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Preface

The music starts. All the awkward silence that had just surrounded us now burst into the loud tunes of a pipe organ, and the air becomes heavy with a peculiar smell of burned pine trees. We gaze at each other with wonder realizing that everybody has raised from their seats, even the small old lady seated nearby with her crumbled back, and we get up in a split second. It is amazing to observe this mixed crowd, which fills the room with anticipating stillness. While some had their eyes fixed on the altar others joined us in examining the colourful mosaics, but suddenly all these eyes are turned toward the entrance. We have seated ourselves in the middle of the nave, out in the side, in the stern above and in between everybody's heads we can glance at what seems like a parade with boys swinging a smoking silver ball in a chain, an older man holding a red book with a golden cross on up in front of him, a golden crosier, and in the middle a serious, but kind looking man with a big arched hat, to whom people nod.

It was Maundy Thursday before Easter, and we had decided to go on a fieldtrip to the Catholic church squeezed in between the rest of the beautiful buildings in Bredgade, to try to understand or at least experience the feeling of reverence for a holy man. It is a topic we have wondered deeply about in our study of Saint Martin, a man considered to be holy, who lived in the 4th century. The wonder caused by this study is augmented by the fact that 4 out of 5 members in this group are not Catholics, and therefore have a different approach to the notion of sainthood than Catholics in general. Of course both Catholicism and Protestantism are within Christianity, but the belief in saints within Catholicism forms an important element of difference. Perhaps we cannot understand and will not stop wondering about this belief simply by attending one Catholic ceremony, however by attending this we realized some differences between the two branches of Christianity that can help us to avoid being judgmental, and instead become more inquisitive in our study. We are five members

with five different approaches to the Christian religion, yet the European culture's Christian attributes and its presence in our everyday life are irrefutable, despite the fact that it is not always vivid. However, when confronted with Catholic liturgy in the church the religious developments and historical influence became apparent. The division of the Christian religion into the Protestant and Catholic Church by the Reformation in the 16th century is today still very apparent in religious practice, especially in the rituals connected to the services. We found that there was a completely different feeling of unity in the Catholic Church that is full of rituals, religious paraphernalia and a more active participation of the congregation than in the Protestant Church. The congregation was constantly answering in song, two men were reading out from the Bible, twelve men had their feet washed by the priest, two had a separate Holy Communion, and all of a sudden everybody was asked to shake hands with the people next to them.

An interesting thing about working within the field of religious history is that it affects all members of the group in different ways; the feelings it awakes are subjective, and we can truly benefit from each other's experiences, both professionally and personally. Being students of humanities we seek to understand phenomena affecting human life and experiences. As persons we are each formed by our own individual pasts and experiences through our lives. As cultural beings we are formed by history. In the search to understand human life of a period in history which we have not ourselves experienced, we must take use of the traces that the past has left us; the respective primary sources as written material created in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the period of our investigation. Furthermore, we make use of research conducted by historians who preoccupy themselves with the same period of time as we do, namely our secondary sources. In evaluating the collected material we must try and free ourselves from our own prejudice and pre-suppositions in our attempt to achieve an understanding of the past.

Introduction

The main character of interest in our project is Saint Martin of Tours: a Roman soldier, monk and finally bishop of Tours. Martin, as we learn from the sources, was born in Upper Pannonia, in modern Hungary, in about 316, and died on the 8th of November in 397 in Candes, France. While still alive, Martin became known as a holy man because of his great devotion to God and acts of charity to people. Shortly after his death Martin's body was moved to Tours and became an object of veneration. Nevertheless, the fame of his deeds, as well as his cult, spread widely beyond Tours and France making Martin a character in numerous narratives and a figure eagerly depicted in church art in the whole of Europe. Nowadays we can find numerous churches dedicated to Saint Martin, and the day of his festival is still solemnly celebrated in Tours, as well as in many others towns of Europe. Being a very significant figure in French history, Martin became one out of three main saint-patrons of France.

The figure of Saint Martin is a particular instance of the phenomenon of Christian holy men, which spread through the whole of Europe from the Late Antiquity, permeating religious life in the Middle Ages.

A saint is one who joins Heaven and Earth, who brings people closer to God and makes God's presence in the world more visible. The Saint is a mediator between material and supernatural reality, and he is a protector of humans against evil powers and earthly enemies.¹ The saint is a person who, after his earthly life devoted to God, finally joins the eternal community of God; he becomes a friend of God but is still an invisible intimate friend of humans. His bodily remains, the relics, are buried in his tomb, which is a meeting place for man and his Creator, in the presence and mediation of saint. In the time full of activity during the Middle Ages

¹ P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in the Late Antiquity*, (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1982), p.50-52.

graves of saints were refuges, where everyone could feel secure and find a shelter in the protection of his invisible friend who is close to God. A saint is also one who reveals God's magnificence by performing amazing miracles in His name; a saint demonstrates God's mercy by supporting people who need it and ask for it.

It is particularly important for a historian to expose the illusory continuities and similarities of different categories,² since the same word can express different phenomena depending on its historical context, and sainthood is one of these categories. If we when working with this project assume that sainthood is only a universal phenomenon, we divest it of its historical dimension. We usually see sainthood as something universal and continuous, but then we cannot see the changes in the development of this phenomenon. For a historian, more important than continuity is the precise change. During the historical development the patterns of sainthood and the ideals of the holy men changed. Therefore the purpose of any historical research on sanctity is to examine how its form changed over time.

For a long time saints and their cults were by scholars regarded as a continuation of old pagan cults of gods and heroes playing a similar role in society, namely as supernatural protectors of human communities.³ However, the historian Peter Brown recently contributed with new perspectives on this field of study in his book *The Cult of the Saints*. The difference between saints and pagan heroes that he presents seems to be crucial in understanding the phenomenon of holy men in Christianity. The central distinction is the relation to death. In Antiquity death and the dead body was seen as something disgusting, and therefore, death was an impassable barrier between the world of humans and gods. In Christianity, by contrast, the saints were commemorated because they died while following Christ. The day of a saint's feast, which was celebrated on the day of his death, is actually not a commemoration

² A. Vauchez, 'The Saint', *Medieval callings*, ed. by J. Le Goff, transl. by L. G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p 313.

³ P. Brown, op. cit., p.67. The classical study presenting the cult of saints as a continuation of pagan cults is the book by H. Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography*, transl. by V. M. Crawford, originally published in 1907.

of his death, but his spiritual birth in God, a commemoration of him achieving eternal life.

Brief historical overview

The first saints venerated by the Church were martyrs.⁴ These people who were persecuted and died for their faith were for a long time the only saints, with exception of the Virgin, John the Baptist and the Apostles, who were commemorated in Christianity. Christian communities were quick to feel desire to honour martyrs as very special dead persons. The martyrs, as well as almost all saints of the first millennium have not been canonised in the juridical sense of this term, which means they have not been approved officially by the pope. However until late 10th century, when the first saint was canonised by the pope, the practice of official approval was not necessary.

The greatest number of saint martyrs comes from the period of the great persecutions under the Roman Emperor Diocletian between 303 and 310. Nonetheless, since 313, when his successor Constantine the Great established a policy of religious freedom for all, the persecutions stopped and martyrdoms of Christians were not so frequent, although they still happened.

In late 3rd century a more radical form of Christianity appeared in the deserts of Egypt: people feeling a great desire for following Christ left society and went into the desert to live alone as hermits. Because of their great devotion they were regarded as holy men and were venerated as martyrs after their death. Therefore a new pattern of sanctity that was not strictly connected with death, but with virtuous life appeared. The saints who were not martyred were called confessors. The first confessors were thus ascetic hermits who originally lived alone and then in small monastic communities. This type of sainthood was very prestigious, because the hermits, living in solitude, were believed to be closer to God. This conception of

⁴ The historical overview that follows is based on: A. Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. by J. Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), pp.13-32.

sainthood was transferred to the West in the second half of the 4th century, and became common in Gaul as well.

The pattern of 'saint confessors' established in the East developed in a different direction in the West: it went from martyrs to bishops who were the guardians of the first saints' graves and became promoters of their cults. From the 5th century onwards, most saints in the West were bishops. In that period bishops also played a political role in the cities, and were for that reason seen as central figures in the Western Church. In Late Antiquity, as well as in the Early Middle Ages, establishing the cults of the saints was the responsibility of a local bishop, who put the name of a saint in a local calendar instituting the day of his celebration. A great influence on the bishop's decision was the fame of saints as holy men, expressed by people's devotion to them. This was in accordance with the rule *vox populi, vox Dei*, the voice of people is the voice of God.

As we mentioned already, in the 10th century the way of approving saints and establishing their cults changed. The moment when papacy took control over the act of establishing saints is a turning point in the development of saints' cults. The institution of new feasts in praise of saints became centralised and was no longer in the hands of local bishops. Instead of *vox populi* confirming the fame of holiness, papacy introduced a juridical process of canonisation, whose aim was to collect proofs of the candidate for sainthood's perseverance in faith. Originally the reason for this process was to select only those who for their pious life deserve to be approved as saints. However in a later period papal exclusiveness for establishing cults of saints became a tool of control over their development, and over local churches as well.

Because the process of juridical canonisation of saints started when a great number of cults of saints were already established, many holy men venerated by the Church were never officially approved. Among them we find the main character

of our analysis, Saint Martin. Although his cult spread through all parts of Europe he was never officially canonised.

Problem field

We have in this project chosen to concentrate on one aspect of medieval Christianity, namely in the belief in sainthood and the holy man, and more specifically in Saint Martin of Tours. There are different levels in our speculations about this subject matter, some are rooted in more personal motivations concerning the study of history in general, with curiosity and perhaps fascination of the, to us, unknown, while others are more rooted in the yearning for some concrete historical answers.

We will base our investigation on a thorough analysis of the different hagiographies (the technical term for the written life of a saint) of Saint Martin and his cult, and subsequently this will lead us to an understanding of the elements included in the making of Saint Martin. We will go in depth with the Christian perspective, an endeavour based on saints as figures created and re-created throughout time. The original sources to this are hagiographies, in our case specifically the 3 hagiographies of Saint Martin. Sulpicius Severus, who was an ecclesiastical (connected with the Christian Church) writer in the 4th century, wrote the earliest *vita* (Latin for the life of a saint). The second *vita* we are dealing with was written by Gregory, the bishop of Tours in the 6th century, and the last *vita* is from a book written by Jacobus de Voragine, a hagiographer and archbishop of Genoa in the 13th century.

