is reinstated in the Breton march to counter the threat of Nominoë.<sup>262</sup> However, in 850 he has once again gone over to Nominoë's side, attacking Neustria frontiers, taking in Rennes and Nantes and ravaging Maine.<sup>263</sup>

The potential for defection, as can be seen in the case of Lambert, was tightly linked to the possession of lands and the *honores* people were granted by the king. Local nobleman defected Charles when they were promised better futures by the other side. Lothar for example knew how to win the loyalty of a considerable group of Neustrian noblemen in 840

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<sup>258</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 157, 165.

<sup>259</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 20.

<sup>260</sup> Smith, *Province*, pp. 53, 94-5.

<sup>261</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 136-7; Smith, *Province*, p. 94.

<sup>262</sup> Nelson, *idem*, p. 165.

<sup>263</sup> Smith, *Province*, pp. 96, 98; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 165. Smith also shows that Lambert was part of the 'Widonid' kin-group, a family that had its ties to Breton as well as Western Neustrian regions; these kinsmen seem also to have been entangled in Neustrian church business: Lambert himself for example was abbot of St. Aubin at Angers, and two archbishops of Tours, Landramnus (816-835) and Landramnus II (847 – c. 850) may have been related to him: Smith, *idem*, pp. 52-3. This family had rivalries with another local family, that of Rorigo, to which Vivian and Rainald belonged, Smith, *idem*, pp. 98-9.

when he promised them to affirm and increase their *honores*.<sup>264</sup> But it also worked the other way around. As pointed out by Nelson Lothar used the nobility's *honores* as a leverage, when in 840 he threatened all men who refused to be loyal to him to deprive them of their lands.<sup>265</sup> Likewise, monasteries also found themselves highly dependent on the kings' policies, for example when holding property in regions ruled by different parties. As Nelson shows, the monastery of Ferrière itself was situated in Charles's region, but one of its depended houses, St. Josse, was in 840 located in an area under Lothar's rule. This meant the monastery found itself in a tight spot, caught between the two battling parties.<sup>266</sup> Lothar gave the abbacy of St. Josse to one of his own men, much to the aggrievement of the community of Ferrière, who pleaded with Lothar to return the community of Ferrière.<sup>267</sup>

Looking back at Marmoutier's position during this difficult period of Charles's rule, it cannot be a coincidence that Charles had a special interest in the monastery as testified by the charters and appointments from the 840s and 850s. It seems likely that by keeping Marmoutier, as a monastery positioned in such a fragile region, under close control, Charles tried to keep his foot down in southern Neustria. The distribution of offices in Tours and the city's environment also show glimpses of Charles's attempts to deal with the diverging interest of local noblemen in this region described earlier. Charles carefully distributed *honores* to people who were loyal to him and thereby created power bases from where he could exert control over the area. As Nelson shows, Charles made some significant strategic changes in 843 to get Neustria more tightly secured, and in these adaptations, Tours and its religious communities were directly involved. Adalard, count of Tours, and probably lay-

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<sup>264</sup> Smith, *idem*, p. 91.

<sup>265</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 108: 'He was threatening to dis-honour anyone who refused to come over to him: in other words, the price of continued loyalty to Charles would be loss of estates granted by previous kings (whether as benefices or as lands associated with office-holding).'

<sup>266</sup> Nelson, *idem*, p. 110.

<sup>267</sup> *Idem*. Later St. Josse was used by Charles the Bald to grant as a benefice to his own men or persons who had just joined Charles' side, to much dissatisfaction and frustration of abbot Lupus of Ferrière: Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 121, 128.

abbot of St. Martin from 834 to 843<sup>268</sup>, in spite of holding these prestigious offices, had his mind set on land in the regions of Middle Francia, where he his roots lay. As this region was since 843 part of Lothar's territory, Adalard formed a possible threat for Charles.<sup>269</sup> At the request of the earlier mentioned count Vivian Charles grants several beneficiaries of lands to different Neustria laymen and to Vivian's brother Rainald, who for the first time is mentioned as abbot of Marmoutier in 843.<sup>270</sup> Nelson interprets the distribution of these beneficiaries as a way to ascertain loyalty in this vulnerable region and to get less dependent of the untrustworthy Adalard. The fact that this was done at the request of Vivian who, in contrast with Adalard, belonged to a local Neustrian family, shows that in this situation Charles employed local nobility to secure his position.<sup>271</sup>

Le Jan provides another interesting insight into the Neustrian situation. She points out that in the 830s and 840s a certain aristocratic family gathers important Neustrian offices such as the abbacies of St. Martin and Marmoutier and the counties of southern Neustria in her fold. A certain count Eudes was in Orléans (and his brother William in Blois) until 834; the earlier mentioned Adalard who became abbot of St. Martin (and possibly also Marmoutier)<sup>272</sup> was the brother-in-law of this Eudes; another member of this group was abbot of Cormery (a monastery related to St. Martin of Tours) around 844/5, and another Eudes (the son William of Blois) according to Le Jan had held the abbacies of Marmoutier and St. Martin before passing them over to Robert the Strong.<sup>273</sup> It appears that by means of these examples Le Jan wants to make clear that local aristocratic family groups tried to exert control over their area

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<sup>268</sup> See above, p. 59.

<sup>269</sup> Nelson, 'The intellectual', p. 3-4; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.128.

<sup>270</sup> See above, pp. 59-60.

<sup>271</sup> At the same time Charles was careful not to completely do away with Adalard, as this might provoke Adalard to definitely run over to the side of Lothar: Nelson, 'The intellectual', p. 4; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 57, note 34.

<sup>272</sup> See above, p. 59.

<sup>273</sup> Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, p. 410.

and properties through these benefices.<sup>274</sup> Still, Le Jan's observation does not mean that the monasteries were just given from the one relative to the other without the king's involvement. The appointment policy of Louis and Charles for Marmoutier and St. Martin shows that the king had (and indeed wanted to have) the say-so in the distribution of offices in this region. I therefore think that this case is an example of how regional and royal power interplayed. There was a local family that had a certain position and their own interests to defend, with whom the king had to deal and negotiate in his strategic arrangements; on the other hand, as the example of Adalard shows, the king had the power to control and make significant changes in the distribution of offices (and power) in the region. Local groups such as the "Eudes-family" could not - at least not in this period - enjoy an unrestrained power-monopoly.

There is evidence that local rivalries also played their part in Charles's plans for Tours and its monasteries. As I have shown, the two brothers Vivian and Rainald both held abbacies there from about 843 to respectively 851 and 846.<sup>275</sup> Here Charles probably made special arrangements to put members of a family whose loyalty he could be sure of in 'a key strategic position'.<sup>276</sup> Vivian and Rainald had a history of continuous loyalty to Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald and a history of rivalry with some of Charles's opponents. In 834 a certain Vivian, probably a close kinsman of Vivian and Rainald, was killed together with other noblemen such as Theoto, the abbot of St. Martin, while fighting at the side of Louis the Pious against three important henchmen of Lothar, the rebellious Matfrid, once count of Orléans, and Hugh, once count of Tours, and the Lambert mentioned previously.<sup>277</sup> About a decade later, one Rainald, *dux* of Nantes, loyal supporter of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald and probably also a close kinsman of Vivian and Rainald, was killed by Nominoë and Lambert II

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<sup>274</sup> Ibidem: '...à partir des années 830-40, les groupes des parenté carolingiens utilisèrent leurs bases locales pour contrôler directement de vastes espaces régionaux, en rassemblant comtés et abbatiats laïques.'

<sup>275</sup> See above, pp. 59-61.

<sup>276</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 128.

<sup>277</sup> Ibidem; *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, SS I, p. 428; Nithard, *Historiarum Libri IIII*, ed. Ernest Müller, *MGH*, SSRG, 44 (3rd ed., Hannover/Leipzig 1907), p. 7; also: Brunterc'h, 'Le duché', pp. 57-8.

in 843.<sup>278</sup> As Nelson points out, the presence of the two brothers as abbots of St. Martin and Marmouter is a good example of how Charles could turn the existence of rival local groups of nobility who ‘competed for influence’ to his own advantage, by incorporating certain members of these groups in his political arrangements.<sup>279</sup>

In 851 the royal quarrel in the regions of Brittany and Neustria reached a new phase. Nominoe’s death made Charles decide to attack the Breton forces of Nominoe’s son Erispoe. This battle of Jengland turned out to be a disaster for Charles. He was not only defeated, but also many of his Neustrian supporters were killed, among them Vivian. A year later however, the notorious defector Lambert also died. This state of affairs called for a ‘redistribution of Neustrian *honores*’.<sup>280</sup> In this new phase, St. Martin and Marmoutier would continue to serve as political tool. In 852 Robert the Strong, a very close supporter of Charles, was appointed as lay abbot of Marmoutier and made count of Angers. According to Nelson he is appointed to these offices to control Neustria in cooperation with some local magnates.<sup>281</sup> However, Charles also had plans for his first-born son Louis the Stammerer. This son, born in 846, eventually had to become the ruler over Neustria as a sub-kingdom. In preparation for this, Louis is in 856 installed in Le Mans to rule over Neustria, under the supervision and protection of the Breton Erispoe, with whom Charles had established a bond of conpaternity.<sup>282</sup> As would later transpire, this plan was not meant to work out. First, Charles

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<sup>278</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 136, 128. As Smith shows, Rainald and Vivian probably belonged to the “Rorigonid”-kingroup to which many *Rainaldi* of the ninth century belonged: Smith, *Province*, p. 54. She also shows that ‘old aristocratic feuds’ could fire up between this “Rorigonid”- and the “Widonid”-kingroup to which the earlier mentioned Lambert belonged: Smith, *idem*, pp. 98-9.

<sup>279</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 57 and note 34. Nelson here also points out that there were in fact two strategies to work with in case of these kind of local rivalries: either make the one party an ally to counter the other, or bring in an outsider to counter both parties in their local strives.

<sup>280</sup> Smith, *Province*, p. 101.

<sup>281</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 166; Smith, *idem*, p. 101. Smith states he is given ‘the command of large duchy stretching from Tours and Angers on the Loire to the Seine’.

<sup>282</sup> Nelson, *idem*, pp. 182-3, Smith, *Province*, p. 110.

met much opposition from local nobility, including Charles's own man Robert.<sup>283</sup> Later, in 860, in an attempt to continue his plan, Charles gave Louis the lay abbacy of St. Martin, but in 862 it was Louis himself who defected his father.<sup>284</sup> After his defection he was once again given some offices, but now outside of Neustria, namely the county of Meaux and the lay abbacy of St. Crispin.<sup>285</sup> Some years later, in 865, Charles seems to have wanted Louis back on the Neustrian stage as he granted him the abbacy of Marmoutier. The *Annals of St. Bertin* tell us that Charles 'neither restored nor withheld his royal title, but he endowed him with only the county of Anjou, the abbacy of Marmoutier and some *villae*'.<sup>286</sup> The fact that Charles had given Louis the abbacy of St. Crispin in Meaux earlier on, and now granted him that of Marmoutier, is a sign that Louis once again had entered the 'competition' for a position in Neustria, and that Marmoutier in the second half of the ninth century continued to be important for Charles in his delegation and regulation of power in Neustria.

### ***Marmoutier in the ninth century: a short recapitulation***

In the first part of this chapter, I showed that ninth-century Marmoutier was a respected royal monastery. Immunity charters testify that Marmoutier was probably already regarded by Charlemagne as a valuable community, and continued to be seen as such by Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald. Both kings as well as local nobility expressed their special interest in Marmoutier because of its link with St. Martin. Besides that, the granting of the lay abbacy of Marmoutier and St. Martin to the king's closest men shows that Louis and Charles wished to keep these communities under close control.

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<sup>283</sup> Louis is even driven out of Le Mans by rebellious Neustrians and Bretons, under the leadership of Robert the Strong. They also send for help to Louis the German, who after Lothar's death allied with Charles's opponents. Smith, *idem*, pp. 102-3; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 173, 182-3. In 860 Louis the Stammerer receives the abbacy of St. Martin and in 861 Robert the Strong is received back at Charles's court: Smith, *idem*, p. 104.

<sup>284</sup> Because of his dissatisfaction with only being granted the abbacy of St. Martin and still being kept under the authority of a *bajulus*: Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 204; Smith, *Province*, p. 104.

<sup>285</sup> Nelson, *idem*, p. 204; *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, SS I, p. 458.

<sup>286</sup> *The Annals of St. Bertin*, ed. Nelson, p. 128; *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Pertz, *MGH*, SS I, p. 470.

The restitution charters of 845 and 852 are issued in a relative small time-span, considering that the earlier charters concerning Marmoutier (with the exception of Marmoutier's immunity charter of 843) date from the beginning of the 830s. It suggests that under Charles there was a special interest in the material state of Marmoutier which coincides with the situation Marmoutier found itself in around the mid-ninth century. The monastery was located in southern Neustria and pinpointed between various political parties in the battle between Charles and his brother Lothar. Similar to other monasteries positioned on the fringes of Charles's territory or in disputed areas, both Marmoutier and St. Martin of Tours were employed by Charles to secure his position in this area against the attacks of Lothar and companions. Not only did Charles, in continuation of his father's policy, directly involve himself in Marmoutier by appointing his closest men as abbots, but he also used these men in order to regulate the local power balance in a time where loyalties – strongly based on the possession of lands and honores – were continuously shifting. By strategic appointments, Charles could diminish the influence of potential dangerous persons, and, the other way around, could secure the loyalty of important local noblemen.