Thus having selected the area of our project, the questions on which our investigation is based are:

- How was Saint Martin presented through hagiographies?
- How was Saint Martin's cult established?
- ***How was Saint Martin made?***

Delimitations

The field of our study is limited to the Late Antiquity and Middle Ages in Gaul (modern France and Belgium), especially to the city of Tours. The chronological frame of our project is marked by two writings describing Saint Martin. In 394 Sulpicius Severus, friend of Martin wrote the first *Vita Martini*, what we assume to be the foundation of the Martinian legend; two centuries later another author of Martinian writings, Gregory of Tours, marks the turning point in the development of Saint Martin's cult in Tours. Furthermore, we shall also briefly present some perspectives of development of the cult of Saint Martin in the further period, by showing two crucial points of Martin's cult's development in the 13th and 14th centuries. However the events from the period after the 6th century will not be the subject of our close analyses, instead they will be presented as an illustration of how Martin was created after the period of our basic interest; as a postscript of our investigation.

Our investigation is a study focused on the history of mentality. Therefore it shall be narrowed to the religious life, excluding from the field of our research political and economical events.

Source criticism

In order to study the making of a historical figure like Saint Martin we must consult sources allowing us to come to understand the process from different perspectives.

Firstly we are making use of hagiographical sources describing the lives of saints, in Latin called the *vitae*, or in singular *vita*. When using this source we must be aware of the specific properties of hagiographical genre, since the authors presented the figures of the holy men according to a particular literary convention. The *vitae* were basically a literary genre therefore the figures they depicted are more a literary creation than a description of men in the flesh. Authors who wrote *vitae* of a particular saint, would adapt material from previous hagiographies.

Furthermore, we will use a chronicle, which is a record of historical events. Although this chronicle also contains a hagiographical description, the purpose of chronicles was to record a wide historical background of the events they present. In the analysis we also include a liturgical text – a written prayer of the mass, as well as a sermon.

Our point of departure is the analysis of three *vitae*, written in different periods of the development of the cult of saints. The first one, written by Sulpicius Severus, belongs to the Late Antiquity; the second, *Vita Martini* by Gregory of Tours, represents the Early Middle Ages; and finally *The Golden Legend* was written in the High Middle Ages. This temporal extension, as we shall present in our analysis is very significant, since each of the mentioned *vitae* presents a specific stage of development of the cult of saints in the West from its beginning to the period when the cult of saints, as well as the way of writing about their lives, was finally established.

Sulpicius Severus was the first author of a Martinian *vita*. He was the founder of the legend of Saint Martin, and his hagiographical writings influenced further authors' writing about Martin, which is why we took his *Life of St. Martin* as

the point of departure. The *vita* he wrote belongs to the period that preceded the Middle Ages, and therefore we should see Severus as a man of the Late Antiquity, a member of Roman elite who, fascinated by the figure of Saint Martin, devoted a great part of his life to propagate his legend. However, we must be aware that his writings on Martin are not limited to this particular *Vita*. Among his Martinian writings we also find the *Dialogues* on Saint Martin, as well as the letters he wrote to his friends and his mother in law in which he present the figure of his beloved saint. Severus wrote his *Vita Martini* in about 394, when Martin was still alive, thus he could not present the whole life of Martin. His letters and *Dialogues*, written just after Martin's death in 397, are therefore a continuation, which completes the events of the last three years of Martin's life. In our further analysis we use the translation by Frederick Russell Hoare, first published in 1954.⁵

The second author whose work we will analyse is Gregory of Tours, Martin's successor at the Episcopal See of Tours. Gregory was a bishop of Tours from 567 until his death in 594. For him, as we shall see below, Martin was a very significant figure. Although he is, as Severus, the author of the *vita* devoted to Saint Martin, Gregory is better known as the author of the *Historiae Francorum*, *The History of the Franks*, which is considered to be the first medieval chronicle. Moreover, he is also the author of the books presenting the lives of saints such as *Glory of the Confessors* and *Glory of the Martyrs* as well as *The Lives of the Fathers*. Besides the two latter books, Saint Martin appears in all Gregory's writings, since, as a bishop of Tours, he was the most significant saint for Gregory. Gregory divided *Liber de virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, the book of Saint Martin's virtues, into four books which is actually a collection of miracles that Gregory probably wrote from the eighties of the 6th century to the end of his life, since the last event recorded

⁵ Sulpicius Severus, *The Life of St. Martin* [further: Sulpicius Severus VM], *Three Letters on St. Martin, Two Dialogues*, in: *The Western Fathers*, transl. and ed. by F. R. Hoare (London: Sheed and Ward, 1980), p.3-144.

in his book is set to 593.⁶ In our further analysis we will use Gregory's hagiographical writing *Vita Martini*, translated by Raymond van Dam as *The Miracles of the Bishop St. Martin* published as a whole in his book *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*.⁷

The last *vita* of Saint Martin, which we analyse is from the 13th century collection of lives of saints called *Legenda aurea*, *The Golden Legend*, written by the Dominican and archbishop of Genoa Jacobus de Voragine. It is significant that the author of *The Golden Legend* was a member of the Dominican Order, for that was a preaching order, whose main calling was to sermonize people. Voragine's *Vita Martini*, as well as the whole collection, is a very significant source, since its author by compiling in one book many *vitae* of different saints established standardised versions of the lives of saints. This canon established by Voragine had a significant influence on medieval authors writing about saints and their lives; *The Golden Legend* was the main point of reference. Thus the *vitae* presented in *The Golden Legend* appear to be the wider known versions of lives of saints in the Middle Ages since 1288, when the *Legenda aurea* was written. Additionally *The Golden Legend* was composed as a handbook for priests to help them prepare the sermons; each of the *vita* was ascribed to the day of feast for the saint, whose life it presents. Therefore in Voragine's collection we find *vitae* for almost every day of the liturgical year. Saint Martin's *vita* appears there under the date of the 11th of November. *The Life of St. Martin* in the classical English edition of *The Golden Legend* translated and adapted by Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger was for the first time published in 1941.⁸

⁶ L. Thorpe, Introduction to: Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, transl. and introduced by Lewis Thorpe, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p.7-9.

⁷ Gregory of Tours, *The Miracles of the Bishop St. Martin* [further: Gregory of Tours VM], in: R. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), pp. 199-303.

⁸ Jacobus de Voragine *Life of Martin*, in: *The Golden Legend* [further: Jacobus de Voragine GL], transl. by Granger Ryan, Helmut Ripperger, (New York: Arno Press, 1969), pp. 663-674.

Although in many modern editions the source of our interest appear under different titles given by translators, we decided, according to the hagiographical tradition, to use the common title *Vita Martini* subsequently adding the name of the author in order to distinguish between the *vitae*.

Besides hagiographical writings we will also be using different kinds of primary sources for the analysis. The *Historiae Francorum*, *The History of the Franks* mentioned above, is a very significant source for investigating many aspects of the early medieval life. It is a chronicle structuralising history of the world from the biblical origins to the contemporary times of Gregory. However, after depicting biblical events Gregory focuses on the history of his Episcopal town of Tours, and political, religious and social aspects of life in the 6th century Gaul. Because of Gregory's interest of the history of Tours and his devotion to Saint Martin, who appears many times in the chronicle, we find this source to be of importance to our analysis. Moreover, as a non-hagiographical writing *The History of the Franks* presents historical events which cannot be found in *Vita Martini*, especially the development of the cult in regards to a foundation of the church of Saint Martin and of his feast. The edition we use is a translation of *The History of the Franks* by Lewis Thorpe and with his introduction.⁹

Another very important source in the exploration of the cult of Saint Martin is a record of the liturgy devoted to him. In *The Bobbio Missal*, a Gallican liturgical book, we find a mass devoted to Saint Martin. The preserved manuscript of this mass, as well as all the collection of liturgical texts of the missal, comes from the mid 8th century. It was written in Northern Italy, however the manuscript was found in a monastery in Bobbio, also in Northern Italy, and is therefore commonly known as *The Bobbio Missal*. The manuscript stems from the 8th century, but the liturgy it presents is from an earlier period. Due to the lack of similar sources from previous

⁹ Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks* [further: Gregory of Tours HF], transl. and introduced by Lewis Thorpe, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

periods, it is not possible to state when precisely the liturgy recorded in the missal was established. However, as the editor of *The Bobbio Missal* Elias Avery Lowe argues¹⁰ that it did, in all probability exist in the same form in the 6th century already, which is the time depicted by Gregory of Tours in his chronicle. This text is important for the analysis because it illustrates how Martin was venerated in Tours. Since there is no English translation of *The Bobbio Missal*,¹¹ the analysed passages have been read in Latin.

Finally we have, as a primary source, a sermon in praise of Saint Martin. There is a strong indication, as its editor Raymond van Dam argues,¹² of the sermon having been delivered at Tours. The actual dating of the sermon is problematic; however previous linguistic analysis ascribed it to the 6th century, according to van Dam.¹³ It was without doubt written for the day of Saint Martin's feast on the 11th of November. Therefore the sermon, as an example of how priests in Tours preached about Saint Martin, illustrates the ceremonies devoted to him. We use the sermon translated by Raymond van Dam, as published in the already mentioned book by him, namely *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul*.¹⁴

In order to acknowledge the contribution of recent scholars, whose works have guided us into the field of our research, we should briefly present the most significant secondary sources that have inspired as well as helped us to understand the phenomena we deal with.

We have achieved our broader historical understanding through Peter Brown's *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in the Late Antiquity*. This book, published in 1982, created new discussions on the cult of saints. Brown presented the phenomenon of the holy man in a historical development from its

¹⁰ E. A. Lowe, Introduction to: *The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-Book (MS. Paris. Lat. 13246)*, ed. by E. A. Lowe (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1991), p.7-10.

¹¹ *The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-Book (MS. Paris. Lat. 13246)*, ed. by E. A. Lowe (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1991), p.107-108.

¹² R. van Dam, op. cit., p.304.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ *Sermon in Praise of St. Martin* [further: Sermo], in: R. van Dam, op. cit., pp.305-307.

origins to the period of the 6th century. Moreover, and most significantly, Peter Brown showed the cult of the saints in a wider context of social and religious life in the period. This book contributed to the direction of our own investigation, as well as inspired our own interpretations.

As much as Peter Brown introduced us to the period of our particular interest, the Early Middle Ages, Sharon Farmer with her book *The Communities of Saint Martin* presented the perspectives of development of the cult of Saint Martin. Her very detailed analysis has helped us to understand the evolution of the cult of Saint Martin, by depicting consequences of the changes, which began in the 5th and 6th century, the period of our interest exactly. Sharon Farmer focuses her research around the period of the united community of Tours, splitting it into three rivalling centres: the cathedral of Tours, the shrine of Saint Martin and the monastery of Marmoutier. All of them were used the figure of Saint Martin for their own purposes. Therefore, this book has helped us to draw perspectives on the development of the cult of Saint Martin in the High Middle Ages.

Methodology

When evaluating a historical development we must analyse our collected sources and try to detect a pattern of relevance. Through this pattern, its variations and changes, we come closer to understanding the development of history. We have chosen to study three different primary sources in order to attempt a creation of a more complete analysis of a figure like Saint Martin, who has been presented from many different isolated perspectives. Our choice of sources is therefore partly due to the significance of the individual texts, but also to a large extent because they each represent a particular interest in the making of Saint Martin.

Besides hagiographies as a literary genre and a more conventional source of the Middle Ages, we will make an analysis of the mass and sermon in praise of Saint Martin. Nevertheless, the process of writing *vitae* and establishing the cult of Saint Martin by founding churches and having feasts in praise of the saint are two different methods for the making of Saint Martin and his cult. The former establishes a saint as a literary creation, while the latter forms an object of veneration. In other words, one creates an abstract knowledge of the phenomenon of sainthood, while the other creates a practice. We are aware that these two dynamics influence each other, but we regard them as two parallel, yet different, ways of making a saint.

Concerning the change in development of the literary image of Saint Martin we will compare the aforementioned three *vitae*. We have read the *Vita Martini* written by Gregory, but to understand his contribution we must also evaluate it in relation to a previous example of hagiography written by Sulpicius Severus, whose contribution established the legend of Martin. Additionally, by analysing the *vita* from the 13th century, the *Life of St. Martin* in *The Golden Legend*, we will attempt to demonstrate how Saint Martin became a standardised or classical example of a hagiographical figure. Using Voragine we wish to depict not the development, but the example of Saint Martin's standard image in the Late Middle Ages. Due to

the limitations of our own experience with historical work and the limited time that we have available for the production of this project, we are not able to go into details regarding the whole development of the cult of Saint Martin taking place in the centuries between Gregory of Tours and Jacobus de Voragine.

The cult of Saint Martin developed in Tours and in order to explore this cult further we will use Gregory's *History of the Franks*, which records changes in terms of the establishment of a main ritual around Saint Martin, namely the festivals celebrating Martin on the 11th of November and on the 4th of July. We wish to investigate the reason why these two dates of celebration of Saint Martin appear and we will moreover use the description of the mass to illustrate how a crucial part of the feast took place and Martin's role in this. We will also analyse the sermon presented above in order to show how the events described in the *vitae* were interpreted and hence communicated to the public.

We are aware that the structure of the project does not reflect chronological order, but we consider it to be essential to present the *vitae* first to explain the phenomenon of sainthood and present Saint Martin's most significant hagiographies showing the legend of the Saint.

These works of literature whose language serves as a medium thus require careful reading in order for us to analyse elements in their structure. This type of source criticism contributes to our understanding of both the authors' deliberate intentions, but also what the written material communicates about the time and place it was written in. Consequently, elements like the genre of the sources, the structure of the texts, their claims and perhaps even intentions are on the whole effects of importance to our analysis. Hence we are attempting to establish an understanding of the texts from our own perspective, and simultaneously understand the authors and possible what they tried to express. We want to analyse the texts as expressions and reflections

of their contemporary structures and aspects of medieval life, particularly in regards to the structures of the development of the cult of Saint Martin.

However, recognising all facets in a work of literature that was written almost two thousand years ago will unavoidably be a challenge to us. A pre-condition for communication as a whole, and in particular written communication, must be the common language. In our project we deal with texts that were originally written in Latin but have been translated into English and we have to be conscious of the predicament this creates. To us the historical distance seems to pose a more immediate problem that can easily become an interfering element. Nuances in communication have changed through history and complicate certain aspects of our understanding. Moreover, we must recognise that our own historical context has an impact on us and our way of understanding our surroundings; we are situated in both time and place and cannot step out of this context. Belonging to the present we do feel the distance to the Middle Ages has implications when conducting an analysis, and an awareness of this distance is important to bear in mind through our historical exploration. We have attempted to maintain a scientific distance when reading and analysing, but we must also be aware of the risk of becoming too sceptical and thereby neglect parts of the sources that have been important for the intended readers. Our subjectivity and historical context create a certain filter for understanding which we cannot disregard, but we hope that when analysing we can get as close to the texts as possible.

Chapter outline

The content of this project is divided into two parts, each constituting an important element in understanding the influence of Saint Martin.

Chapter I is devoted to the analyses of Saint Martin's *vitae* written in different historical periods, and how the hagiographical writings of Saint Martin makes him a holy man. Firstly, the *vita* written by Sulpicius Severus at the very end of the 4th century followed by Gregory of Tours' *vita* from the 6th century and finally the *vita* from *The Golden Legend* written by a Jacobus de Voragine in the late 13th century.

Chapter II focuses on how Martin was made in terms of religious rituals and practices devoted to him, through the same period as above, from the 4th to the 13th century, however concentrating on the 5th and 6th century. For this purpose we are analysing the chronicle *The History of the Franks* by Gregory of Tours and the liturgical texts of the mass and the sermon, all from the same period. Furthermore, in these analyses the texts by Peter Brown and Sharon Farmer provide us with a general overview for our investigations.

Chapter I

Legend: *Vita Martini*

‘A little book on the life of our holy Martin’: *vita* by Sulpicius

The popularity of a saint can be fleeting and ephemeral. Some saints are remembered for only a few years and then completely forgotten either for eternity, or until a historian stumbles over its hagiography and brings the unknown saint out from obscurity. Other saints, however, continue to be remembered for centuries, perhaps even millennia. The memory of Saint Martin is of this latter kind whose memory has been kept alive even until today, and the first writings about his life were by Sulpicius Severus, an author from Gaul who lived from about 363 AD until 420 AD.

Severus started his writing on *Vita Martini*, (*The Life of St. Martin*) in 394, and completed it in 396, one year before the death of Martin of Tours. *Vita Martini* was generally accepted, as a truthful description of Martin’s life, even by outstanding citizens such as bishops, which is surprising since Severus, as a new convert, had no prior records of Christian merit. Both Severus’ authority as a writer and Martin’s authority as a holy man were acknowledged, which is an achievement worthy of investigation.

Vita Martini begins with a dedication from Severus to his ‘most dear brother’ Desiderius, a monastic friend, on whose request Severus wrote *Vita Martini*. The *vita* is structured in 27 small chapters, the first being a preface describing personal reflections on his writing, and from the second chapter he described Martin’s life from birth until he entered the episcopate, all the time reminding the reader of Martin’s extensive qualities as a Christian. Chapters eleven to twenty-four are devoted to depictions of Martin’s continuous fight against paganism and the

miraculous deeds he performed. The last three chapters, which show Severus' pilgrimage to Tours and his period as Martin's disciple, present the interior life of Martin, emphasizing his consistent ascetic way of living, thus combining the notion of being both a monk and a bishop.

In order to give a more profound analysis of *Vita Martini*, we have divided it into three sections; the first section is an analysis of the way in which Severus presented himself and his influence as the author. The second section is Severus' presentation of Martin's life, and the final section concentrates on Severus' depiction of Martin's excellence in performing miracles, including exorcism and fighting paganism.

Severus about himself

Vita Martini begins with a letter to Severus' friend Desiderius, in which he states that he is not an eloquent man, and that he is weak and wishes to avoid human judgement upon his writings, thus making himself appear humble and unassuming. He even goes as far as to request not to be published. Nevertheless, Severus may still have expected it to be published, because he writes: "Spare me, however, the necessity for these painful excuses [about his poor writing] by letting the book be published, if you are agreeable, with the name suppressed. To make this possible, please erase it from the title-page, so that the silenced page announces the book's subject and does not announce the author".¹⁵ This request is nonetheless paradoxical as Severus' relationship with Saint Martin is being used as evidence for the authenticity of the content, making it impossible to omit Severus' identity as author of this text without losing an important proof of such authenticity.

Nevertheless, Severus expected Desiderius to publish the *vita*, as long as the readers knew that he, Severus, is a bad writer: "I made up my mind to feel no

¹⁵ Sulpicius Severus VM, Dedication, p.11.

shamed of solecisms [mistakes]”.¹⁶ Furthermore he also claims to be poorly educated, although he had legal training,¹⁷ and whatever knowledge he may arbitrarily have come across, he “had lost it all by long disuse”.¹⁸ As honest as this confession of shortcomings may seem, it also has the effect of altering the perception of Severus. Severus posing as a poor and uneducated writer makes him appear truthful and not in search of glory and it makes his request to avoid publishing seem honest. However, in a subsequent letter to the priest Eusebius, Severus writes: “mention was made of a little book I have published on the life of that saintly man Martin and I was very pleased to hear that it is being eagerly and widely read”.¹⁹

As we also see from this quote, the news of the *vita* spread quickly, and it could not have taken long before church officials had become convinced of the authenticity of Martin of Tours, and the honesty of the author. Even Martin himself accepted Sulpicius Severus as his hagiographer, which can be seen in a letter written after Martin’s death to Aurelius, a deacon and dear friend, where Severus describes his vision of Martin: “Smiling a little, he held out to me the book I had written on his life.”²⁰ This is an effective, but nevertheless circular argumentation because it was Severus, who through his writings increased Saint Martin’s popularity and importance in the first place, and then he later let this same Martin, give himself his blessings. Still, it must have been convincing, because the first basilica was built on the grave of Saint Martin²¹ not long afterwards.

Presentation of Martin’s life

Severus presents Martin gradually, whereby the miracles or events do not differ too much from episodes in similar works. Martin was born in Pannonia (modern

¹⁶ Ibidem, p.10.

¹⁷ F. H. Hoare, Introduction to Sulpicius Severus *The life of St. Martin*, op. cit., p.4.

¹⁸ Sulpicius Severus VM, Dedication, p.11.

¹⁹ Sulpicius Severus *Three Letters on St. Martin*, letter 1, op. cit., p.48.

²⁰ Ibidem, p.52.