The interest of local families were also in another way relevant for Marmoutier. The special connection between the king and Marmoutier might well have resulted in a wish of certain noblemen and noblewomen to associate themselves with this monastery. They in any case show their interest by donating or selling certain property and provide sustenance for the monks on special feast days of St. Martin. Besides that, local interest in Marmoutier may also have been the result of a local family's pursuit of interesting benefices in the region of Tours, as discussed by Le Jan.

The political situation Marmoutier found itself in may well have had its influence on its life and welfare. It may well have experienced how political instability meant an increased royal

involvement in its business and resources. In this light, the quotation of the malediction of psalm 82 in the *Historia translationis* appears to be very significant, as it was also used at the mid-ninth century synods as a warning against secular infringement in monasteries. Furthermore, in chapter one we have seen how St. Gorgon is in the *Historia translationis* directly related to the need of the monastery to be restored in certain things it lacked. Might this, in the light of the political situation around the mid-ninth century, be interpreted as a reference to the community's call for a restoration of certain privileges and properties that it had lost or was in fear of losing as a result of the politically troubled times?

In the following chapter, I will start with a discussion of the evidence that actual restorations at Marmoutier took place and the role that St. Gorgon's may have played in this. Then I wish to continue with an exploration of the implications of the malediction of psalm 82 in the 840s and 850s synods and their relevance for Marmoutier's position in the political troubles contemporary to Gorgon's translation.



## Chapter 3: The protection of St. Gorgon

### 3.1 Relics and restorations

As noticed in the discussion of the description of St. Gorgon's arrival in Marmoutier and his integration in the monastic community, the author related the martyr's translation directly to a promise made in Rome, namely that with St. Gorgon's help the monastery and its religious life would be restored in those things it was in want of.<sup>287</sup> We have also seen that the author in the beginning of the story appears to hint at some kind of new constructions at Marmoutier, although his formulation remains vague.<sup>288</sup> For Lelong the combination of these statements point to certain material restorations or constructions taking place in Marmoutier (with reconstructions taking place, new resources would have been needed) and here justly points to a charter issued in 846 by Vivian – here mentioned as the the caretaker and ruler of both St. Martin of Tours and Marmoutier – that testifies to some kind of restoration activities in the oratory of the Virgin Mary in Marmoutier.<sup>289</sup>

According to the charter, the priest Ebernus, fulfilling the duty of treasurer of Marmoutier (he is mentioned as the *presbyter custos*) had requested Vivian's consent and help in the restoration of the oratory of the Virgin Mary. This oratory is defined as a crypt (*cryptam*) that had once been erected by St. Martin himself and situated inside the monastery (*infra idem monasterium*) near the entrance. The priest had asked Vivian to arrange or consent to the necessary funding and equipment by using some of Marmoutier's property. Vivian consents: he states that the plans have his personal approval as well as that of both

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<sup>287</sup> See above, pp. 29-30.

<sup>288</sup> See above, pp. 19-20.

<sup>289</sup> For Lelong's statements: Lelong, *L'abbaye*, pp. 24-5. and note 81. The charter states thus: 'Itaque ego in Dei nomine Vivianus, qui, licet indigne, tamen curam atque regimen abbatis S. Martini basilicae necnon et Majoris-monasterii sortitus sum, notum esse volumus sanctae Dei ecclesiae fidelibus atque cunctis successoribus nostris, abbatibus scilicet praedictae ecclesiae, quoniam innotuit nobis, quod quidam servitorum ejusdem ecclesiae atque monasterii, quod Majus nuncupatur, atque precatus est, nomine Ebernus, presbyter custos memorati loci, quod quoddam oratorium infra idem monasterium situm atque a beato Martino fundatum, quod est in honore B[eatae] Mariae semper virginis, relevare atque ex rebus ejusdem abbatis honorare satageremus.', *Ann. OSB*, vol. 2, Appendix, no. 66, pp. 694-5, at: p. 694.

communities (St. Martin and Marmoutier) and he therefore has made sure that certain properties – little estates and parts of lands, including some vineyards and pastures, some of these once given to Marmoutier by members of St. Martin of Tours - will for eternity be held by Ebrenus and his successors for the benefit of the oratory of the Virgin Mary. It is explicitly stated that none of these possessions are to be used for other purposes, stating that they are not to be any attempts by them to diminish any it: it is to remain fully to the disposal of the oratory.<sup>290</sup>

Is this charter evidence that St. Gorgon's translation was related to the restoration or reform of Marmoutier as the author of the *Historia translationis* suggested?<sup>291</sup> The translation and the restorations at the oratory in Marmoutier are in any case closely related to each other, not only because both the translation as the initiatives of restoration seem to have taken place in or around 846, but also because the *Historia translationis* explicitly mentions the oratory in relation to St. Gorgon's *depositio*, describing it as the place next to which St. Gorgon was to be buried.<sup>292</sup> Furthermore, as Lelong points out, there is evidence that a church was built for the relics of St. Gorgon: not only does the author refer to this church in the *Historia translationis*<sup>293</sup>, but a charter from 1096 and a map from 1148 testify to a church of St.

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<sup>290</sup> 'Neque sui [Hebrenus's] successores, qui post eum in eadem ecclesia, dum ipse dispendia vitae passus fuerit, aliquid de his quae praediximus imminuere praesumant, sed integre, sicut disposuimus, eidem loco in perpetuum permaneat', idem, p. 695.

<sup>291</sup> The introduction of the charter at first sight hints at irregularities in the religious life of the community, as it speaks of carrying the way of life to a higher level (*provehit ad incrementa sanctae conversationis*) and the need to support or provide maintenance (*sublevetur*) against 'the arrogance of unjust life' (*fastus iniquae vitae*) and the 'idleness of the human weakness' (*inertia humanae imbecillitatis*). However, a similar introduction can be found in a charter issued in the period 1020-1037 of a certain Rainard donating property to Marmoutier, so the introduction of the 846 charter may not specifically refer to restorations or reforms taking place in Marmoutier: *Eudes, comte de Blois, de Tours, de Chartres, de Troyes et de Meaux (995-1037) et Thibaud, son frere (995-1004)*, ed. Leonce Lex (Troyes 1892), no. 18, pp. 150-2.

<sup>292</sup> See above, p. 28-9 and note 98.

<sup>293</sup> At the end of the description of decisions made for Gorgon's *depositio*, the author states that Gorgon was eventually to be buried in a church constructed next to the monastery: see above, pp. 33-4 and note 115. I agree with Lelong that if one also follows the author in his statement that Gorgon's resting place was to be next to the Virgin's oratory, according to the charter of Vivian situated inside and next to the entry of the monastery, this suggests that the church of St. Gorgon was built not far from and to the west of the Virgin's oratory. Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 25 and note 82, and plate III. I imagine the church being erected next to the oratory only separated by the monastery's wall (the oratory being situated *inside* the monastery, and the church *next to* the monastery).

Gorgon at Marmoutier.<sup>294</sup> I agree with Lelong that these pieces of information, including the fact that at the request of Rainald in 845 certain properties were restituted to Marmoutier, create the impression that efforts were made by the abbots Vivian and Rainald and, considering the efforts of Ebrenus, by the community of Marmoutier herself, to bring about restorations and to increase the material state of Marmoutier.<sup>295</sup>

But what then was the place of these relics in the restorations? In chapter 2.1 I mentioned Heinzemann's remark that in translation stories the translation of relics was often related to the dedication of a church. This church could be a newly-built church for which the community wanted new relics, and this could also have been the case for Marmoutier. Furthermore, these new relics were intended (and often resulted in) the boosting of the monastery's prestige, increasing the flow of pilgrims and donations. I believe that in Marmoutier's case the boosting of prestige had even more significance considering that the community was respected for its special link with St. Martin, but lacked the actual body of the founding father. In this light the possession of prestigious relics of their own must have been a great improvement for Marmoutier. And what kind of relics would have given a Carolingian monastery more prestige than that of a Roman martyr? As pointed out before, Rome was the cradle of early-christian culture and traditions and stood for everything to which the Carolingians aspired in their pursuit of correct christianity. Likewise, the martyrs who had died for their faith in the early periods of christianity and were buried in Rome were the most prestigious, authentic and virtuous saints one could acquire. As stated before, the fact that the *Historia translationis* places much emphasis on the Roman background of St. Gorgon and that his Romaness appears to be the only characteristic the author seems to have wanted to

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<sup>294</sup> Lelong, *L'abbaye*, p. 25 and note 82; Lelong, 'Culture et société', pp. 68-9.

<sup>295</sup> Lelong, *idem*, p. 25: 'Reste, cependant, l'impression que la prise en charge de Marmoutier par Renaud et Vivien fut marquée par un grand effort d'accroissement de ses biens et, sans doute, de restauration des bâtiments.' Lelong also points out that in the light of this evidence that the discovery of certain Carolingian masonry fragments may also be appointed to this period: Lelong, *idem*, p. 25 and plate IV.

identify him by<sup>296</sup>, shows that Gorgon's Romaness is what made him especially important for Marmoutier. Seen in this light of Roman prestige, it is even possible that Marmoutier's community, by the acquisition and installation of St. Gorgon in its monastery, wanted to step out of the shadow of its big sister, the monastery of St. Martin in Tours, which flourished because of its possession of St. Martin's relics.

Interestingly enough, the author of the *Historia translationis* seems to have wanted to make clear that St. Gorgon is to function on an equal level with St. Martin. In chapter one I discussed the possible meanings of 'pretiosissimi confessoris Christi, cui sociandus erat': the sentence may not only state that St. Gorgon had to be united with Marmoutier by St. Martin, but may also imply a cooperative bond between St. Martin and St. Gorgon.<sup>297</sup> This idea is supported by the fact that at the one hand, efforts were made to restore the Virgin's oratory where St. Martin was commemorated (as the charter of 846 testifies) and on the other hand, a special place for St. Gorgon was constructed next to it.<sup>298</sup> It seems that the boosting of Marmoutier's prestige consisted of the edification of the existing cult place of the prestigious confessor St. Martin, the apostle of Gaul<sup>299</sup>, bishop of Tours, and founding father of Marmoutier, as well as the addition of a new and equally prestigious one, that of the early-Christian Roman martyr Gorgon.

This co-existence of St. Martin and St. Gorgon within Marmoutier may also reflect Marmoutier's stance towards the monastic community in Tours. The charter of Vivian explicitly states that both communities had given their consent for the restoration plans of Marmoutier's oratory. Furthermore, as observed in chapter one, the *Historia translationis* suggests that not only monks and priests of Marmoutier, but also members of the community of Tours took part in the expedition to Rome. These aspects might point to a sort of

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<sup>296</sup> See above, p. 37.

<sup>297</sup> See above, pp. 27-8 and note 93.

<sup>298</sup> As the author states that St. Gorgon is to be buried next to St. Martin's place, which he then specifies as the oratory of the Virgin Mary, see above, p. 28-9 and note 98.

<sup>299</sup> See above, p. 39 and note 128.

cooperation between the two communities in the plans of restorations and the acquisition of a new, Roman saint.

Whatever its exact attitude towards the community St. Martin of Tours, Marmoutier would surely not have had any plans to replace Martin's cult with that of Gorgon or to surpass their founding father's prestige by means of the acquisition of Roman relics. This would have been an unwise move as the kings highly esteemed Marmoutier because of its special link with St. Martin. It seems far more likely that with the acquisition of St. Gorgon the community rather wanted to add a new prestigious saint to their monastery that would strengthening its position and its right to exist.<sup>300</sup>

It would be interesting to dive deeper into the relation between Marmoutier and St. Martin of Tours and the place of Gorgon's relics in this. However, I wish to follow another lead. I earlier pointed out that there are indications that the restorations the *Historia translationis* talks about in relation to St. Gorgon's translation had deeper implications than a boosting of her religious prestige. As said, the malediction of psalm 82 with which St. Gorgon's settlement in Marmoutier is associated, was used at the 840s and 850s synods where the secular infringement in the church and her abuse of church property was condemned. May the author have wanted to resonate these discussions? And what could this say about the function of St. Gorgon for Marmoutier? May the restorations to which St. Gorgon is connected be understood in the light of the mid-ninth century discussions on secular intrusion in church business? In order to answer these questions, I now wish to start with an examination of the meaning of the psalm's malediction in the context of the 840s/850s synods.

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<sup>300</sup> Geary points to the use of relics as a way of survival, as a way to secure the continuous existence of a monastery: Geary, *Furta sacra*, pp. 70-1.

### ***3.2 The mid-ninth century synods***

Around the mid-ninth century, the appropriation of church property for secular uses was a hot topic. The proceedings of the 840s and 850s synods reveal a great concern about the intrusion of the laity in church business. This concern however was not unique for the mid-ninth century. At the Merovingian councils, the secular uses to which ecclesiastical property was put already formed a point of debate<sup>301</sup>, and the issue was anything but decided in the Carolingian period. As explained above, under the Carolingians the relation between the church and the king became tighter, with the kings drawing monasteries within their sphere of power and employing them as political tools. Here, a dualist approach from the side of bishops and monastic communities towards the king's protection was unavoidable: on the one hand the monasteries needed royal protection against for example the hands of local nobility<sup>302</sup>, but on the other hand experienced<sup>303</sup> that this royal protection had its prices. The king would expect certain privileges in return, such as the right to mobilise monastic resources in times of warfare.