²¹ Gregory of Tours HF, book 10, chapt. 31, p.595.

Hungary) and brought up by pagan parents in Pavia, in Italy. Even though he grew up with pagan parents, Martin devoted himself to Christianity from the very beginning of his life. Similarly to Christ who went to the temple when he was twelve,²² Martin went to the church by himself at the age of ten asking to become a catechumen (a person being prepared for baptism). At the age of twelve Martin conceived a desire for a hermitage, solitary and ascetic life, but as son of a retired soldier, according to Roman law, he was forced to join the Roman army. Against his will, at the age of fifteen Martin became a soldier, but he still felt a strong desire to pursue religious life.

At the age of twenty, when he was still a soldier, his generous spirit is depicted in a defining moment, where Martin in the middle of winter meets a beggar by the gate of the city of Amiens. He had not many clothes on, but despite the cold he divided his cloak in two and covered the beggar. Severus underlines that this work of mercy, Martin did as a catechumen before even receiving baptism and being admitted into Christianity. The following night Martin had a dream in which Christ appears, dressed in Martin's cloak, and the pious catechumen realizes that the beggar he met was indeed Christ himself.

Thus Severus presents Martin right from the beginning as a promising youth; an indication further established by another essential episode, namely when Martin avoided a battle between the Romans and the barbarians, who were invading the Roman Empire. Martin did not want to fight as he was a soldier of Christ (for whom it is not lawful to fight), and in order to disprove Caesar's notion of cowardice, Martin offered to go unarmed, protected only by the sign of the cross, into the battlefield. On the day of the battle the barbarians surrender. This was not a clear, undoubtedly miracle, but Severus asked, "who can doubt in these circumstances that

²² See: Luke 2,41-50.

this victory was due to this man of blessings...?”²³, thus arguing that this was indeed a result of divine intervention.

An element that catches our attention in this presentation of Martin’s life is the fact that the moment of Martin’s conversion is never described. There are several essential episodes in Martin’s life, such as his ascetic life as a monk, his hermitage and his bishopric; however, these events have nothing to do with an actual conversion. Even baptism, followed by the encounter at Amiens, seems to be a natural consequence of his previous life. He seems to be born converted both to Christianity and to the ascetic ideal.

Having retired from military service, Martin met Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, who saw the qualities in Martin immediately, and wanted to ordinate him a deacon, but the pious Martin was too humble to accept any prestigious position, wherefore Hilarius ordained him an exorcist instead. Not long after this, Martin headed for Milan to convert his parents, who were still in the error of paganism. After his mother had converted to Christianity, Martin fulfilled his longing from youth and did, according to Severus, become a hermit. He settled on the island of Gallinaria for a shorter period, from where he followed Hilary back to Poitiers and established himself in a monastery in Ligugé. It was not long before people seemed to consider and acknowledge Martin as a holy man, and Martin was soon ordained bishop in Tours.

It is interesting to note the way in which Severus depicts the episode where Martin is ordained bishop. Not willing to leave his abbey, Martin was basically cheated into becoming a bishop of Tours, by a citizen pretending that his wife was in need of healing, while his way out of the city was blocked by supporters; “all had the same desire and the same opinion, which was that Martin was the fittest to be bishop and that the Church would be fortunate to get such a priest. There were a few, however, including some of the bishops who had been summoned to consecrate the

²³ Sulpicius Severus VM, chapt. 4, p.16.

new prelate, who were so abandoned as to oppose”.²⁴ Those who refused to accept him as a bishop did so because of his appearance; his clothing was mean, and his hair disgusting, but they were laughed at by Martin’s followers. This shows that he was a very modest man who did not seek power and authority, and the resistance against him was futile since he was chosen by God.

The life of a bishop and a hermit or monk was completely different; while a hermit or monk lives in solitude, out of the society, the bishop must live among other people. Severus therefore emphasises Martin’s ability to function both as bishop as well as maintaining his ascetic life as a monk.

Miracles

In Severus’ *Vita Martini* we find many examples of Martin performing what we would regard as being ‘miracles’. It appears to indeed be miracles, which he performed and the visions that Martin experienced which invite for the praise he receive from people like Sulpicius Severus himself, and which enhance the incentives for his later sainthood. As Severus mentions in the text, Martin was ‘saint-like’ through his whole life; he is described as being very consistent in his pursuit of a life in line with Christian values, even from a very early age.

Vita Martini is constituted by descriptions of these aspects of Martin’s life, personality and gifts that made him differ from ‘ordinary’ worshippers and which, according to the text, emphasised his position as a link between heaven and earth. All of these illustrations of his abilities seem to belong under the heading ‘miracles’ but are also, more specifically, narrations of how Martin performed exorcism, had visions of both Christ and the Devil, predicted future events and had confrontations with paganism in the name of the Lord.

²⁴ Ibidem, chapt. 9, p.22.

Miracles of healing and resuscitation

Of all the miraculous events described in the *vita* the notion of healing tend to dominate the content, as well as it appears to have had a very significant and symbolic meaning to the text. According to Severus' narration, these cures are performed by Martin throughout most of his life, even from, as mentioned, a relatively young age. In Severus' depiction of these events we find some crucial points for the analysis of the establishment of Saint Martin's cult.

The first mention of Martin actually performing miracles in terms of healing is when he is being persecuted by Auxentius and escaped to the island of Gallinaria where he is said to have eaten "Hellebore", a poisonous root. As Martin felt the poison inside him and was close to death he finally fought death by prayer and regained his strength. Hence, the manifestation of his powers for healing is made through emphasising the strength, enhancing the element of self-protection and self-maintenance.

Resuscitation as a miracle was already believed by many. There were several instances of resuscitation in the New Testament, which describe a similar miracle²⁵ being performed by Jesus and the apostles Peter and Paul. The pattern used by Severus to introduce the reader to such amazing miracles and establish Martin's powers is simple but effective: visions (Christ), uncertain miracles (avoiding battle), and definite miracles (resuscitation). Had Severus begun to speak of resuscitation from the outset, it would have been more probable for a reader to question the truthfulness of the miracles.

In the *vita* it is also described how Martin, before he became bishop, resuscitated a slave of a highly esteemed family who had hung himself. He was passing the premises where he was met with crying, and after being introduced to the situation he went to be alone with the body of the dead person, and through Martin's

²⁵ See: John 11:38-44 (Lazarus); Luke 8:40-42, 49-56 (Jairus' daughter); Peter: Acts 9:36-42 (Tabitha); Paul: Acts 20:7-12 (boy fallen from window).

prayers the slave was brought back to life. We also find a description of how a catechumen, who wished to be taught by Martin and thus stayed with him, fell ill while Martin was away for a few days. As Martin returned he found the man dead. Alone with the man Martin prayed and felt God's presence. After two hours the man was resuscitated. The catechumen was immediately baptised afterwards and lived a long life, in which he spread his testimony of Martin's gifts and of how he, while his body had been dead, had been "brought before the tribunal of the Judge",²⁶ where by two angels was recognised as being the man for whom Martin was praying.

There are two depictions of women being healed by Martin in Severus' *vita*. A young girl had been seized with a paralysis and was only mentally alive at the point of Martin's visit. Through his touch her limbs were brought back to life. An equally miraculous event took place as another young woman was gravely ill, but had a letter her father had received from Martin placed at her bosom – despite the fact that Martin was not even present it was said that his powers shone through the letter, curing the young woman.

From the above descriptions of the different miracles of healing it seems evident that Martin performed these to help people regardless of their gender, class and even religion. It is furthermore mentioned in the text that many of the people he cured immediately received baptism afterwards. The fact that it is described how Martin healed persons of all kinds, from slaves to non-Christians in general, women as well as men, leaves the reader with the impression of Christianity being without prejudice and open for everybody, and that this implication in fact was deliberate.

As part of reading about these phenomena occurring around Martin one may start wondering how Martin performed these acts of healing. Severus describes examples of how Martin "stretched himself out over the lifeless limbs of the dead brother",²⁷ "he met the threatening danger with prayer",²⁸ and "prostrated himself on

²⁶ Sulpisius Severus VM, chapt. 7, p.21.

²⁷ Ibidem.

the ground in prayer”.²⁹ In other words, Martin is described as possessing certain powers, or being capable of establishing contact with higher powers, helping him to carry out the healing process. His prayers imply a level of concentration, which may be interpreted as establishing a connection or transmission of higher power from his Lord. Moreover, the physical connection with the diseased or dead body became a very literal manifestation of Martin’s link to heaven as the divine powers he appeared to possess and put to use re-confirms his loyalty to the Holy Spirit.

Miracles against the Devil

As a relatively young man Martin was appointed to be an exorcist by Hilary, bishop of Poitiers. He initially wished to make Martin a deacon, however Martin, who did not think himself worthy of that, opted for the assignment as exorcist. Martin had an ability to recognise the Devil, the spirit of evil and the enemy of God. This power to distinguish the Devil in all his appearances was a very remarkable quality about Martin, which must have contributed to his strong authority and powers, having made ordinary worshippers follow him in the name of God.

In the text we find examples of Martin showing superiority towards the Devil. In one incident it is described how Martin heard a rumour saying that barbarians were going to attack the city. However, when Martin commanded a possessed person to speak the truth, he could not resist Martin and confessed that the attack was a rumour spread by demons to drive Martin away from the city. This implies that the holy authority, which Martin possessed and the power of commanding over evil, made him capable of forcing the demon to tell him the truth. Another example of his pre-eminence towards the evil spirit was illustrated when Martin was sitting alone in his cell praying and the Devil came to him. He was surrounded by a bright light and dressed in a royal robe with a golden crown,

²⁸ Ibidem, chapt. 6, p.19.

²⁹ Ibidem, chapt. 16, p.30.

appearing both tranquil and happy so that no one could know that he was the Devil. Martin looked at him but said nothing, and after a while the Devil spoke. He said he was Christ about to descend upon earth. He continued to speak as Martin made no reply but then Martin told the Devil that unless he showed himself in the form in which he was crucified, with wounds Martin would not believe that the figure standing in front of him was truly Christ. Upon those words the Devil vanished and left behind a foul smoke that indicated his true identity. Even though the Devil showed himself wearing beautiful clothes with the happy, serene aura of a pious Christian, Martin was still able to see through it due to his close contact with his Lord.

Martin is under the protection of God in the example above; just as he is in so many of the miracles he performs. This seems to strengthen the perception of Martin serving as a link between heaven and earth as his commitment to God, to goodness and everything holy, this implies to have been rewarded with an intuitive awareness of evil when faced with it.

Miracles against paganism

Briefly we will examine Martin's miracles depicted in Severus' *Vita Martini* in relation to the Saint's fighting against paganism. Severus shows how Martin discovered the truth about a grave near Tours where some mysterious martyrs were commemorated.³⁰ Previous bishops of Tours had established an altar devoted to those buried there who were believed to be saints, but no one could remember who these martyrs were; their names and dates of their death were unknown. Martin was suspicious of the graves and found out after praying that the buried person had nothing to do with martyrdom and was falsely worshipped by the inhabitants of Tours.

³⁰ Sulpicius Severus, VM, chapt. 11, p.25.

We can therefore say that the above miracle shows two saints stand face to face: the false popular saint, and the true Christian hero. The false saint was of course debunked by the true one, but to recognise the false he needed help from God. This altar was established by a bishop of Tours, so there is no doubt that the cult was officially accepted by the local authorities. For many years this place was commemorated as holy; in the minds of believers this tomb simply was a holy grave, since at this time people did not discern carefully between whether holiness was based on tradition or theology.

So far, we can assume that the problem of recognition of what was genuinely Christian was a real problem in the Late Antique Gaul, when Christianity was still in the process of being established. Pagan and Christian elements were mixed, and what was thought of as holy was in both cases very similar, so it was a complex problem to separate Christian cults from pagan tradition. Inhabitants of the towns had been Christianised, but in the villages traditional pagan religion was still professed.

What made Saint Martin sceptical about the truthfulness of the false cult of the martyr was the lack of any testimony about their names and lives. There was no story about their lives and martyrdom; there was only pure ritual focused around the place that was believed to be holy. To put it in other words, there was no myth or legend of foundation of the cult, which is a crucial element of the cult of the saints. Lives of saints establish the feasts of saints. A ritual cannot exist without a myth; and a myth without a ritual becomes forgotten. Here we only briefly show how this theory works in this particular case, but this problem will be discussed broadly in the chapter on cult.

Vita Martini by Severus is the first *vita* where the miracles are linked to paganism. It was not coincidental that it was also, as we have pointed out above, the first life, which presented the saint as a bishop. Earlier *vitae* were mainly about martyrs or hermits. In contrast, it was the duty of the bishop to live in society and to

take care of his parishioners. Most of them were still pagans, so as a spiritual leader, Martin had to fight their superstitions.

Sulpicius Severus, as we have seen, combines all the patterns of sainthood he know. Martin is a hermit, a monk, and a bishop. Moreover, Severus mentions that if his character had only opportunity to die for Christ, he would certainly become a martyr. Severus' structure of *Vita Martini* therefore reflects two ideals of sainthood: the pattern of a saint-hermit or a saint-monk was stronger rooted in hagiography, so if Severus wanted to root Martin as a saint in existing hagiographical tradition, the only possibility was to make him a monk. Saint-bishop was a new quality in hagiography, so as the structure of *Vita Martini* clearly shows, this role is added to the role of a saint martyr, which is strongly rooted in tradition.

‘The third bishop’: *vita* by Gregory

Gregory (538-594) was the 19th bishop of Tours, and he had a tremendous influence on the development of the making of Saint Martin. At Gregory’s time the world was replete with wonders and miracles and the link between presence and mythical past was very strong. Interaction between the world of the sacred and the secular was still needed, and miracles and relics were mediators between the sacred past and the lay presence.

The memory of Saint Martin, the miracles he performed and the impression this had made was strong. Living two centuries after his glorious predecessor Martin, Gregory lived in a post-mythic world, when the legend of Saint Martin’s life had already been established, and it is this legend that he wrote about and developed further.

Gregory’s *vita* of a dead man

Gregory mentioned Martin in several works and wrote a *Vita Martini*. Originally it was known as *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, (*On the virtues of the bishop St. Martin*), but commonly, in accordance to the hagiographical tradition, it was simply called: *Vita Martini*.

Gregory was not interested in investigating Martin’s virtues, in spite of what he suggested in the title of his book. He was much more interested in miracles. He saw himself as a guardian of Martin’s cult, trying to strengthen it and increase its importance.

From Gregory’s *Vita Martini*, we know that the bishop before Gregory, Perpetuus, also collected stories of the miracles of Saint Martin. On the basis of the collection from Perpetuus, Paulinus of Périgueux, a 5th century poet who wrote *Vita*

Martini in verse,³¹ Gregory writes about Saint Martin's miracles. Thus, although Gregory focused his *Vita Martini* on the miracles he witnessed, he also accounted for his predecessor's writings.

Gregory begins his writing about Saint Martin in *The History of the Franks* by saying that Martin was the third bishop of Tours,³² followed by an account of Martin's deeds. Gregory refers to Severus' hagiographies when writing that Martin was born in Pannonia, that he was of pagan parents and that he founded a monastery of Milan. He also mentions Martin as a propagator of Christianity fighting against paganism and enumerates the churches Martin founded in places of pagan temples.

However, he chooses to leave out the notion of Martin being a monk in his *vita*, while Severus, as mentioned, basically presented Martin as both hermit and monk, which was one of the main arguments for making him a saint. Gregory only mentions Martin's founding of a monastery in Milan. Being Martin's own successor Gregory emphasises Martin as a bishop of Tours. Although Martin was not the first bishop of Tours, he seems in Gregory's narrative to be the real founder of the Episcopal community. The two previous bishops Gatianus and Litorius are only briefly mentioned. Moreover, as Gregory writes the bishopric "remained vacant for thirty seven years",³³ after the first bishop Gatianus died in 301. Therefore, there was no continuity between the actual founder of the Tours episcopal authority and his continuator. Litorius, in turn, is mentioned as a founder of the first church inside the town of Tours and a bishop, in whose lifetime Martin began to preach in Gaul.³⁴ The period of Martin's function as a bishop mark a new era in religious life of diocese; as a good shepherd he protected his community, and fought against paganism.

³¹ Ibidem, book 1, chapt. 2, p.205.

³² Gregory of Tours HF, book 10, chapt. 31, p.594.

³³ Ibidem, p.593.

³⁴ Ibidem, p.594.

Martin's posthumous miracles

All the events in Martin's life, which Gregory briefly presents, are quotations from Sulpicius Severus and Paulinus of Périgueux. Gregory's own contribution starts in the description of events that happened after Martin's death. Gregory's *Vita Martini* actually starts at the moment of Martin's death.³⁵ This paradox can easily be explained according to Christian eschatology as the temporal death of the body is the beginning of eternal glorious life. However, Gregory's aim does not seem not to have been based on a theological idea.

Apart from the first section, Gregory's *Vita Martini* is a catalogue of miracles rather than a classical *Vita*, which is usually a description of the deeds of the saint while still alive. In order to retell the story of Martin's life, Gregory simply refers to the founder of the Martinian legend, Sulpicius Severus, by saying that he wrote "one book about the miracles of his [Martin's] life while he was still alive in the world; then after the death of that blessed man he wrote two books that he wished to call dialogues".³⁶ The first book mentioned by Gregory about the miracle of Martin's life is, of course *Vita Martini*. The fact that Gregory's *vita* is mainly focused on Martin's miracles, and that he also refers to the *vita* of Severus as a book on miracles, shows an emphasis on the supernatural and sacred aspect as a focal point in Gregory's contribution to the making of Saint Martin.

Martin as a local saint

After Martin was buried in Tours, his successors in the Episcopal See, wanted to restrict his figure to the community of Tours by making him a local saint. The beginning of the process of associating Martin with Tours started immediately after Martin's death. The first event, which confirmed the significance of his figure to the

³⁵ Cf. Gregory of Tours VM, book 1, chapt. 4, p.206.

³⁶ Ibidem, book 1, chapt. 1, p.201.

local churches was the dispute over Martin's relics between the church of Tours and Poitiers. In his book *The History of the Franks*,³⁷ Gregory presents the argument of the inhabitants of Tours who claimed that Martin's body should be returned to Tours in order to support the local community by his posthumous miracles since he performed more miracles while being a monk than after his bishopric. It is only in *The History of the Franks* Gregory refers to Martin as a monk, since it does not serve his purpose depicting Martin as other than bishop.

In regards to the inhabitants of Tours' argument about Martin having performed more miracles before he became bishop, the contrary observation is presented in Severus' *vita* where only the first resuscitation of a dead catechumen happened in the monastery of Ligugé. All other miracles mentioned by Severus refer to the period when Martin was a bishop of Tours, although, as mentioned, not with emphasis on his bishopric. Had the inhabitants of Poitiers won the competition of Martin's relics, Martin would probably be known as an abbot of the monastery of Ligugé instead of bishop of Tours.

Establishing Saint Martin as a local figure associated with Tours, Gregory chooses to narrate Martin as a bishop and neglects Martin's function as a monk as possible. It was not his intention to bring fame to the monastery of Ligugé near Poitiers.

The idea of Episcopal unity

Gregory's purpose with the narrative about Martin as a bishop seems to be to emphasise the significance of the Episcopal See in Tours and he is also keen to underline that he himself is a successor of the glorious bishop Martin. Moreover, Gregory is the first, perhaps even the only one, to mention that Saint Martin, as the third bishop of Tours, translated the first bishop of Tours, and buried his relics next to

³⁷ Gregory of Tours HF, book 1, chapt. 48, p.97-99.

the second bishop. That story seems to have the purpose of raising the prestige of bishops of Tours, but it also has the effect of bringing the memory of Gregory himself to mind. We know that Gregory's wish was to be buried close to Saint Martin.³⁸ Peter Brown describes the motivation for the desire of being buried *ad sanctos*, close to saints; when he explains that it was caused by the belief that the holiness of a saint's body can be transmitted to those close to him.³⁹ Gregory's purpose, as he himself said, was however different as he did not want his own cult to spread out after his death, and this was impossible when lying next to glorious Martin.

It does not seem unintended that in his description of Saint Martin's actions as a bishop of Tours, Gregory points to the translation of Saint Gatianus's relics and re-burying them by Saint Litorius' tomb. It can be interpreted as an attempt to establish a tradition of the unity of bishops of Tours, which means that all relics should be put in one place which in the writings of the 19th bishop of Tours seems to be a myth establishing the Episcopal authority in Tours. Unfortunately the description is very brief, limited to one sentence. It is, however, remarkable that Gregory points out such a small detail, in comparison to other deeds of Martin that he has omitted.