Here it is important to understand that all parties involved in the discussions –laity and clergymen alike - agreed on the point that abuse of church property was not to be tolerated. What really was under discussion was the boundary between proper and improper use and at what point this boundary was crossed. Moreover, in defining this boundary, each party had their own interests to defend. The bishops' criticisms at the synods, for example, was not just fuelled by religious zeal, but also by their wish to prevent secular nobility from diminishing their own power over churches and monasteries.<sup>303</sup> Monasteries and their (lay) abbots were very eager to defend their privileges and property against other powers that might diminish

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<sup>301</sup> Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien*, Konziliengeschichte, reihe A: Darstellungen (Paderborn etc. 1989), p. 458.

<sup>302</sup> Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p. 57, as quoted above, p. 46.

<sup>303</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotating space*, p. 101; Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 302-3. Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 794.

their own position. Likewise, the king was within his rights to make certain claims on monasteries in return for his royal patronage.

It is not my purpose to provide an overview of the developments in the discussions in the ninth century. I am primarily interested in the relation between St. Gorgon, the psalm, and some of the discussions around the mid-ninth century where the psalm is employed. The key-issue here is that (parts of) the malediction of psalm 82 are at the synods used as a warning and a curse against those secular people who, according to the bishops, crossed the line as they involved themselves in the church more than was rightful. I want to examine in what terms this crossing of the boundary is described and gain an understanding of the place of the psalm in these rhetorics. This examination of the bishops' rhetorics may help us understand the message of the *Historia translationis* concerning St. Gorgon's function in Marmoutier. However, before I dive into an exploration of the 840s and 850s synods, I first wish to give a short overview of preceding discussions on secular uses of church property.

The ideas and themes employed in the 840s and 850s concerning this topic can be seen as a continuation and development of discussions in earlier decades. At the provincial reform synods in 813, for example, the use of church property for secular goals was one of the important issues. Here, according to Hartmann, new formulations of the problem were made that would be influential for the following ninth century policy concerning the alienation of church property and lay involvement in ecclesiastical business.<sup>304</sup> Later, at Louis's reform synods of Aachen in 818/9, a promise was made to put a stop to the secularisation of church property.<sup>305</sup> It was affirmed that monasteries were free to choose their own abbots, but this regulation did not seem to have much effect, as Louis and his son Charles continued to place

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<sup>304</sup> Hartmann, *Synoden*, pp. 458, 138. For the five reform synods of 813: *MGH*, Conc. II, 1, no. 34-8. The series of five provincial reform synods in 813 took place at Arles, Reims, Mainz, Tours and Chalon.

<sup>305</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 792.

their own men at the head of monasteries.<sup>306</sup> In 822 the bishop Agobard of Lyon at the court of Attigny criticised the practice of the king's distribution of church property as benefice to his men, which greatly disturbed the lay nobility; as Wood states, his ideas were thought to be 'radical and aggressive'.<sup>307</sup> It is in one of Agobard's letters (on *de dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum*) that, to my knowledge, for the first time in the ninth century psalm 82, 13-14 is used in the context of secular infringement.<sup>308</sup> After Agobard, similar accusations seem to have been voiced by Wala, abbot of Corbie, who according to Paschasius Radbertus's *Epitaphium Arsenii* at the assembly of Aachen in 828-9 criticised the secular intrusion in church business, such as the appointment of abbots.<sup>309</sup> Shortly after Wala's performance, at the reform synod of Paris in 829, the topic of secularisation was a point on the agenda.<sup>310</sup> At the synod of Aachen in 836 the discussion intensified once again<sup>311</sup>, but it was the 840s that really witnessed an new upsurge of criticism on lay infringement in the church. This is first and foremost reflected in the series of synods of this decade, namely those of Coulaines 843, Yütz 844, Ver 844, Beauvais 845, Meaux-Paris 845/6 and Paris 846/7.<sup>312</sup> In contrast with the earlier discussions, it was in the 840s – at least from Ver 844 on - that the existence of the office of lay abbot in itself became heavily criticised.<sup>313</sup> In the 850s, these topics were once again dealt with at the synods of Quierzy 858 and Tusey 860 in combination with the malediction of psalm 82.

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<sup>306</sup> Mayke de Jong, *The penitential state. Authority and atonement in the age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge 2009), pp. 166-7; De Jong, 'Power', p. 635; Wood, idem, p. 792; *MGH*, Capit. I, no. 138 (*Capitulare ecclesiasticum*), c. 5, p. 276.

<sup>307</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 795; De Jong, *The penitential state*, pp. 142-3

<sup>308</sup> *MGH*, Epp. Kar. III, 4, no. 5, p. 173.

<sup>309</sup> De Jong, *The penitential state*, p. 167. Ganz, *Corbie*, p. 29. For an impression of some of Agobard and Wala's (or Radbertus's) thoughts on the appropriation of church property, I used: De Jong, *The penitential state*, pp. 102-7, 142-5, 164-70. The fact that the *Epitaphium* dates from two decades later raises the question whether the ways in which Wala expresses his concern is not more a product of the 840s, but De Jong notes that his basic accusations fit well within the 820's discussions: De Jong, idem, p. 107.

<sup>310</sup> Wood, *The proprietary church*, pp. 798-9.

<sup>311</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>312</sup> Meaux-Paris 845/6 can be regarded as an accumulation of earlier discussions: Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 799; Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 208; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 300.

<sup>313</sup> Felten states that earlier lay abbacy was in itself not criticised, only the fact that lay abbacy could result in abuse of church property, Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 297-9; also: De Jong, 'Power', p. 635.



Here, I wish to focus on two early synods, namely Ver 844 and of Paris 847. These address some essential and recurrent themes employed in the discussions on church property, and at the same time, connect them with psalm 82 to emphasise their message.

The synod of Ver 844 is the first in the series of synods to quote psalm 82.<sup>314</sup> In the last capitulary the bishops direct their admonitions to the king and his men<sup>315</sup> (*vos ac proceres caeterique fideles*), bewailing the fact that through all kinds of wickedness (*sceleribus*) and robbery (*rapinis*) the property of the church is employed for worldly uses (*in usus saecularium detinentur*). Because of this, the church's possessions do not reach their intended goal, namely those persons who are depended of the church for their sustenance, such as the servants of God and the poor.<sup>316</sup> In relation to these accusations, the bishop use a quote from the fifth-century writer Julianus Pomerus – in fact a much recurrent quote in these discussions - namely that the property of the church is the votive offering of the faithful, the inheritance of the poor and the redemption of the souls (*possessio ecclesiae votum est fidelium, patrimonium pauperum, redemptio animarum*).<sup>317</sup> The capitulary makes clear that by stealing from the church the greedy laity clearly act in contradiction with these terms:

How then could anyone dare to snatch away the offering to God made by another [man]? By which kind of rashness has he presumed to take possession of the inheritance of the poor? By which some redeem their souls, on what account do others thereupon destroy their [souls]? Thus, what never has been heard of before, [is that] lay people take full/anew possession of certain venerable places, of whom some usurp

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<sup>314</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 7, pp. 42-4.

<sup>315</sup> Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 459.

<sup>316</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 7, c. 12, pp. 42-3. Another example of this idea can be found in Quierzy 858: *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 41, c. 7, p. 414 and note 47.

<sup>317</sup> This is a quote from Julianus Pomerus's *De vita contemplativa*, for example already quoted at Chalon 813 and the ecclesiastical capitula of 818-9: Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 459 and *MGH*, Conc. III, no.7, p. 43, note 46. According to Wood this quote was also used in Paris 829 and Aachen 836: Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 794 and notes 40-1.

a part for themselves, and some by multiple times breaking off estates, make that [these] are given to themselves as inheritance.<sup>318</sup>

At this point, it is made clear that those people who steal from the church do not only show unmoral behaviour by depriving the needy of their incomes. Their actions are also unjust in more legal terms. That which from early times on had been acknowledged as the inheritance – the *patrimonium* or *hereditas* - of the poor, certain noblemen now claim as their inheritance. But who are these people who *ex integro*, that is anew or as a whole, take possession of certain holy places? According to the editor, they are to be understood as those people who have received a church or monastery as a benefice. Indeed, considering that the bishops direct their admonitions to the king and his *fideles*, it is most likely that the lay beneficiaries, whom the king granted the rule and authority over a monastery, are the defending party.<sup>319</sup>

In a reaction to this evil practice, certain biblical passages are brought to the audience's attention in order to underline the inviolability of church's property. First, a reference is made to Genesis 47, 20: because of a great famine all Egyptian people were forced to sell their lands to the Pharaoh. The priests however, who lived on the incomes they received from the Pharaoh, were spared this fate and could keep hold of their lands. So, the bishops point out, even in a land where not the one true God (*solus et verus deus*) but false gods (*falsi diti*) were venerated, the property of the priests was protected against alienation.<sup>320</sup> Another biblical example follows, reminding of the sad case of Oza (or Uzzah), who was killed by God during the procession of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. As soon as the

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<sup>318</sup> 'Votum ergo alterius quomodo quisquam deo aufferre? hereditatem pauperum qua temeritate praesumit invadere? unde alii suas animas redimerunt, cur inde alii suas perdunt? Itaque quaedam loca venerabilia, quod numquam antea auditum est, laici ex integro possident, quorundam partem sibi vindicant, quorundam predia multipliciter divisa in hereditatem sibi dari fecerunt.', *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 7, c. 12, p. 43.

<sup>319</sup> *Idem*, p. 43, note 47; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 299.

<sup>320</sup> This passage from Genesis is also used by Agobard of Lyons in one of his letters in combination with psalm 82: *MGH*, Epp. Kar. III, 4, no. 5., c. 15, pp. 171-2; for a discussion of Agobard's use of this text, see for example: Wood, *The proprietary church*, pp. 795-7, and note 53.

man touched the Ark to prevent it from falling down, he was struck by God's anger.<sup>321</sup> Although there is only shortly referred to the fate of this man, for those people who were known with this story, Oza's example provides a very strong image. The property of the church is equated with the most sacred object of the Old Testament, the Ark in which God himself presided. Divine anger even avenged those lay people with good intentions if they rashly laid their hands on this most sacred object.

This biblical passage is followed by the quotation of psalms 82, 13, the first part of the malediction, that, just as the image of the Ark, appears to be used to emphasise the link between church property and God himself, whereby stealing from the church is made equal to the violation of the sacred. From this it is only a short step to calling church robbery sacrilege. Indeed, some time later, at the synod of Meaux-Paris in 845/6, cc. 60-61, all forms of unlawful infringement in church business, either by stealing property or abusing God's men, or oppressing the poor, are (according to Hartmann for the first time in church history<sup>322</sup>) described as acts of sacrilege.<sup>323</sup>

About a year later – either in the autumn of 846 or the spring of 847 – a synod is held in Paris as a reaction to the disdain with which the reform stipulations of Meaux-Paris were treated by king and nobility at the *Reichstag* of Epernay in 846.<sup>324</sup> Another point on the agenda is the confirmation of certain privileges of the monastery of Corbie. In a letter resulting from this synod, the present bishops, amongst others our Landramnus, bishop of Tours<sup>325</sup>, affirm the monastery's authority over its own possessions and its right to choose its own abbot. This was

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<sup>321</sup> II Samuel 6, vv. 1-11; I Chronicles 13, vv. 1-12.

<sup>322</sup> Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 213.

<sup>323</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 11, cc. 60-1, pp. 112-3, and notes 178 and 182.

<sup>324</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 13, introduction, p. 140, and no. 11, pp. 62-3; Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 299-300; Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 799.

<sup>325</sup> The *MGH* points to Flodoard's *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, III, 2, where Landramnus is mentioned as one of the bishops present: *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 13, p. 141. See also, notes 112 and 115.

done at the request of Corbie's abbot Radbertus who had presented the bishops the privileges given to the community by Louis the Pious, Lothar and Charles the Bald.

It is in the context of the community's free election of abbots that the malediction of psalm 82 is once again cited. The letter speaks of the necessity for the community to choose its own abbot, according to the rule of Benedict, in case that the *rector* of the monastery (which can here be understood as a lay abbot<sup>326</sup>) did not live according to the honour of God (*non digne deo vivat*) and neglected his duties. The bishops set much store by the independency of the monastic community in these matters: the monastery must be free from people of secular power (*seculare potestate*) who for money or through special favours gain the office of abbot and so, like a wolf between the sheep, impetrate in monastic business. These people should be punished according to the canon law, that is, with excommunication.<sup>327</sup>

Here, a direct connection is made between the outside appointment of secular abbots and the risks of this kind of man for the monastic community and her property. But there is more. After the warnings of excommunication, the Old Testament example of Acham is evoked. This man, as the book of Joshua tells us, had stolen some of the silver and gold that was taken as booty after Jericho's destruction and which had been dedicated to God. When it was discovered that Acham, against God's stipulations, had secretly taken some of this booty for himself, God ordered the Israelites to stone him to death. As with the capitulary of Ver, an Old Testament example is used to underline the bishop's message. Here it is made clear that no one is to claim that what belongs to the church, as it is in fact dedicated to God himself.