The description of Martin translating the body of the first bishop of Tours can be argued as a significant event for at least two reasons. Firstly, because of Gregory's interest in relics; we must not forget that being bishop of Tours, Gregory brought from Auvergne the remains of his beloved patron Saint Julian and handed them over to the monastery of Saint-Julian; from Burgundy, in turn, he brought the relics of the martyr Saint Benignus. The second reason for mentioning the translation made by Saint Martin is more pragmatic; by commemorating the glorious Martin his predecessor founded a myth of unity of bishops of Tours. Moreover, if we notice that Litorius founded the church, where the remains of the first bishops were buried, and

³⁸ Ibidem, book 10, chapt. 31, p.601.

³⁹ P. Brown, op. cit., p.27.

that it was the first church in the city of Tours, Martin's act takes on a symbolic meaning.⁴⁰

Severus also regarded Martin as a miracle maker, yet primarily as a virtuous man as in an ideal monk and bishop. Therefore, in describing his pious and ascetic life, Severus emphasised the moral values of Saint Martin. The miracles are a confirmation, but not the foundation of his sanctity. Thus the events he described are often rather marvels than miracles.⁴¹ We can recall the event recorded by Severus about the shrine of the false martyr, whom Martin debunked. In this instance, both Martin and the false martyr would have an equal value as long as they were believed to perform miracles. In contrast to Severus, at Gregory's time the virtue of a saint's life was not as important as the power of performing miracles. The religious landscape was shaped by the power of relics and miracles, and this power constituted the basis for a foundation of sainthood. Hence, the irrational aspect of sainthood as in a narrative of miracles was Gregory's contribution to the making of Saint Martin.

⁴⁰ Cf. I. Wood, 'Constructing Cults in Early Medieval France: Local Saints and Churches in Burgundy and Auvergne 400-1000', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by A. Thacker, R. Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002), p.155-187.

⁴¹ About the difference between both terms see C. W. Bynum 'Wonder', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 102, no. 1 (Feb 1997), p.1-26.

Further Perspectives: Jacobus de Voragine

The Golden Legend (1289) is a collection of stories about the lives of great saints written by the Archbishop of Genoa and medieval hagiographer, Jacobus de Voragine (1230-1298), in the 13th century. In this analysis we are concentrating on the chapter called *Saint Martin November 11*, which we compare to the *vitae* by Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours.

Similarly to Gregory of Tours, Jacobus de Voragine has numerous references to Sulpicius Severus; however, his style of writing and focus differ on several levels. Firstly, given the historical distance between Voragine and Saint Martin, Voragine obviously did not have a personal acquaintanceship with Martin, as opposed to Severus' who was a disciple, and Gregory who took over Martin's office, hence there appears no references to a personal knowledge of Saint Martin in this text. This enhances his approach to this *vita*; he relates to the figure of Saint Martin with less emotional involvement than what we found in the other *vitae*. Voragine was a hagiographer of many *vitae* and *Vita Martini* was simply one out of many collected legends about saints, apostles and others Christian legends.

The emphasis on episodes in Saint Martin's life is weighted differently in the three *vitae*. Severus describes the life of Martin thoroughly, without specifically emphasising his position as either a monk or bishop⁴². Gregory, however, put all emphasis on Saint Martin being a bishop, more specifically the bishop of Tours. Furthermore he concentrates almost solely on the miracles performed by Martin while both being bishop and after his death through his earthly remains, instead of writing about his life in general. In contrast Voragine simply depicts him as a saintly man⁴³ regardless of his official position. Voragine's writings are, contrary to Gregory's, in line with traditional hagiographies as known from Sulpicius Severus,

⁴² See: Sulpicius Severus VM, chapt. 10, p.23: "What Martin was like, and his greatness, after entering the episcopate, it is beyond my powers to describe. For with unswerving constancy he remained the same man as before."

⁴³ Sulpicius Severus does not refer to Martin as Saint Martin till after his death, where he was made a saint.

showing a more chronological and coherent account of Saint Martin's life from birth to death, which he put into a historical timeline. Voragine reintroduces some classical values in his depiction of saints, which thus evolve around the saints exemplifying ethical and moral standards and altogether being good men. The text somehow legitimises the notion of sainthood and the mysticism that follows by referring to historical events and specific emperors, hence locating the abstract elements connected to saints in a concrete historical context. Voragine focuses, as mentioned, on Martin being a saint in particular, rather than a bishop. Consequently, Voragine writes of many episodes after Martin entered the episcopate, without referring to his prominence, which seems to illustrate the weighting of good deeds and setting an example, as opposed to status.

The fact that this *vita* is quite short compared to the other *vitae*, results in it being less detailed and nuanced. As an example of this, Voragine describes Martin as bishop in the beginning of his office by writing: "Being ordained bishop, Martin could not bear the tumult of the city, and established a monastery about two miles outside the walls, where he lived in strict abstinence with eighty disciples."⁴⁴ Severus describes this episode in more details: "There was the same humble heart and the same poverty-stricken clothing; and, amply endowed with authority and tact, he fully sustained the dignity of the episcopate without forsaking the life or the virtues of the monk. For a time he occupied a cell next to the cathedral. Then, when he could no longer endure the disturbance from his many visitors, he made himself a hermitage about two miles from the city."⁴⁵ From these two quotes, besides the fact that they differ in terms of quantity of nuances and details, we moreover find that Voragine only indirectly shows Martin's desire to be a hermit, when "Martin could not bear the tumult of the city". Voragine shows Martin's desire to become a hermit, but that his position as bishop prevented him from truly fulfilling this dream.

⁴⁴ Jacobus de Voragine GL, p.666.

⁴⁵ Sulpicius Severus VM, chapt. 10, p. 24

Voragine puts a lot of emphasis on Saint Martin fighting paganism and it seems as if Voragine, like Severus, encourages the impression of Martin as a representative of a religion which was met by opposition: “At the time the Arian heresy⁴⁶ was spreading throughout the whole world, and Martin stood against it almost alone”⁴⁷ Christianity was not a stabile religion at the time of Saint Martin, so priests, monks and bishops had to endure whatever they would be exposed to, as Voragine also writes: “wherefore he was publicly beaten, and cast out of the city”. This seems to support the point made by Severus, when he described Martin having nevertheless “... achieved martyrdom though he shed no blood. For of what human sorrows did he not, for the hope eternity, endure the pain- in hunger, in night watchings, in nakedness, in fasting, in the insults of the envious, in the persecutions of the wicked, in care for the sick, in anxiety for those in peril danger?”⁴⁸

Additionally, Voragine’s *Vita Martini* starts by an etymological understanding of the name Martin. It here seems essential to him, right from the beginning, also to describe Martin as either a martyr or a very good Christian with divine powers. It is for Voragine, as it was for Severus in his letter to the deacon Aurelius⁴⁹, the quotation above, important to emphasise the fact that even though Saint Martin did not suffer the death of a martyr, he was worthy of sainthood. Being a martyr, meaning to suffer tremendously and/or get killed for one’s religious belief, for example seen in the Passion of Christ, was considered to be the greatest confirmation of dedication. Although there are numerous similarities between Voragine’s and Severus’ *vitae*, an important distinction can be made between the two writings: Voragine does not need to establish the sainthood of Martin, since this was already done by Severus’ *vita*, instead Voragine can employ the eminence of Saint Martin to illustrate the meaning of for example humility, dignity, justice and patience.

⁴⁶ *Arian* comes from priest Arius, who did not believe that Christ is God. *Heresy* means a belief or an opinion that is against the principles of a particular religion; the fact of holding such beliefs. (Oxford Advanced Genie)

⁴⁷ Jacobus de Voragine GL, p.665.

⁴⁸ Sulpicius Severus *Three Letters of Sulpicius Severus*, op. cit., letter 2, p. 54.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 51.

An example of the way in which Voragine implies the notion of moral and ethical values being associated with saints is the catalogue of qualities⁵⁰, as seen above, attributed the respective topics of: humility, dignity, justice and patience, each followed by an explanation in the text. In this respect he differs from his previous style of writing, and refers to other sources than Severus' *vita*, he refers to the Gospel through Franciscan order, and describes a pattern of sainthood similar to Saint Francis of Assisi: "His dignity was great, for he was called equal to the apostles; and this because of the grace of the Holy Ghost, Who descended upon him unto strength in the form of fire, as He had done unto the apostles."⁵¹ In fact Voragine's *vita* may be divided in two in terms of style; the first half appears to be a direct compilation of Severus' *Vita Martini*, whereas Voragine, in the second half, refers to other sources, such as the *Dialogue* of Severus and Gallus, the Gospel, and Master John Beleth⁵². This shift in style is also shown by Voragine referring to *Saint Martin*⁵³ instead of just Martin, which is due to the compiled text from Severus being written before Martin's death, and obviously before Martin could have been proclaimed to be a saint. In the second half of the text Voragine's illustrations are increasingly detailed in relation to the Gospels and the apostles, where he a few paragraphs later explains that after Martin had clothed a poor man in his own tunic, "... a globe of fire appeared above his head, and was seen by many; wherefore he is said to be equal to the apostles."⁵⁴ This complementary description must be explained by a notion of sudden access to other sources describing this exact episode, in this instance from Master John Beleth.

In general it can be said about the *Vita Martini* from *The Golden Legend* that Voragine, as both Severus and Gregory, depicts how Martin had miraculous powers of healing, performed exorcism, and fought paganism, but more importantly he does moreover, in a pedagogical manner, succeed in portraying how a good

⁵⁰ Jacobus de Voragine GL, p.668.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² John Beleth, a 12th century rector at the University of Paris.

⁵³ Jacobus de Voragine GL, p.666.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 670.

Christian ought to behave. Martin symbolises the ‘ideal Christian’ and a key element in Voragine’s legend about Saint Martin is that of ‘setting an example’. This is emphasised in particular at the end of the text, when Martin, towards the end of his life lies in bed, waiting to be united with Christ. He is besought by his disciples who want to put some straw in his bed, to whom he answers: “My sons, it befits a Christian to die in sackcloth and ashes. If I leave you any other example, I shall have sinned thereby!”⁵⁵

It is important to remember that Martin’s legend and cult had already been established through the past nine centuries; therefore the explicit justifications of Martin as a saint were not as important, since they were already acknowledged. Furthermore, the genre of hagiographies was standardised and a collection of such writings is what constitutes *The Golden Legend*. A manifestation of the notion of this standardisation is thus found in Voragine emphasising ethical and moral values as enhancing sainthood generally, as opposed to both Gregory’s and Severus’ specifications on Martin’s gifts. Moreover, the purpose of depicting the lives of saints in *The Golden Legend* is to show the continuous presence and mercy of Christ: “the saints sacredness lays within Christ acting through them... When the saint is being worshipped, it is in fact Christ who is being worshipped.”⁵⁶

To sum up and put the three *vitae* in connection to each other, we can say that, while Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours are very explicit in each of their hagiographies in order to make Martin fit into their specific patterns of sainthood, Jacobus de Voragine is not, as mentioned, committed to the promotion of Saint Martin in the same way. Furthermore, we have seen evidence of Severus trying to make Saint Martin into a universal saint, while Gregory two centuries later seeks to give Martin more significance as a local saint due to his episcopate in Tours. *Vita*

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 671.

⁵⁶ J. Gabrielsson, Introduction to: *Helgonlegender* [*Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine], ed. and transl. by J. Gabrielsson (Malmö: Bokförlaget Artos, 1981), p. 5.

Martini is included in the compiled handbook by Voragine, hence a contribution to Martin as a universal saint.

Chapter II

Ritual: The Cult of Saint Martin

*Amy de Dieux, glorieux saint Martin,
que de Cande translate fus a Tours,
preserve moy tant au soir qu'au matin,
que les fievres n'ayent en moy le cours*

[Glorious Saint Martin, friend of God,
who was translated to Tours from Candes,
preserve me both morning and evening,
that fevers may not attack me]

Grandes Heures 1488 (ll. 282-285)⁵⁷

In our investigation of the making of Saint Martin, we have in the previous chapter accounted for the most important elements of its foundation, namely some of the ecclesiastical writings of his life. However this is but a corner of his cult, and we will now concentrate on the devotional practices and feasts of Saint Martin. Alongside the hagiographies, there are sermons, inscriptions and practices related to his relics, which we intend to investigate. There are also many iconographical images connected to his cult, but this topic lies beyond the scope of our project.

The Christian cult of saints emerged in the Western Mediterranean between the third and 6th century, and it involves religious life and organisation of the Christian church, as well as tombs, relic fragments, and objects closely connected to

⁵⁷ Quote and translation from: L. R. Muir, 'The Saint Play in Medieval France', *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo, 1986), p.125. The invocation to St. Martin was put in *Grandes Heures* under the date of 4th July.

the bodies of holy men and women. In addition, it is interesting to note that Saint Martin was one of the earliest saints, who was not a martyr, and what makes the study of precisely him even more fascinating, is the fact that his cult was started by Sulpicius Severus promoting Martin's sainthood through *Vita Martini*, which "became the principal model for Western hagiographers".⁵⁸

The cult of the saints was more than relics and rituals, it was a form of faithfulness that was gracefully adapted to enable men of Late Antiquity to articulate and hand down a debate on the nature of power in their own world, "and to examine in the searching light of an ideal relationship with ideal figures, the relationship between power, mercy, and justice as practised around them".⁵⁹ It is also possible that the cult of saints arose from a hope of new converts or members of an increasingly worldly church, to find an easier road to Heaven than what was offered by early Christian communities.

⁵⁸ S. Farmer, op. cit., p. 21.

⁵⁹ P. Brown, op. cit., p. 63.

‘Before the glittering jewelled shrine’

The tomb of the saint was the source of the holiness of the cult. From the very beginning of the rise of the cult of saints, holy men were venerated at their graves. Around the graves that became saints’ shrines, by the cemeteries, which according to the Roman law had to be situated outside of the cities, arose new metropolises. The Vatican Hill, which was founded at Saint Peter’s grave on the cemetery beyond the walls of the city of Rome, is a typical example of founding such cities. The phenomenon of establishing new religious centres by the cemeteries and in basilicas with relics of saints, spread widely over the Roman Empire.

Originally the bishops of the cities, that were close to where the shrines were established, were guardians of graves and relics of saints. As we learn from the book *The History of the Franks* by Gregory of Tours, the bishops of Tours felt not only as successors of Saint Martin, but also as the guardians of his remains. As presented later in this chapter, they looked after his grave and supported the development of his cult at the basilica – the Church of Saint Martin. At this point it is helpful to include a brief remark on the topography of the community of Tours, for it reflects a typical religious organisation of the early medieval community. The use of the word ‘community’ is intentional, for as we will see in this specific case, it was not equal to the term ‘town’ or ‘city’.

The first walls of the town of Tours were built in 275.⁶⁰ They surrounded the town on the southern bank of the Loire River. The centre of the ecclesiastical organisation of the area within the walls was the cathedral; this was the see of the bishop of Tours. The basilica of Saint Martin, however, was found far beyond these walls. In 918 the basilica of Saint Martin became a centre of the newly founded town Châteauneuf in the close neighbourhood of Tours, where it was surrounded by its

⁶⁰ S. Farmer, op. cit., 16-17.

own walls. The founding of a new city on the ancient cemetery was caused by the competition between the bishops of Tours and the Augustinian canons, who were at this time guardians of Martin's relics, both hoping to gain authority over the cult of Saint Martin. However before the 10th century, the town of Tours and the basilica became one community united by the cult of Saint Martin. The Martinopolis, as Sharon Farmer calls the community of Tours, was under control of its bishops.

The significance of a saint's burial place in the early Christian period can be understood only if we refer it to religious beliefs of the early Christianity in the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. The saints were believed to be present at their tombs. Their *presentia* (presence) played a big part in human religious experience, as God was so distant from people's problems, whereas the saints were, as Peter Brown calls them, man's 'invisible intimate friend'. Therefore the contact with the saint was much more intimate than with God. The *presentia* of the saint was achieved through some rituals, which will be presented subsequently.

First the saint is connected to a place, the *locum sanctorum* (holy place), which was his grave. Holiness was considered to be present in the body of the saint, and therefore the relics were a visible manifestation of the holy. The remains of the dead holy man were believed to be powerful, not as a contribution of the body itself but given by God through the body. Therefore saints' shrines were located around their graves, where numerous miracles occurred. As the saints in heaven were believed to be present on earth in their tomb, their graves were considered to be privileged places where heaven and earth would meet.

The image of God as being far from human desires and problems, which was characteristic for the Late Antiquity as well as for the early medieval period, caused the holy to be regarded as separate from human experience. Therefore the cult of saints who were mediators between people and God brought forth a solution to this

separation, for a saint was considered ‘a friend of God’⁶¹ and therefore he provided an access to the holy by reducing the distance between man and God. Earthly life of a saint made him a brother to all human beings, providing man with a more intimate relationship with God than he was able to achieve without the help of saints. Being human, thus close to man and a friend of God, the saint was believed to be able to persuade God to show pity upon his fellow mortals.

As Peter Brown has demonstrated, the veneration of saints as mediators, besides its religious dimension, had its roots in the social structure of the Roman Empire. The centralisation of the political power in Rome, far from society, as well as the dangerous time of barbarian invasions in the 3rd century brought to existence numerous mediators between the central power and people. As a result of such a structure a special relationship was established between people, namely the relation: patron – client. A patron was the one associated with the central power, often a local Roman officer, who became a protector of the ones placed lower in the social hierarchy, who had no access to political power – the clients. This established relationship of social patronage was transferred into a relation between humans and God, where the saint acted as a patron for the believers. Therefore, the cult of the patron saint spread very rapidly in ascetic circles and became an intimate thread of stability.

⁶¹ P. Brown, op. cit., p.60-63.

Relics and Festivals

The function of the holy men, as presented above, obviously refers to the particular topic of Saint Martin and his cult established in Tours just after his death, when his body was moved from Candes and buried in Tours. As the founder of the cult of Saint Martin, Gregory of Tours presents his predecessor, bishop Perpetuus who was the 6th bishop of Tours between 458(9) and 488(9). In the second book of his *Historiae Francorum* (*The History of the Franks*) Gregory recorded what we believe to be the crucial event of the development of the Martinian cult: “when Perpetuus saw” Gregory writes, “how frequently miracles were being performed at Saint Martin’s tomb and when he observed how small was the chapel erected over the Saint’s body, he decided that it was unworthy of these wonders”.⁶² Thus, in the place of the old wooden chapel, which he removed, Perpetuus built a great church over Martin’s grave. Moreover, from the *Historiae Francorum* we also learn that it is in this church on the 4th of July that the great festival of Saint Martin was celebrated in order to commemorate three events: the dedication of the church, the translation of Saint Martin’s relics and Martin’s ordination as a bishop. The festivals of Saint Martin are a matter of careful analysis later, but it is important to stress its threefold significance. In spite of what Gregory writes, we must be aware that the cult of Saint Martin existed before Perpetuus established the church of Saint Martin. Gregory mentioned the chapel that existed over the saint’s grave as well as the numerous miracles that happened at this holy place. Being aware of the solemnity of the funeral and the great fame of Martin as a holy man, it might be assumed that his cult spread in Tours just after his death. In order to support this assumption we should remember that Sulpicius Severus wrote *Vita Martini*, the foundation of the Martinian legend a few years before the saint died. Bishop Perpetuus, however, must be considered a crucial

⁶² Gregory of Tours HF, book 2, chapt. 14, p.130.

figure that put a great effort into establishing the cult of Saint Martin. When analysing the *Vita Martini* written by Gregory of Tours we have already mentioned that Perpetuus listed the miracles that appeared at Martin's grave. Moreover, he also instituted the fasts and vigils that were a part of the celebrations in praise of Saint Martin, which will also be examined carefully later. Perpetuus, therefore, seems to be a figure that began a new period in the development of Martin's cult: he arranged the previous elements of popular piety of the cult in a more structured official manner. We have no doubt that Martin's successor, as a bishop of Tours, approved him as a saint; in all probability Martin was honoured on the day of his feast on the 11th of November before Perpetuus. We also know from Gregory that there existed a chapel at Martin's grave, as well as that numerous miracles appeared there, but his cult at that time might still seem to be far more influenced by popular piety than the ecclesiastical institution.