After the example of Acham, the malediction of psalm 82 is once again quoted. Clearly, this quote was not only used as a general warning against the secular abuse of church property, but was also employed in specific cases of unjustified intrusion in monastic business

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<sup>326</sup> See above, note 177.

<sup>327</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 13, pp. 145-6.

and the bad rule of lay abbots. It seems that the monks of Corbie and their present abbot Ratbert had experienced how the rule of a secular abbot or the intrusion of secular powers with the choosing of a new abbot had endangered their monastic resources, or this is at least what the bishops would want us to believe. They continue their letter saying that there had been people who, led by their own desires, had wanted to take possessions of and snatch away (*invadere et asportare voluit*) the money and resources (*pecuniam et substantiam*) of the servants and poor of Christ.<sup>328</sup>

Hartmann sees this privilege as proof of the bishops' strong position under Charles the Bald, as in Corbie's case not the royal patronage under which a monastery was placed, but the threat with excommunication by the bishops provided the monastery with the necessary protection against local noblemen.<sup>329</sup> I agree that in this case no particular attention is paid to the king's role in the matter, except that he and his men (*filios ac dominos nostros piissimos principes nostri pariter et futuri temporis*<sup>330</sup>) are repeatedly and explicitly admonished to amend their ways. Indeed, it appears that here it was not seen as the task of the king, but preferably of the church itself, to safeguard Corbie's privileges. It appears we are in this case actually witnessing what Rosenwein described as the episcopal protective claims over monasteries: while at the one hand the Carolingian kings wanted to draw monasteries in their sphere of power, at the other hand the bishops regarded themselves as rightful protectors.<sup>331</sup>

I explicitly say 'in this case', because at certain occasions the bishops specifically reminded the king of his task to protect the church and her servants. At the synod of Paris 829, in the capitulary stipulating the ruler's responsibilities, it was mentioned as one of the

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<sup>328</sup> 'Et quia cupiditate ductus etiam pecuniam ac substantiam servorum et pauperum Christi invadere et asportare voluit, una cum Iuda sacre pecunie dilapidatore et proditore domini nostri Iesu Christi, maledictiones illas, quae in eum prolatae sunt, excipiat, utpote invasor gregis Christi et necator pauperum', *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 13, p. 146.

<sup>329</sup> Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 218.

<sup>330</sup> Later in the letter the bishops refer to them as *filius nostri domini*, or *filius et domini nostri* or *dominis ac filiis nostris*.

<sup>331</sup> Rosenwein, *Negotiating space*, p. 101.

most important christian duties of the king<sup>332</sup>, an idea that was repeated on several other occasions. At the synod of Quierzy in 858 for example, the bishops reminded Louis the German – and later also Charles the Bald– not only to refrain from supporting the separation of property from the church, but as a christian king to actively defend her property against these practices.<sup>333</sup>

Only a few years after Paris 847, Pope Benedict III becomes directly involved in Corbie's troubles. In a letter dating from 855 and directed at the bishops of Gaul, the pope explains how abbot Anselmus of Corbie had come to Rome in order to present him the privileges granted by the kings and the stipulations of the bishops in 847, and to ask for his confirmation.<sup>334</sup> It is in this letter that psalm 82 is once again cited, but also directly explained. First, the pope warns the bishops – especially the bishop of Amiens – as well as the secular rulers not to interfere in any of Corbie's business. The three kings – Lothar, Louis and Charles – are reminded of their christian duty (they are to act as the *Christisanissimi principes*) and are told to respect the monastic privilege of free election of abbots. Then he quotes the malediction of psalm 82, and states that those people in the psalm who are said to take hereditary possession of God's sanctuary are those who not by free election, but on basis of an appointment by secular powers receive an abbacy and subsequently lay their hands on property dedicated to God.<sup>335</sup> This again makes clear that the psalm was here specifically used in the context of the king's distribution of lay abbacies as benefices to his own men.

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<sup>332</sup> *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 41, p. 414 and note 48. In the note is referred to the capitulary 56 of the synods of Paris 829, a capitulary dedicated to the description of the king's duties. It begins with the statement that 'Regale ministerium specialiter est populum Dei gubernare et regere cum equitate et iustitia et, ut pacem et concordiam habeant, studere. Ipse enim debet primo defensor esse ecclesiarum et servorum Dei, viduarum, orfanorum, ceterorumque pauperum necnon et omnium indigentium.', *MGH*, Conc. II, no. 2, p. 651.

<sup>333</sup> 'Res et facultates ecclesiasticas, quae sunt vota fidelium pretia peccatorum, stipendia ancillarum et dei servorum, depraedari et ab ecclesiis discindi nolite sustinere, sed fortiter ut rex christianus et ecclesiae alumnus resistite atque defendite.', *MGH*, Conc. III, np. 41, p. 414 and note 48. The editor states that originally the bishops directed themselves at Louis the German, later, Lupus of Ferriere would in a letter to Charles the Bald make clear that these admonitions also applied to him: *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 41, introduction, p. 403.

<sup>334</sup> *PL*, vol. 115, Benedictus, Epp., no. 3, pp. 693-701.

<sup>335</sup> 'Qui sunt enim qui sanctuarium Dei haereditate possidere dicuntur, nisi illi qui res Deo dedicatas, et ad usus pauperum servorumque ejus collatas, saecularis potentiae dominatu, non electionis gratia quaerunt obtinere?'

### ***A recapitulation***

Although ecclesiastical people themselves were also known to claim their rights and to interfere in monastic business, the synods of the 840s dealing with the protection of church property were primarily focused on the involvement of secular powers in the church. The bishops portray the laity's actions as stealing from the church, usurping the rule of a monastery, using its resources for secular goals, and treating it as their own inheritance. In the synods where the malediction of psalm 82 is quoted, this is done in combination with biblical examples to emphasise the link between at the one hand the different forms of church robbery and on the other hand the violation of the sacred, and thereby the violation of God himself. In all these cases the malediction of the psalm is employed as a curse, to invoke God's anger at those who unlawfully interfere in church business and property. Of this, the case of Corbie provides a telling and practical example: it shows that the psalm was mobilised for a specific situations where a monastery was diminished in or deprived of certain rights and properties. This case also shows that the psalm was especially connected to the royal habit of distributing abbacies as benefices to his lay *fideles*.

### ***3.3 Dangers for Marmoutier?***

With these observations in mind, let us now return to the *Historia translationis*. By quoting the malediction of psalm 82 in relation to St. Gorgon's translation in 846 the author may have wanted to remind his audience of the range of ideas, biblical references, warnings, terms and conditions as expressed at the synods. But what would have been his reasons for referring to this theme of church robbery? Bearing in mind Heinzemann's remark that translation stories may also have been read during meals of important visitors of monasteries, might the author have wanted to warn certain secular noblemen against unlawful interference?

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Principes autem illorum sunt hi, qui votis eorum suffragia praestando, aut Ecclesiae res illis tradendo consentiunt', *PL*, vol. 115, p. 699, col. a.

Let us again consider the people to whom the author seems to direct his warning. The *successiones haeredum* can be translated as ‘successions of heirs’. Here, the *successiones* remind of the charters where in case of property transactions the present as well as the future authorities (the *successores*) responsible for the properties in question, are warned not to detract parts from these possessions or diminish it in any other way.<sup>336</sup> In the case of Gorgon’s translation, it may refer to those people who were to succeed the present local authorities who had a certain authority over Marmoutier, or, considering the accusations of the synods, more specifically Marmoutier’s lay abbots.<sup>337</sup>

However, the word *haeredum*, the plural genitive form of *heres*, is rather ambiguous and problematic. The word *heres* can be translated as ‘heir’, to indicate the successor by birth or blood relation. If we keep to this narrow definition this would provide a problem for the dating of the text. As Marmoutier only from the later ninth century on became a hereditary possession in the line of the Robertian family<sup>338</sup>, the succession of heirs would then be referring to the late ninth-century state of Marmoutier, which would contradict my dating of the text around the mid-ninth century. However, when examining the use of the word *heres* in the Middle Ages it becomes clear that the word did not have a fixed meaning. It did for example not only indicate a person who inherited by birth or blood relation, but could, in certain contexts, also refer to a lawful successor in general.<sup>339</sup> Furthermore, in the light of

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<sup>336</sup> For example, Louis the Pious affirming the sale of lands by Oda and Eodon in 832 states that none of his successors are to detract any of this property or claim any jurisdiction over it: *PL*, vol. 104, Ludovicus Pius, no. 172, p. 1216, col c; see also Vivian’s charter of 846, above, note 290.

<sup>337</sup> According to the Niermeyer and Van de Kieft dictionary *successio* either indicates a lineage or parentage, or generations to come: Niermeyer, Jan Frederik and Kieft, Co van de, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*, 2 vols. (re-edited by J.W.J. Burgers; Leiden 2002).

<sup>338</sup> See above, p. 62.

<sup>339</sup> See for example the definitions of *heres* and *hereditas* in: Lewis, Ch. T. and Short, Ch., *Latin Dictionary* (1879), and Blaise Medieval (Blaise, A., *Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi* (1975)), in the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (produced by the Centre Traditio litterarum occidentalum, Turnhout 2005 – present), of the Brepolis Database, for a full reference, see note 92; and see also *heres* and *hereditas* in: Niermeyer and Van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus*; for a Carolingian immunity charter where the successors of a royal agent are referred to as *heredum suorum*: *MGH*, DDLol/DDLoII, no. 56, p. 160; For a similar occurrence of ‘ubi successores haeredum’: Frank Merry Stenton, ‘The supremacy of the Mercian kings’, originally in: *English historical review* 33 (1918), pp. 433-452, republished in: Doris Mary Stenton (ed.), *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England. The collected papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford/New York 1970, repr. 2000), pp. 48-66, at: p.



psalm 82 where people are said to make unjust hereditary claims on God's church, the 'succession of heirs' might point to succession of abbots who were not actually heirs, but would like to see themselves as such.

Although no definite conclusion be made on how this sentence should be read, it seems likely that it is here used as a reference to successions of abbots, lay-abbots or other people in an authoritative office in relation to Marmoutier, and who would have had or claimed certain rights over Marmoutier. The question then arises whether the author had any reason to express such a strong warning against these successors in the form of psalm 82. Are there any indications that Marmoutier found itself in a situation that made the community wanting to underline her rights and privileges? Did Marmoutier's resources suffer under the rule of her lay abbots in this particular time?

Considering the use of the psalm at the mid-ninth century synods I do believe the author wanted to embed it in themes discussion contemporary to Gorgon's translation, but the passage where the psalm is quoted does not explicitly refer to any danger of secular intrusion as it was described and condemned at the synods. It only seems to connect the psalm with the protection of the relics against a removal to an inferior place.<sup>340</sup> In the light of Gorgon's importance for Marmoutier as discussed above, this is understandable; it is however unlikely that the author chose the psalm to express the fear of Gorgon's relics being entirely taken from Marmoutier, in the way other monastic resources were used for secular goals.

First, in examining the various synods dealing with the abuse of church property I have not come across any specific remarks about the protection of relics<sup>341</sup>, although there might be a relation between the previously discussed example of the inviolability of the Ark

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59, note 4; Wood, *The proprietary church*, p. 242; The spiritual sense of the word *heres* may also be taken into account. In one of his letters pope Nicolas I for example argues that he is actually the hereditary successor of the apostles: *MGH*, Epp. Kar. IV, 5, no. 71. p. 392: 'Christus [...] subiturus ad caelos hanc apostolis commendavit ac per eos tamquam hereditario iure successoribus eorum, nobis scilicet, ...'.

<sup>340</sup> See above, pp. 30-1.

<sup>341</sup> And although Hartmann places the capitulary of Mainz 813 - stating that no one is to undertake a translation without the permission of the bishop or the *princeps* - under the heading of the protection of church property, the context of this capitulary does not show a direct relation with this theme Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 138.

of Covenant and the protection of newly translated relics. Like the Ark of the Covenant being brought into Jerusalem, translated relics were brought in a ceremonious procession into the monastery or church where they were to have their new resting place, and had, just like the Ark, a direct connection with God's power. Interestingly enough, Hraban Maur, abbot of Fulda (822-846), had a reliquary made that symbolised the Ark of Covenant and in which he kept safe a number of newly acquired relics of Roman martyrs.<sup>342</sup> Still, in spite of these similarities, at the synods the malediction of the psalm was primarily used in the context of secular infringement in church business and the abuse of its property, without any explicit reference to their unlawful claims on relics.

Secondly, it seems unlikely that successive abbots or other authoritative figures of Marmoutier (or St. Martin of Tours) would do away with such a prestigious new saint. True, there are examples of abbots giving away some of the relics of their monasteries. Abbot Hilduin of St. Denis, for example, during his exile in the monastery of Corvey, promised Corvey's abbot Warin the relics of St. Vit once he, Hilduin, had been reinstated as abbot of St. Denis, and, eventually, in 836 the translation of St. Vit from St. Denis to Corvey takes place.<sup>343</sup> This same Hilduin of St. Denis also gave abbot Boso of Fleury amongst others some minor relics of St. Denis's patron saint and the relics of the Roman martyr St. Sebastian which they had recently acquired.<sup>344</sup> Still, it must be pointed out that in these transfers not the most important relics of a monastery were involved.<sup>345</sup> It is unthinkable that an abbot such as the one of St. Denis would give away the body of the patron saint, which formed the basis of this monastery's prestige and existence.<sup>346</sup> Would the abbot of Marmoutier or St. Martin of Tours be prepared to give away the relics of St. Gorgon, the relics which, as the *Historia*

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<sup>342</sup> Raaijmakers, *Sacred time*, pp. 183-4.

<sup>343</sup> Van Landschoot, 'La translation', pp. 595-6.

<sup>344</sup> Head, *Hagiography*, p. 46.

<sup>345</sup> I thank Carine van Rhijn for pointing this out to me.

<sup>346</sup> On relics as a way of survival for monasteries: Geary, *Furta sacra*, pp. 70-1.

*translationis* testifies, had such importance for Marmoutier, and of whose prestige the abbots themselves would profit?

As mentioned in chapter two, the destructive force of Norman raids in the Neustrian region was experienced first hand by St. Martin and Marmoutier. These attacks were not only harmful for the people, buildings and lands, but also formed a danger for the relics, as there were instances where Norman invasions prompted a monastery to transfer its relics to a safer place, as the monks of St. Martin did after the attack of 853.<sup>347</sup> Might the emphasis on the place of the relics in Marmoutier in the *Historia translationis* also be connected to a fear that the relics, once brought to another place, would not find their way back to Marmoutier that easily?

All these ideas remain highly hypothetical. Overall, I think that these fears may have been an actuality for Marmoutier but do not provide a satisfying explanation for the use of the malediction of psalm 82. Especially the fact that the psalm at the synods was never quoted in relation to the protection of relics, but only and specifically to defend church's rights and properties against unlawful secular involvement, strongly suggest that it is in this direction that we should look.

The last part of the *Historia translationis* provides a first indication that the malediction of psalm 82 may be understood in the context of protecting Marmoutier's rights and properties.<sup>348</sup> In the series of miracles St. Gorgon performs after his temporarily placement in the fields next to the monastery, two miracles take place that both relate to the issue of church robbery. The first tells about a woman who earlier in the story had been healed by St. Gorgon from her deafness, blindness and muteness during his journey from Rome to Marmoutier, but

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<sup>347</sup> For literature on the accounts of the translation of St. Martin in face of Norman attacks, see above, note 189; The monks of Fleury, another monastery situated along the Loire, twice in a short period fled for the Normans together with their patron relics (in 854 and 856): Head, *Hagiography*, p. 52.

<sup>348</sup> *Historia Translationis*, AASS, Mar. II, dies 11, pp. 58, col. e- 59, col. a.

now stole a silver present that had been placed near his head. St. Gorgon punished her by making her blind again. The woman acknowledged her sin, and immediately returned the gift. After having spent the night and day grieving and lamenting over her wrongdoing she was once again cured. The other miracle took place somewhat further afield. A certain Gislebertus travelled from Marmoutier to his home, and on his way passed through one of Marmoutier's *villae*, Asmaria. Here he entered a certain house and took away some bundles of grain. Upon seeing this, the woman of the house started to cry, imploring the man not to deprive her of the little that she had (*paupertatiunculum*<sup>349</sup>). She called upon St. Gorgon to be her avenger. At that moment the nobleman's horse started to eat from the bundles of grain and as soon as it closed its mouth, it swayed to the door and fell dead to the ground. The nobleman, shocked and frightened, fled from the place together with his companions.

These two miracles are a new element in Gorgon's "repertoire". With his settlement in Marmoutier, Gorgon is no longer primarily concerned with healing, but starts to act as a powerful protector and avenger as well. Whether it is the gifts dedicated to him at his resting place, or the bundles of grain belonging to the poor living in one of Marmoutier's *villae*, it is clear that St. Gorgon is not to be trifled with. Some particular themes as expressed at the 840s/850s synods can be discerned. The first miracles showed us an act of stealing that which is dedicated and sacred. The woman who can be compared to Old-Testament example of Acham, who stole some silver and gold that had been dedicated to God. The second case showed us a man – probably of noble birth as he possessed horses and was accompanied by his own men - who deprived a poor woman of her sustenance. Here the saint clearly acts as a protector of the poor against the greedy hands of the nobility. Furthermore, as the man is told to be passing through a *villa* that is explicitly said to belong to Marmoutier, the stealing from

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<sup>349</sup> See Du Cange, 'Paupertaticula', and Blaise Medieval, 'Paupertacula': 'faibles ressources': Fresne, C. du ('Du Cange'), *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (1883-1887), and Blaise, A., *Lexicon latinitatis medii aevi* (1975), both consulted in the *Database of Latin Dictionaries* (produced by the Centre *Traditio litterarum occidentalum*, Turnhout 2005 – present), of the Brepolis Database, for a full reference, see note 92.

the poor is brought in relation with stealing from the monastery itself. In fact, this is also the case in the first miracle. The woman does not only steal from the saint, but from the monastery as well, as St. Gorgon belonged to Marmoutier (and the other way around), and the offerings made at his tomb were probably used to sustain the community.<sup>350</sup> Both miracles make a direct link between the different forms of stealing and protection of Marmoutier, resembling the ideas of the synods, albeit in the inversed way: whoever steals from the saint or from the poor, steals from the church, in this case Marmoutier itself.

True enough, the portrayal of a saint as the powerful protector and caretaker of his monastery and the poor devoted to him is not unique.<sup>351</sup> The two miracles discussed for example show similarities with those performed by St. Alexander of Fulda as described in the miracle collection written by Rudolf of Fulda in the middle of the ninth century.<sup>352</sup> A woman is paralysed by St. Alexander before she is explicitly allowed to take two golden earrings from his altar that had been offered to him by another pilgrim; a ferryman is punished for taking away the bread of a female pilgrim, who could not afford to pay for the crossing and had reserved the bread for her provision; the horse of a certain Perahtgarius is pinned to the ground when the man refuses to pay his respects to St. Alexander when he passes by the saint's church. Frightened by this miracle, the man enters the church, offers his prayers, donates certain of his properties located next to the church, and is then able to continue his journey. True enough, the last case shows us a man who is not punished for stealing, but for his disrespect for the saint. Still, it shows that the power of the saint also functioned to subject the will of a noblemen to that of the saint, and was tightly connected to the protection of the saint's prestige and the accumulation of monastic property.

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<sup>350</sup> That the offerings made at a saint's tomb were partly used for the sustenance of the monks can for example be seen at St. Martin of Tours. In a charter from 844/45 Charles the Bald confirms certain regulations concerning the division of offerings at St. Martin's tomb to be used by the community of St. Martin: *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 61.

<sup>351</sup> On the creating of an image of a saint as powerful patron and protector of his own community, see for example Head's discussion of Adrevald of Fleury's work on St. Benedict: Head, *Hagiography*, pp. 135-52.

<sup>352</sup> Rudolf of Fulda, *Miracula sanctorum in Fuldenses ecclesias translatorum*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH*, SS XV, 1 (Hannover 1887), pp. 328-241, at: p. 331; see also: Röckelein, 'Über Hagio-Geo-Graphien', p. 169 and note 19; the dating of the text I based on: Raaijmakers, *Sacred time*, p. 167.

Considering these examples, the author in his portrayal of Gorgon's interventions may have drawn on certain established ideas on how a saint's protective power could be expressed. Moreover, Gorgon's miracles do not specifically speak of any threats of exploitation by kings or abbots. This does not mean, however, that the miracles were just a random choice. I think that in combination with the psalm as quoted in the preceding passage, the miracles may indeed have been selected in order to resonate particular themes as expressed at the 840s/850s synods. Consequently, the miracles would then function to connect the synodal warnings to the power of Gorgon himself. The author may have wanted to show that is not only the curse that is to protect Marmoutier's property, but the martyr himself who will act as an avenger in all cases where people try to steal from Marmoutier.

The relating of the malediction of psalm 82 with the common idea of new saints acting as protector of monastic property suggests that the community had a certain fear that was not based on anxiousness about the safety of their new relics, but fuelled by a situation wherein its property and resources in general were likely to be employed for secular goals. I therefore want to turn our attention to the possible relevance and actuality of the theme of secular intrusion for Marmoutier and explore the ways in which Marmoutier saw its privileges and resources to be in danger.

### ***3.4 Restitutions and rhetorics***

Reminding Marmoutier's situation under Charles the Bald's rule, situated in one of Neustria's most troubled regions, caught between different parties and forming an essential political pawn in Charles's security arrangements, it cannot be denied that Marmoutier indeed was in a position to experience material losses. Charles's appointments of his closest men as lay abbots of Marmoutier and St. Martin of Tours shows that the king wanted to these communities and their resources under his direct control. In these circumstances, Marmoutier could very well

have expected and feared that this amount of secular involvement would diminish it in its own rights and possessions.

There actually exists evidence that Marmoutier indeed had suffered from alienation of its property. As already briefly mentioned in chapter two, twice in a decade Charles confirms the transaction of certain *villae* and belongings to Marmoutier. In a charter of 845, at the request of abbot (*abbas*) Rainald, Charles the Bald affirms the restitution of a considerable amount of *villulae*, initially intended for the sustenance of the monks (*quae actenus ad eorum usus seu ad stipendia fovenda fuere dicite*).<sup>353</sup> Here the charter employs a rethoric that would have very well connected with the feelings of Marmoutier's community. It states that by some kind of instigation (*quorundam instinctu*) these properties had been usurped (*subtractas*), and that it was he, Charles, who without any retractions or reductions had restored them to Marmoutier. Moreover, special provisions are made to secure the monks sustenance: they are granted most of the *villulae*, and only two of them are meant for the abbots disposal.<sup>354</sup> Furthermore, Charles declares that all of the *villulae* returned to the monks are not to be diminished by any of Marmoutier's *rectores*.<sup>355</sup> About seven years later, in 852, a same kind of charter is issued, this time at the request of the lay abbot (*rector*) Robert the Strong, confirming the transfer of certain *villae* and belongings to Marmoutier's property.<sup>356</sup> This time, it also involves certain special buildings and privileges, such as the church of St. Simphorian, situated to the west of Marmoutier<sup>357</sup>, including its harbour (*portu*) and both riverbanks (*utriusque ripae*). It must be admitted that in comparison with the earlier charter, no explicit mention is made of any alienation, but the formulation *reddere et confirmare*

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<sup>353</sup> *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 74, p. 208.

<sup>354</sup> '...et insuper peculiariter habendas abbati ipsius monasterii praesenti videlicet suisque successoribus, Rosontem et Calitomnum.', *idem*, p. 209.

<sup>355</sup> 'decernimus atque [...] firmamus firmandoque praecipimus ut nostris futurisque temporibus de suprascriptis villis fratrum suprafati monasterii necessitas atque stipendia amministretur et absque retractione rectorum ipsius monasterii suppleatur....', *ibidem*; for the use of the word *rector* for lay abbots, see above, note 177.

<sup>356</sup> *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 147.

<sup>357</sup> For the location of St. Simphorian, see the map in: Bernard Chevalier, 'Un grande domaine agricole de Marmoutier: la grange de Meslay (IXe- XVIIIe siècle)', in: *Campagnes médiévales. L'homme et son espace Etudes offertes à Robert Fossier Histoire ancienne et médiévale* 31 (Paris 1995), pp. 587-99, at: p. 99.

shows that in this transaction at least some properties were involved that had originally belonged to Marmoutier. Similarly to the 845 charter, it is also ordained that Marmoutier's rectors are not allowed to diminish any of the mentioned properties for other purposes, with the addition that none of the beneficiaries are to claim that they have any right over these possessions. They are only to be used as sustenance for the monastic community.<sup>358</sup>

Of course, it cannot be ignored that the king made special provisions for the monks' welfare out of concern for the quality of their religious activities. As I pointed out in chapter two, in the last charter Charles even regulates special arrangements for the commemoration of his parents Louis the Pious and Judith.<sup>359</sup> Moreover, at first sight one could say that Marmoutier profited from the king's and abbots' commitment, as quite an amount of *villae* were returned. Still, the charters clearly show that Marmoutier had experienced certain alienation of her property. Besides, although it is not specified in the charter how this had come about, the fact that the rectors of Marmoutier, in the last charter mentioned in one breath with the beneficiaries, are explicitly told to keep their hands of Marmoutier's restored property, suggests that Marmoutier still found itself in a situation where the use of property for secular purposes was likely to take place.

Actually, there exists a text from the mid-ninth century that suggests that the ecclesiastics' frustration concerning secular intrusion in church business through the appointment of lay abbots also found its focus in the communities of St. Martin of Tours. In the 840s and 850s Audradus Modicus, once a member of one of the communities of St. Martin (from c. 820 to 847)<sup>360</sup>, wrote an interesting work known as the *Liber revelationem*, in which he described

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<sup>358</sup> '...precipimus atque firmamus ut nulli rectorum ejusdem loci nostris aut futuris temporibus eas in alios usus liceat retorquere vel minorare, nec cuilibet beneficiario de omnibus superius memoratis rebus jure habendum donare presumat, sed, sicut presignatum est, usibus et stipendiis memoratorum prefati monasterii clericorum sine aliqua, sicut memoratum est, minoratione, perennis temporibus habeantur...', *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 147, pp. 388-9.

<sup>359</sup> See above, p. 48.

<sup>360</sup> Kessler, 'A lay abbot', p. 667.



several prophetic visions concerning the battle between Charles and Lothar.<sup>361</sup> As Kessler in his article on the production and patronage of the “Vivian Bible” discusses, there is a link between Audradus’s work, the political troubles of the mid-ninth century and the king’s policy with regard to the communities of St. Martin of Tours in this period.<sup>362</sup> This link I will now shortly examine.

In one of Audradus’s visions God directs his attention to Charles the Bald, and assigns him the right- and peaceful rule of the empire, together with his brother Louis the German, on the condition that Charles will keep God’s commandments and stop his plunderings, robberies and violations against the people of the church.<sup>363</sup> Clearly, according to Audradus Charles had committed certain injustices against the church and needed to be corrected. That these injustices were also related to the appointment of lay abbots is first suggested when Charles is told by God that because he had not been afraid to harm the church (*‘de suo status submovere non timuisti et propter tantum malum affligit ecclesiam meam’*), he would suffer the attack of the Bretons, and that in these attacks the wicked Vivian would be killed. This Vivian is said to have oppressed the abbot of God’s church, while gloryfying himself in the monastery of St. Martin.<sup>364</sup> As we know that Vivian was from about 844 to his death in 851 lay abbot of St. Martin and at least for some time lay abbot of Marmoutier, it is likely that here Vivian is accused of abusing his position as abbot of St. Martin for his own goals, with negative consequences for the community.

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<sup>361</sup> Audradus Modicus, *Liber revelationem*, ed. Traube, ‘O Roma nobilis’, pp. 297-395, at: pp. 374-91. As a reference I used the translation provided by Ellendorf: Johann Otto Ellendorf, *Die Karolinger und die Hierarchie ihrer Zeit*, vol. 2 (Essen, 1838), pp. 559-565.

<sup>362</sup> Kessler, ‘A lay abbot’, pp. 665-9.

<sup>363</sup> ‘et dixit dominus Karolo: ‘tu, puer meus, si humilis et obediens fueris et permanseris coram me et ecclesias meas restitueris caput et ordini uniuersique propriam legem tenere feceris et a rapinis et depraedationibus et ecclesiarum violationibus omnem populum, qui tibi committitur, cessare feceris et uniuersique homini iustitiam servaveris et corde bono et otimo voluntatem meam semper sequutus fueris’’, Audradus Modicus, idem, p. 384.

<sup>364</sup> ‘‘perfidus et nefandus Vivianus, qui non extimuit conculcare nobilitatem ecclesiarum mearum abbatem se glorians monasterii beati Martini et ceterorum’’, idem, pp. 384-5. See also Kessler’s comment: Kessler, ‘A lay abbot’, p. 667-8.

Later, in the year 853, Audradus told the king this vision (*ego in sermone domini iterum illi, ut supra scripta sunt, omnia ennaravi*), and thereupon Charles promised to take care of the vacancies in the church of St. Martin. However, Audradus complains, the king did not fulfill this promise.<sup>365</sup> Audradus tells that, after other bad decisions of Charles concerning certain ecclesiastical offices, God's anger is aroused and a few months later the monastery of St. Martin of Tours (which one is not specified) suffered from attacks of Normans.<sup>366</sup>

Traube interprets this passage as a plea for the privilege of free election of abbots for Marmoutier<sup>367</sup>, but I cannot find a direct confirmation of this. Marmoutier is not explicitly mentioned, and the king is only criticised for his bad decisions and not (at least not explicitly) for the fact that he appointed lay abbots in the first place. Still, Audradus's references to the king's neglect of church's rights and the robbery of its property, in combination with the accusations in the direction of Vivian, suggest that the suffering of monastic communities (especially that of Tours) through the appointment of bad abbots was an important issue in Audradus's work.

Overall, the focus and sphere of the discussed passages perfectly fit both the rhetorics of the synods and the political situation of the mid-ninth century. The themes, at least in the mind of Audradus, clearly were an actuality for the communities of St. Martin of Tours in this period. The existence of a work that resonates the themes of the 840s/850s synods and the political problems in relation to St. Martin's monastery in any case supports the idea that the author of the *Historia translationis* had similar concerns on his mind in relation to Marmoutier.

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<sup>365</sup> 'qui [Charles] coepit iterum atque iterum promittere, quod infra duos menses sancti Martini ecclesiam seu ceteras, quae videbantur apertae, in suo ordine restituisset, quod non adimplevit.', idem, p. 386.

<sup>366</sup> Idem, pp. 385-6.

<sup>367</sup> Idem, p. 387.

Audradus's work puts a strong emphasis on the king's responsibility for the - in his eyes - unjust situations with which the church had to deal. However, when talking about the secular uses of monasteries, it is important not to forget the role of regional powers. As pointed out before, the king's interest in Marmoutier would also have won the attention of local nobility. In chapter three I mentioned Le Jan's observation that the abbacy of St. Martin and Marmoutier in the 830s and 840s together with certain other Neustrian offices were connected to a local circle of aristocratic relatives, including count Eudes at Orléans, abbot Adalard, and Eudes, son of William of Blois.<sup>368</sup> We have also seen that in the 830s a woman called Oda, wife of a certain count Eodon, sold certain of her properties to Marmoutier. This Oda and Eodon may have been related to the family of Eudes, when considering the similarity in names.<sup>369</sup> The similarity is in itself by no means solid proof of a (blood) relation, but combined with the fact that, like the "Eudes", Oda and Eodon had certain associations with Marmoutier, may be an indication that they belonged to this family, and that their interest in Marmoutier may be understood from this family's broader range of interests in Neustria as described by Le Jan.

Interestingly enough, two of the properties transferred to Marmoutier by Oda – *Culturax* and *Galiaco* - also seem to be on the list of property that was restored to Marmoutier under abbot Rainald, here mentioned as *Culturam* and *Gaiacus*. If these properties are identical, might this be a sign that the "Eudes-family" had made any claims on parts of Marmoutier's property? Were these people (for example Adalard, who had been abbot of Marmoutier and St. Martin in the 830s and 840s) among those who had diminished Marmoutier's property as testified of by the restitution charters? These suggestions remain on the level of speculation. Still, if the family was somehow closely associated with Marmoutier,

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<sup>368</sup> See above, pp. 68-9 and notes 273-4.

<sup>369</sup> Eudes is alternatively spelled as Odo: Dépreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 191 and note 1.

this would mean that the interest of local nobility, along with that of the king (as these two were closely related), were both factors with which Marmoutier had to deal and negotiate.

Considering the restitution charters, the involvement of kings and local families in Marmoutier and the political circumstances as described in chapter two, it seems that Marmoutier had enough reasons to worry about its rights and properties. In this sense, the quoting of psalm 82 in the *Historia translationis* could at first instance be interpreted as Marmoutier's reaction to exploitation and abuse of its property. However, when reading texts like that of Audradus or even legal documents such as charters, it must be kept in mind that they are coloured by rhetoric, presenting the situation as the authors (or the party involved) wished to present it. Monastic communities complaining about secular interference had interests in mind that in essence did not really differ from those of secular powers, namely the gaining and defending of their prestige, position and possessions. If, for example, a monastery like Marmoutier expressed the fear of being deprived of her property by successive abbots, it must be remembered that the appointment of lay abbots was not necessarily a bad thing for a monastery. Felten for example regards Audradus's presentation of Vivian as very subjective, and justly shows that Vivian was a lay abbot who was personally involved in and cared for the welfare of, for example, those monasteries dependent on St. Martin of Tours, such as Cormery.<sup>370</sup> This image also corresponds with Vivian's involvement in the earlier mentioned restoration activities in Marmoutier. It should also be considered that the abbots themselves also had to gain from a prospering monastic community, as the monastery's prestige would reflect on them, and parts of her wealth would, as the charters of Charles make clear, be reserved for their disposal. Thus, an expression of fear for secular involvement may very well reflect Marmoutier's coping with her present circumstances, but must not be taken as

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<sup>370</sup> Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 50-1; see also: Kessler, 'A lay abbot', pp. 667-8. I also thank Rutger Kramer for pointing to the possible similarity in status between Cormery and Marmoutier in relation to St. Martin of Tours.

evidence that it was really exploited. A monastery like Marmoutier would also have to negotiate with and seek for a certain balance between the positive aspects of being placed under royal protection, having an influential man as lay abbot, and enjoying the attention of local nobility, and the negative effects that these kinds of interests brought along.

### ***3.5 Other threats for Marmoutier?***

Thus far, I have mainly focused on the rule of the abbots and people who claimed to have any say over the monastery, because the malediction of psalm 82 was specifically used in this context at the synods, and because the author of Gorgon's translation appears to hint to the danger of successive abbots. However, at the end of the chapter I shortly wish to consider another threat for Marmoutier which might have been connected to its concerns for her rights and properties.

The *Vita S. Donati*, although probably written at least certain decades after the mid-ninth century (as bishop Donatus died in 876)<sup>371</sup>, provides an interesting perspective to the problem of secular appropriation of ecclesiastical property that may also have been relevant for the community of Marmoutier. The *Vita* recounts the life of the Irish Donatus (d. 876), who travelled to Rome and eventually was ordained bishop of the church of Fiesole in Italy. The author dedicates a part of the text to the bishop's efforts to restore certain property to the church of Fiesole. Here, the malediction of psalm 82 is uttered against a certain nobleman who refused to yield to the bishop's request to return the church's possessions which he had taken away. After recounting how the man was punished, had shown remorse and returned the church's possessions, the author explains how the alienation of property could have happened in the first place:

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<sup>371</sup> *Vita Sancti Donati Episcopi Christi Familiaris* (BHL 2305), AASS, Oct. IX, dies 22, pp. 655-62.

‘Accordingly, formerly in this time many intrusions had been made against the church of Fiesole, concerning its things and properties, through the orders of emperors and the loss of charters, that had happened through the devastation of the most cruel people of the Normans. By this the church had been [...] in a fair amount and he [St. Donatus] was much troubled in restoring of properties in this way.’<sup>372</sup>

Here, the loss of property is directly linked not only to royal interference in the church, but also to the attacks of Normans, that had resulted in the loss of charters. This link between threat of Normans and loss of documents was possibly also an issue for Marmoutier. I have already mentioned how the religious communities of Tours in 853 suffered the attacks of these people. Furthermore, invasions of, for example, the Bretons, who were hostile to Charles the Bald, could have the same devastating effect, as a letter from the West-frankish bishop of July/August of 850, directed to the Breton Nominoe, testifies. In this letter the bishops accused him of all kinds of wickedness done against the church - especially Tours - and the faithful, ‘by his condemnable desires and his horrible cruelty’ (*damnabili cupiditate et horribili crudelitate*). He amongst others had destroyed and burned down churches, including the relics that were kept safe there, had taken possessions of the churches’ properties – ‘the votive offering of the faithful, the redemption of the souls and the inheritances of the poor’ – and had laid hands on the hereditary possessions of noblemen.<sup>373</sup>

In the light of the *Vita S. Donati*, I imagine that in the face of these kinds of attacks, communities such as Marmoutier would not only have feared the loss of property, but more

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<sup>372</sup> ‘Tempore siquidem illo contra prædictam Fesulensem ecclesiam, in rebus facultatibusque suis multæ olim factæ fuerant invasiones per præcepta imperatorum et chartularum amissionem, quæ ob devastationem crudelissimæ gentis Normannorum acciderat. Unde aliquantis ecclesia solimata(?) fuerat et pro hujusmodi facultatibus redimendis multum angebatur. *Vita Sancti Donati*, in: *AASS*, Oct. IX, dies 22, c. 1, 17, p. 657, coll. e-f.

<sup>373</sup> ‘Cupiditate tua vastata est terra christianorum, templa dei partim destructa, partim incensa cum sanctorum ossibus ceterisque reliquiis, possessiones ecclesiarum, quæ fuerunt vota fidelium, redemptio animarum, patrimonia pauperum illicite in tuos usus redacta, hereditates nobelium ablatae....’, *MGH*, Conc. III, no. 20, p. 204.

importantly, the loss of documents that were legal proof of their privileges and possessions. A charter of St. Martin of Tour issued in 854, for example, shows that St. Martin's community appealed to king Charles to confirm its possession of certain lands and its immunity, as its legal documents were destroyed in the fire resulting from the attack of the Normans.<sup>374</sup>

In this sense it would not be going too far to say that Marmoutier might have feared the loss of property, not necessarily directly through the hands of Bretons or Normans, but indirectly, through the loss of her documents that legally secured these possessions. If these testimonies were destroyed, Marmoutier would have stood on less firmer ground against other claims, for example of those of successive lay abbots. Maybe it was also in the face of this danger that the community wished to proclaim and propagate St. Gorgon as protector of the monastery and publicise him as a patron saint who would render justice and defend Marmoutier against unlawful claims.

### ***Marmoutier in danger? A recapitulation and reflection***

The *Historia translationis* talks about the condition on which St. Gorgon was translated from Rome. He was brought to Marmoutier so that through him the monastery would be restored in what it lacked. St. Gorgon's translation appears to have coincided with initiatives to restore the Virgin's oratory in Marmoutier, which may be an indication that Gorgon made part of a bigger plan of restoring or boosting Marmoutier prestige. The acquisition of relics of a Roman martyr provided Marmoutier with an authentic, prestigious saint who would provide new incomes through a new flow of pilgrimage and donations, and may also have provided the monastery with the prestige that she was missed out on, lacking the bodily relics of her founding father St. Martin.

However, the quoting of the malediction of psalm 82 in relation to St. Gorgon's settlement in Marmoutier is actually an indication that the community not only relied on St. Gorgon to

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<sup>374</sup> *RACC*, vol. 1, no. 167, p. 441.

provide Marmoutier with Roman prestige, but also wanted him to fulfil a very active and concrete role for the community. In the bishops' rhetoric of the 840s/850s synods this malediction was used against claims - unlawful in their eyes - of secular powers on church business and properties, which happened through the appointment of abbots and the (subsequent) "exploitation" of monastic resources. In the light of the political situation around the mid-ninth century as described in chapter two, the rhetoric of the synods would have been very relevant for Marmoutier. She was one of those monasteries Charles had to rely on in order to keep his foot down in Neustria. The restitution charters of 845 and 852 are evidence of this. When looking beyond the king's rhetorical warnings at the address of Marmoutier's *rectores* not to lay hands on the monks' resources, the charters indeed show that alienation of property had happened, and that a reasonable chance existed it would happen again.

Here it should be kept in mind that Marmoutier, just as any institution or individual with a certain status, power and possessions, wanted to defend and, preferably, accumulate these. Here it had to deal and negotiate with the wishes and claims of various parties. Having the status of a royal monastery made it a focal point for royal as well as local interests (which were very much intertwined); it entwined it with both of them, and it would certainly have experienced the positive as well as the negative effects that these associations brought along. For example, Charles's appointment of the Neustrian Vivian as lay abbot connected Marmoutier closely to the king (which meant protection as well as employment of its resources), and at the same time may possibly have involved it in Vivian's local struggles and personal desires (for example to boost Marmoutier's prestige and hereby that of his own, but also to employ Marmoutier's property for his personal goals).

This kind of aspects would certainly have made the rhetoric of the 840s/850s synods an attractive message for Marmoutier. Just as Audradus Modicus embedded and connected his criticism on the king's and lay abbot's role in St. Martin of Tours to the theme of secular abuse



and interference in the church, the community of Marmoutier wanted to underline their rights and defend their properties by relating these themes to their newly acquired saint.

Although the portrayal of Gorgon as powerful patron of Marmoutier shows similarities with miracle stories of other saints, the combination of these protective miracles with the malediction of psalm 82 would have made Gorgon not just any patron, but a patron that defended Marmoutier against secular infringements and claims on its property which were so much condemned at the synods. Gorgon was not just there to boost Marmoutier prestige, but additionally to recover and defend those rights and possessions that Marmoutier felt in danger of losing. The charterlike elements in the *Historia translationis* may in this light not only be seen as a way to bind Gorgon to Marmoutier, but also to make Gorgon one of the legal assertions of Marmoutier's rights, possibly also in the danger of losing legal proof of these rights in the face of Norman and Breton attacks.

## Conclusion

A relic only has a meaning when the community ascribes a meaning to it.<sup>375</sup> This observation by Patrick Geary is what in essence this exploration was all about. A close examination of the text of St. Gorgon's arrival in Marmoutier provided valuable insights in the function of Gorgon's relics in his new home.

First of all, the emphasis on the unbreakable and irrevocable link between Gorgon and Marmoutier stood out. Although the underlining of a saint's wish to stay at Marmoutier is recurrent in other translation stories, the way in which the author peppers his description of Gorgon's settlement in Marmoutier with charter-like elements and the quotation of psalm 82 as a warning against any attempt to replace the relics, first of all testifies to St. Gorgon's importance for the community

It is interesting to see that no reference is made to anything that might have been known about St. Gorgon in the ninth century. The Gorgon-cult that had already settled in the region of Gorze and Metz may have been of influence for the choice of this martyr, especially when remembering that about two decades after Gorgon's translation to Marmoutier, St. Gorgon became directly associated with the king on Charles's coronation day at the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 869. Still, the *Historia translationis* shows no interest in Gorgon's origins, his background or already existing cults. The only aspect of Gorgon's identity that seems to have counted for author was Gorgon's "Romaness", as the martyr's connection with Rome and the Apostolic power is much emphasised.<sup>376</sup>

The author links St. Gorgon's translation directly to Marmoutier's need to be recovered or restored in those things the community lacked. Indeed, there is reason to believe that the acquisition of the Gorgon's relics was part of broader plans of renewals at Marmoutier.

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<sup>375</sup> Geary, *Furta sacra*, pp. 5-9.

<sup>376</sup> A similar observation is made by Smith regarding the account of the translation of the martyrs Eusebius and Pontianus to Bourgogne: Smith, 'Roman relics', p. 330.

Around the time of the translation initiatives were taken for the reconstruction of the Virgin's oratory, which in the *Historia translationis* is explicitly mentioned as the place next to which Gorgon would be placed. Furthermore, the abbot Rainald was probably a cleric abbot and may have been appointed by his brother Vivian to boost Marmoutier's (and Vivian's) prestige; lastly, the abbots Rainald and Robert the Strong were both concerned with the restitution of certain amounts of Marmoutier's property. In these plans of restoration the acquisition of a new and prestigious saint would certainly have formed an important ingredient, providing Marmoutier with new, prestigious, miracle working relics that could result in a new flow of pilgrims and donations.

Still, I have also shown that Marmoutier was already a respected monastery before Gorgon's translation. Probably from Charlemagne's time on, it was granted immunity and kept close to the king. Charters from Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald testify that this royal interest in Marmoutier was directly related to its link with the prestigious royal patron St. Martin, its founding father. Beside the royal family, other nobility associated itself with Marmoutier through donations and sales of land. The acquisition of a Roman martyr would therefore not have been meant to replace St. Martin's cult, but would have functioned to enhance Marmoutier's prestige, possibly also making up for the fact that the community had to do without the primary relics of its founding father.

In this sense, the emphasis on the irrevocable bond between Marmoutier and Gorgon importance as expressed in the *Historia translationis* is understandable. By using the malediction of psalm 82 the author seems to have followed in the tradition of monastic benedictions and sanction clauses in charters to protect Marmoutier's latest acquisition. Any replacement of Gorgon's relics to another, inferior place, would probably at the same time have meant a diminishment of St. Gorgon's cult (and hereby Marmoutier's incomes), so the underlining of the exact position of the relics is a way to ensure that Gorgon would for ever

remain at his resting place next to St. Martin, and continue to be an important focal point of devotion and veneration of laity and clergyman alike.

However, I have shown that the use of psalm 82 had another and deeper implication. The same psalm passage was employed in several of the 840s and 850s synods in the context of the bishop's condemnations of secular infringement in church business through the king's appointment of lay abbots and the (subsequent) false claims on monastic property by the laity. The condemnations of the bishop's were very relevant for Marmoutier around the mid-ninth century, considering its position in the (political) landscape in this period. The monastery was located in southern Neustria, a frontier region that formed an important stage in the battle between Charles and Lothar. Marmoutier as well as the community of St. Martin of Tours were, similar to monasteries in other frontier regions, important tools for Charles to keep his foot down in this troubled area. The appointment of Charles's closest man as lay abbot of both communities shows that Charles wished to keep Marmoutier and its resources under close control. The two restitution charters from 845 en 852 are evidence that Marmoutier had experienced loss of property as a result of this. Here, Charles's warning aimed at the *rectores* of Marmoutier not to lay hands on the monks's resources suggest that it was through their hands that loss of property had come about. In this light, the recovery of things that Marmoutier lacked, mentioned in the *Historia translationis* as the condition on which St. Gorgon was translated, was probably not only to be understood as a reference to an increase of prestige and incomes. It was probably also referring to a concrete restoration of what Marmoutier had lost of was in fear of loosing, namely its privileges and possessions.

It is on basis of the *Historia translationis* or the charters not possible to determine how exactly Marmoutier had suffered loss of property. The author of the *Historia translationis* does not express any criticism towards the abbots, nor gives specific hints concerning any

“exploitation” of the monastery. I can imagine that it was not in the community’s interest to accuse one particular party in a time where loyalties were continuously shifting and being positioned in a region that was exposed to threats from all sides. I earlier referred to Heinzelmann’s remark that these kinds of text were primarily intended for a small audience, but were possibly also read in the presence of a wider public visiting the monastery, such as high nobility or secular officials.<sup>377</sup> These people would surely have taken offence if certain accusations or criticisms were uttered at their person, but would have picked up the hint about unlawful infringements in Marmoutier.

There are indications that beside enjoying the interest of the king, Marmoutier was also of political importance for local nobility. Regine Le Jan’s observation that in the 830s and 840s the abbacy of Marmoutier was, together with other Neustrian offices, in the hands of members of one particular family, may coincide with the charter by which Oda and Eodon, possibly members of this family, made a transaction with Marmoutier concerning some landed property. It could be that this family sought to exert and keep control in Neustria through the holding of important offices and connections with important institutions, and that Marmoutier was an important component in these pursuits.

Still, these local powers should not be seen as parties acting independently from and without any connection to the king, because the interests and politics of the royal court and the local nobility were much intertwined. The king for example was aware of the dangers as well as the possibilities of local noblemen, and indeed made arrangements were he employed local interests for his own goals. Likewise, local noblemen were closely related to higher, royal politics, as men like Theoto, Adalard, Vivian and Robert the Strong, lay abbots of Marmoutier, were the king’s closest men.

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<sup>377</sup> Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, pp. 116-8.

In the light of various interests in Marmoutier and its own entwinement in local and high politics, the emphasis on the protective qualities of Gorgon by connecting him with the malediction of psalm 82 would have provided a powerful message against any attempts to diminish Marmoutier in its position, rights and properties. The use of psalms by monastic communities as a maledictory formula in their charters in order to protect their possessions, can also be translated to Marmoutier's case. The malediction of psalm 82 would have functioned to give a legal air to Gorgon's protection of Marmoutier's rights and properties, that would have been especially necessary in times were legal proof of these rights were in danger to be destroyed by, for example, invasions of Breton or Norman parties.

However, it has to be emphasised that what we witness here is not a story about an exploited defenseless religious community versus secular exploiters. As with a secular power, a monastic community would have been interested in the protection and augmenting of her prestige and possessions. The employment of the malediction of psalm 82, resonating the rhetoric of the bishop's against secular interference, would have been very useful for Marmoutier in its efforts to stand and defend its ground against other parties with own interests at heart.

I have earlier pointed out that Marmoutier probably needed to seek a balance between the positive and negative implications of being a royal monastery, and "enjoying" the king's protection and the nobility's attention. Marmoutier might have felt or feared this balance to shift to the negative side and wanted to employ the martyr Gorgon to put more weight on its own side of the scale. The addition of a Roman martyr's power to the protection of that of the king may have provided Marmoutier with an impressive blend of royal and saintly patronage.

In these conclusions the Roman factor of St. Gorgon must not disappear from sight. The fact that he was an early-christian martyr from Rome was the one aspect of Gorgon's identity that

really mattered. It guaranteed the authenticity of the saint and was for the Carolingians an important certificate of his virtues. Furthermore, I earlier pointed to Heydemann's remark that the transfer of relics from Rome to a Carolingian monastery could create a bond between Apostolic See and this monastery<sup>378</sup>, and the association with Rome would have provided a Carolingian monastery with an extra prestigious glow. The *Historia translationis* indeed emphasises Marmoutier's link with Rome (through her saint's John and Peter) and underlined the approval of the Apostolic power with Gorgon's translation. Remembering that St. Gorgon was to be buried next to the oratory of the Virgin, which was probably an important site for St. Martin's commemoration in Marmoutier, would have meant that from that time on Marmoutier would not only delight in its special connection with St. Martin, the apostle of Gaul and special patron of the kings, but also in its association with the power and authority of Rome.

This power and authority of Rome that Gorgon represented was not only to provide Marmoutier with a prestigious Roman halo, but very likely also functioned to evoke this power in its defenses against any interest that endangered its privileges and properties. In chapter one I mentioned how in the case of St. Wandrill, the acquisition of a Roman martyr was connected (and even part of) a plan of embedding the monastery in a papal protection as a defense against unlawful infringements. Likewise, in the 850s the monastery of Corbie mobilised the help and protection of the pope when in its eyes the boundaries of royal and episcopal interference were crossed. Another example is the nunnery of Vézelay. Smith describes how count Gerard of Vienne, in whose personal lands Vézelay was founded (a. 859) in 863 sought and received papal protection for this community, as he feared that the monastery might fall prey to other interests in the struggle between Charles and Lothar. According to Smith, the subsequent translation of Roman relics to Vézelay in 863 provided

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<sup>378</sup> Heydemann, 'Heiligen', p. 10.

the monastery with a ‘tangible pledge of papal interest and protection’.<sup>379</sup> In the light of these examples (although the state and status of the mentioned monasteries differ from that of Marmoutier), similar motives probably played a role for Marmoutier. Although the *Historia translationis* does not explicitly propagate papal protection, its emphasis on Marmoutier’s connection with the Apostolic See, through its patron saints John and Peter and through its newly acquired Roman martyr Gorgon, suggest that Marmoutier wanted to supply itself with the protection of Apostolic Roman power, especially in the face of the political troubles of the mid-ninth century.

In the introduction, I mentioned that the Carolingians’ high regard for Rome was tightly related to the early-Christian culture and traditions Rome represented. The Carolingians’ pursuit of correct christianity may also have played a role in the author’s portrayal of Gorgon. The representation of St. Gorgon’s power by the miracles he performs does not differ much from other patron saints who acted as powerful protectors of their monastery. However, by quoting the malediction of psalm 82 in relation to St. Gorgon’s integration in Marmoutier, the author provided Gorgon’s protective powers with a special touch. Gorgon would not only defend Marmoutier as any good patron, but would do this in the style of the contemporary synods. He would correct and punish those people who failed to acknowledge the monastic rights and privileges that had been established and defended since the earliest time of Christianity. A comparable case can be found in Einhard’s portrayal of the Roman martyrs Peter and Marcellinus. Smith shows how Einhard in his account about the translation and miracles of Peter and Marcellinus made these martyrs mouthpieces of the Carolingian ideal of *correctio*, hereby reacting to the troubles of the late 820s. This period was characterised by quarrels between Louis the Pious’s sons, political unrest and corruption, but also - and very much related to this – by high concerns for correcting the wrongs in society and politics.<sup>380</sup> In

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<sup>379</sup> Smith, ‘Roman relics’, pp. 329-31.

<sup>380</sup> Smith, “‘Emending evil ways’”, pp. 192-4, 201-6.



similar terms might the malediction of psalm 82 have functioned to make St. Gorgon a mouthpiece of the mid-ninth century synods, in a time where political troubles were bound to result in a growing secular infringement in monastic business that was so much condemned by the Frankish ecclesiastics. In this sense, the psalm was not just an additional protection to that of St. Gorgon, but a part and augmentation of Gorgon's own Roman power. If any unlawful claims on Marmoutier were made, it would be Gorgon who, in line with the stipulations of canon law, would correct the wrongs and carry out the divine judgement of psalm 82.

I hope to have shown that by switching back and forth between the text and context of St. Gorgon's translation to Marmoutier, the *Historia translationis* made the newly acquired relics of this Roman martyr directly relevant and actual for the community of Marmoutier in the mid-ninth century. The author used traditional themes and elements – the emphasis on the approval of God, Rome, and the saints, the link to monastic reform, the legal language, a malediction, and the portrayal of the saint as patron and protector - but it is the combination of all these elements that created an intriguing and unique piece of work that translated Gorgon's translation into a mobilisation of Roman power and the stipulations of the synods, hereby providing Gorgon with a role specifically adjusted to Marmoutier's needs in these demanding times.

## Appendix

### *Notes to Map 1 (for Map 1: see next page)*

Map 1 provides an overview of the journey from Rome to Marmoutier based on those cities and villages I was able to identify. Below I have provided a list of those places mentioned in the *Historia Translationis*'s description of the journey from Rome to Marmoutier, with the places marked in the map printed in bold. Some of the places can be found in Graesse<sup>381</sup>, but most information is based on the editorial notes to the *Historia Translationis* by the Bollandists (*AASS*) and Mabillon (*AASS OSB*).

<b>Places and rivers on the route from Rome to Marmoutier as mentioned in the <i>Historia Translationis</i></b>	<b>Additional notes</b>
<b>Roma</b>	Rome
St. Alexandrus	possibly the monastery of St. Alexander in Albano, one of Rome's suburbicane dioceses (see: L.H. Cottineau, <i>Répertoire topo-bibliographique des abbayes et prieurés</i> , 3 vols. (Mâcon 1939-1970), vol. 2, pp. 2579-80.)
Crossing the river Thar	Tarus/Taro, a river flowing from the Monte Penna through the provinces of Genoa and Parma, into the Po-river ( <i>AASS</i> , note a, <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 593)
the village Boilana (?)	
<b>Placentina</b>	Placentia or Piacenza ( <i>AASS</i> , note a, <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 593)
<b>Papia</b>	Pavia
<b>Vercelli</b>	
<b>Augusta</b>	Augusta Praetoria, that is: Aoste ( <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 594/ <i>AASS</i> , note b)
crossing the lake of St. Mauricius	the lake of Geneva ( <i>AASS</i> , note c)
<b>Arrival at a port two miles from Lausana</b>	Near Lausanne
Arrival at the river Voba (?), near Salinis	Salinis: see note below
<b>Salinis</b>	Salins, a village in the county of Burgundy ( <i>AASS</i> , note c, <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 596); most likely Salins-les-Bains in the Jura (see: Graesse, <i>Orbis Latinus</i> , under the key

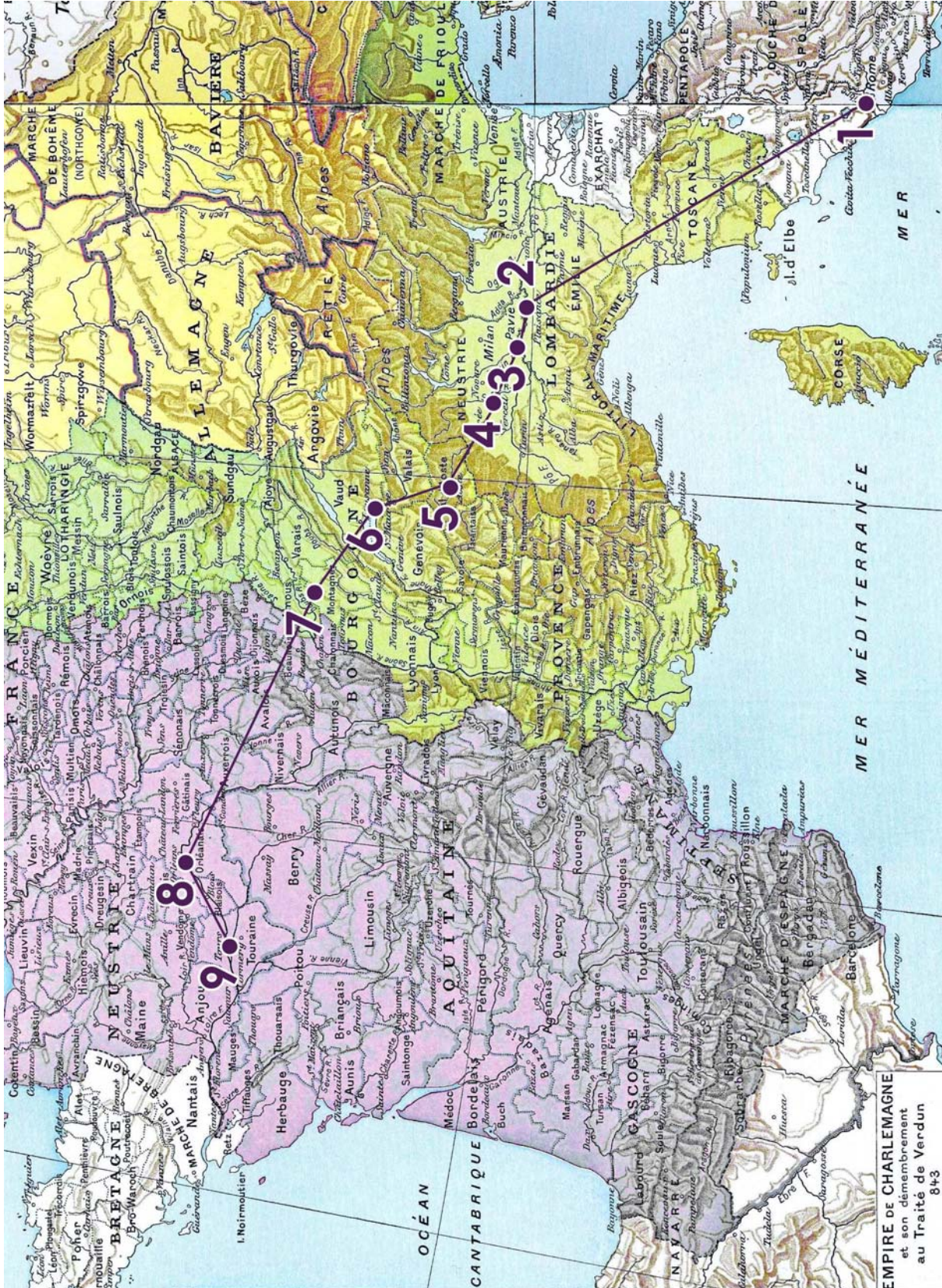
<sup>381</sup> J.G. Th Graesse et al. (eds.), *Orbis Latinus. Lexikon lateinischer geographischer Namen* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Berlin 1909), consulted as the online digitalised version as revised by Karen Green (1996), at: <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/Graesse/contents.html> (date of access: 06-11-09)

	word ‘Salinis, Salinense oppidum, Salinae’)
arrival at the river Loa	La Louve or Loue, a river tributary to the river Doubs (itself tributary to the Saône), between Lausanne and the Saône ( <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 594, note b)
crossing of the river Sogonna	La Saône ( <i>AASS</i> , note d, <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 594)
<b>Aurelianis</b>	Orléans
monastery of St. Maximinus	The monastery of St. Maximinus of Micy, near Orléans ( <i>AASS</i> , note e, <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 594, note c)
Calniacum	probably a village to the north of the Loire, near Blois or Orléans, possibly Calviacum or Calciacus ( <i>AASS OSB</i> , p. 595 and note a, referring to Nithard’s <i>Historiarum Libri IIII</i> , I; see: Nithard, <i>Historiarum Libri IIII</i> , ed. Müller, MGH SSRG 44, I, 5, p.8 and note 3 and 4. Here Müller states that it is either Calciacus which was probably located near Blois, or a village known today as Chevilly, near Orléans) Other options: Caniacus, and further corrected Cariacus (see: <i>RACC</i> , vol. 3, pp. 285-6): ‘villa S. Martini Turonensis, <i>Channay-sur-Lathan (?)</i> ’, and: <i>RACC</i> , vol. 1, pp. 173-7; or: Caniacus, <i>Cheny</i> , to the north of Auxerre. (see: MGH, Conc. III, p. 58.)
<b>monastery Maius</b>	The monastery Marmoutier near Tours

# Map 1

**Gorgon's journey**  
from Rome to Marmoutier in  
846/ 847

1. Rome
- \* (Boilana)
2. Piacenza
3. Pavia
4. Vercelli
5. Aoste
6. Lausanne
7. Salins-les-Bains
8. Orléans
- \* (Cahiacum)
9. Marmoutier



**EMPIRE DE CHARLEMAGNE**  
et son démembrément  
au Traité de Verdun  
843

This map is based on the map from: Vidal-Lablache, Paul, *Histoire et géographie. Atlas Général Vidal-Lablache*, Librairie Armand Colin (Paris 1898) as taken from the public domain of: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Partage\\_de\\_l'Empire\\_carolingien\\_au\\_Traité\\_de\\_Verdun\\_en\\_843.JPG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Partage_de_l'Empire_carolingien_au_Traité_de_Verdun_en_843.JPG).

## Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur</i> , eds. J. Bollandus et al, (Antwerp/Brussels 1643-1940).
AASS OSB	<i>Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti in saeculorum classes distributa</i> , ed. J. Mabillon, 7 vols. (Paris 1668-85).
An. OSB	<i>Annales Ordinis Sancti Benedicti Occidentalium Monachorum Patriarchae</i> , ed. J. Mabillon, 6 vols. (Lucca, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed., 1739-45).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores Antiquissimi
Capit. I	Capitularia Regum Francorum, vol. 1, eds. Alfred Boretius (Hannover 1883).
Capit. II	Capitularia Regum Francorum, vol. 2, eds. Alfred Boretius and Victor Krause (Hannover 1897).
Conc. II,1	Concilia Aevi Karolini (742-842), vol. 1 (742-817), ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover/Leipzig 1906).
Conc. III	Die Konzilien der karolingische Teilreiche (843-859), ed. Wilfrid Hartmann (Hannover 1984).
Conc. IV	Die Konzilien der karolingische Teilreiche (860-874), ed. Wilfrid Hartmann (Hannover 1998).
DDKar. I	Diplomata Karolinorum, vol. 1, Pippin, Karlmann und Karl der Grosse, eds. Engelbert Mühlbacher et al. (Hannover 1906).

DDL <i>o</i> I/ <i>o</i> II	Diplomata Karolinorum, vol. 3, Lothar I/Lothar II, ed. Theodor Schieffer (Berlin/Zürich 1966).
DDLII	Diplomata Karolinorum, vol. 4, Ludwig II, ed. Konrad Wanner (München 1994).
Epp.Kar.II	Epistolae Karolini Aevi, vol. 2, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin 1895)
Epp.Kar.III	Epistolae Karolini Aevi, vol. 3, eds. Ernst Dümmler, Karl Hampe et al. (Berlin 1899).
Epp.Kar.IV	Epistolae Karolini Aevi, vol. 4, eds. Ernst Dümmler, Ernst Perels et al. (Berlin 1925).
Epp. sel.	Epistolae Selectae
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SSRM	Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum
PL	<i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris 1844-55, 1862-65).
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