Therefore, erecting the new church and establishing an additional celebration in praise of Saint Martin, Perpetuus made him a very special saint, especially for the community of Tours. The earlier day for the veneration of Martin was as mentioned only on the 11th of November, but this date is a matter of controversy. Gregory of Tours claims that it was the day of Martin's death in Candes, but Severus by contrast recorded in his *Dialogues* that Martin died on the 8th of November and on the 11th he was buried in Tours. Severus, as a witness of Martin's life seems to be more credible than Gregory who lived two centuries later. Also the contemporary historical records accepted the date of the 8th November as the day of Martin's death. Therefore, the 11th of November would in fact be the day of the translation of Martin's relics and when they were installed in the wooden chapel, which was probably built by Martin's successor at the Episcopal See, bishop Bricius. Both the *translatio reliquiarum*, translation of the relics, and their *instalatio*, their

installation in the church, were celebrated. According to Peter Brown's book,⁶³ translations make the holy closer to the people. On the other hand, the translated relics had to bring unity and concord to the community. Translation and installation of the relics in a new place was therefore a great celebration for the community, and the day of translation was remembered and put in a local liturgical calendar. It is remarkable, though, that Martin was commemorated not on the day of his death, which was a common practice in the veneration of saints. The day of death, as we have pointed out, is celebrated as the day of the spiritual nativity (being born) in the eternal life. The day when a saint joins the *communio sanctorum*, the community of saints in Heaven, is a day when he becomes a patron and mediator between God and worshippers, and for that reason the saints were commemorated on the day of their death. This patronage refers to all people who would ask for the saint's support.

However the story of the competition between the people of Tours and Poitiers for Martin's relics sheds some light upon that problem. This story was mentioned in the analysis of Gregory's *Vita Martini*, but let us briefly remind that after Martin died in Candes, the people of Tour and Poitiers argued in which of these two cities Martin should be buried, competing in order to make Martin a saint patron of their respective towns. Eventually, his relics were translated to Tours. For the community of Tours it was therefore more important to commemorate their beloved bishop on the day when he arrived to the city rather than when he died in the other place. Consequently, Martin was commemorated on the day of his translation for the same reason Gregory did not speak of Martin as a monk; local patriotism played a great role in the veneration of saint patrons. We must not, however, forget that although the alternative day of feast was established, the 11th of November was still celebrated in the whole of Europe, while the 4th of July was commemorated particularly in Tours.

⁶³ P. Brown, op. cit., p.88-89.

The discussion presented above sheds light on the feast established by Perpetuus. Gregory wrote that after the erection of the new church, Perpetuus “translated the blessed body of the venerable saint to the apse (behind the main altar) of this new church”.⁶⁴ It seems that this act of translation was a repetition of the first translation of Martin’s body from Candes, an act necessary for the foundation of the additional day of celebration. The 4th of July could have been a commemoration of Martin’s ordination as a bishop of Tours only, but by performing the translation on the same day Perpetuus augmented the importance of the commemoration. It is significant that this festival focuses on the events relating Martin to the community of Tours, and as a result it might be assumed that the translation of Martin’s relics into a new church is the act of the second foundation of the cult of Saint Martin.

We have pointed out in our analysis of Gregory’s *Vita Martini* that in contrast to Sulpicius Severus whose purpose was to make Martin a universal saint, Gregory wanted to establish Martin particularly as a local saint patron of Tours. It is hard not to notice the similarity between Perpetuus’ and Gregory’s purposes. Both of them re-established Martin as a local saint. Perpetuus did it by repeating the first act of translation and installation of the relics on the already very significant day when Martin became a bishop of Tours, and Gregory, in turn, by depicting Martin only as a bishop of Tours. The first one, by changing the day of the festival modified a ritual and the second founder modified the Martinian legend by writing a hagiography.

⁶⁴ Gregory of Tours HF, book 10, chapt. 31, p.596.

On the Way to Compostella

Peter Brown writes that pilgrimages were one of the ways of reducing the distance between man and the holy.⁶⁵ As he points out, Christianity has many holy places because relics could be divided. The bodies of holy men could be divided into many pieces and each of these pieces had the same power as the whole body. There was even an obligatory prescription from the 10th century that in every altar there should be a relic, so more or less precious relics were found in almost every church, thus bringing the holy closer to the people. There still existed, of course, the hierarchy of relics – the body of Saint Peter is much more precious than a dusty cloth from his grave.

Therefore, because of the dispersion of the holy, there existed many centres of cults and pilgrimages. Pilgrimages *ad sanctos*, to saints, was one of the rituals that actualised the presence of the saints. Relics were believed to be something more than just a symbol of presence; they proved the real presence of a saint in his grave. The pilgrimages to the holy graves underline this presence, because the cult of a saint is alive as long as people visit his grave.

The shrine of Saint Martin was a very important place for pilgrimages. In the early medieval religious geography its significance was comparable with that of Rome, where the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul were venerated, and the centre of Saint James' cult in Compostella, situated on the Iberian Peninsula. Let us just add that Rome, as well as Compostella, was the place of the most frequent pilgrimages. Undoubtedly the location of Tours near the road to Compostella helped Tours to keep a position as the leading centre of pilgrimages. Compostella was a goal of pilgrimages coming from whole Europe, so going there from Germany or England one could as well visit Saint Martin's grave in Tours, which was on the way to the

⁶⁵ P. Brown, op. cit., 87-90.

shrine of Saint James. In addition, the church of Saint Martin was the biggest centre of saints' cults in Gaul, so besides international visitors it was also visited by local pilgrims.

The holy places were, of course, most frequently visited on days of celebrations. As we learn from Gregory's *Historia Francorum*, during Saint Martin's festival a great number of miracles happened at his grave. The day of his feast was the time when his presence at his grave was the most perceptible. He appeared in the liturgy, in sermons and of course in his miracles. It can be said that after his death Martin was more present on the day of his feast than before he died.

Otherwise it might be significant that the feast of Saint James in Compostella was celebrated on the 25th of July; just 22 days after the festival in praise of Saint Martin established by Perpetuus. It is very tempting to connect these two dates and state that besides the ideological purpose of establishing the day of Martin's veneration on the day when he was elected bishop, there was another reason. Perhaps Perpetuus being aware of the great celebration in Compostella chose the date of the 4th of July thinking about the masses of pilgrims going to Compostella at that time. Unfortunately we do not have any other sources, which can prove or disapprove our speculation, so let us close the further discussion on that matter.

The description of the holy place given by Peter Brown seems to be particularly accurate in relation to the day of the feast. Brown remarks that a Christian shrine in the Late Antiquity was a noisy and even frightening place for the reason that it was mainly visited by people possessed by demons. They came to be healed because the ritual of exorcism was originally performed at a saint's grave, where saints played the role of a judge. An exorcist was asking a demon questions and a saint was a warrantor of the true answers. In the Late Antiquity possession by demons was believed to be a reason for illnesses. Therefore, by exorcising demons saints healed people.

‘Hear graciously, o Lord, our prayers’: The Liturgy of Saint Martin

The famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz has written: “ritual creates confirmatory experiences by making use of symbols and images in its dramatisation of a worldview that is designed to elicit particular emotions, for example anxiety and calm. Ritual thus makes a certain view of the world ‘actual’, makes it really happen”.⁶⁶ The last sentence of the quote describes the essence of ritual. Let us emphasise that a ritual makes a worldview *actual*, and *makes it really happen*. To put it in other words, the ritual makes a link between the present world and the ideal world. It is a vehicle which carries us out to the period *in illo tempore*, at that moment, a time in an undetermined past. The time *in illo tempore* is, of course, a mythical past. Thus ritual refers us to a myth.

Another thing that Geertz has emphasised in his definition of ritual is the dramatisation of a worldview by using symbols and images. Dramatisation is of course a common element of ritual and theatre. Theatre cannot exist without any dramatised action; while in a ritual dramatised repetitions of events from an undetermined past create a unique experience of participation in a ritual.

In the first line of his book *The Cult of the Saints*, Peter Brown says that it is a book “about the joining of Heaven and Earth”.⁶⁷ Similarly we can find that ritual, as part of the cult of saints, joins Heaven and Earth. Ritual is a space, where the natural and supernatural dimensions meet.

Besides joining Heaven and Earth, however, ritual has a social dimension. In his definition of religion, the famous sociologist Emile Durkheim has emphasised the collective aspect of religious institutions. “A religion” – Durkheim has written – “is [a] unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices, which unite into one single

⁶⁶ C. Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), p.128.

⁶⁷ P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982), p.1.

moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them”.⁶⁸ The second part of his description is crucial in understanding the social factor. Ritual, like myth, creates one single community of the people who share the same beliefs and participate in the same rituals. Nevertheless, in contrast to a myth, ritual makes the community visible. Shared beliefs gather a spiritual or moral community, which through ritual expression becomes visible to the natives as well as foreigners. Geertz, in his reflections on ritual, does not neglect this social aspect. Moreover he points out that one of the functions of rituals is keeping the present social order in place.⁶⁹ Every repetition of ritual confirms a disposition to life in a certain way. Ritual performance is a confirmation of a worldview which established a feeling of community among the believers.

Saint Martin was a patron of such a community that celebrated his memory on the days of his feast. Especially during these two days the whole community of Tours, sharing the same myth of Saint Martin as a holy miracle maker and bishop of their town, commemorated him by dedicating a Holy Mass to him. We also know of a sermon in praise of Saint Martin, which probably comes from the 6th century. It clearly says that it was prepared for the “day on which Martin, the glorious bishop of God, migrated from this world to the flourishing garden of Paradise”,⁷⁰ which must be the 11th of November. Sermons like this preached in the churches of Tours recounted the story, the life of Saint Martin. All devotional practices on these days were focused on Saint Martin. At this time many pilgrims came to the saint’s grave because, as Gregory remarked, many of Martin’s posthumous miracles took place on the days of his feast.

It is beyond doubt that these two days were special for the believers of Tours. The memory of Martin’s deeds and miracles shared by the whole community is

⁶⁸ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, transl. by K. E. Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p.44.

⁶⁹ Cf. C. Geertz, ‘Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example’, *The interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp.142-169.

⁷⁰ Sermo, p.305.

expressed by the masses and the visiting of his grave. Saint Martin performed miracles just as before his death. The historical time stopped and the *illud tempus*, ‘that time’ when Martin was alive returned through the devotional rituals of his people. When performing miracles, a saint ‘comes in pride and sorrow, affirming all his claims, / Assured, beyond doubt, of the devotion of his people’, as T. S. Eliot has poetically put it.

“Any study of late medieval religion must begin with the liturgy, for within the great seasonal cycle of fast and festival, of ritual observance and symbolic gesture, lay Christians found the paradigms and the stories which shaped their perception of the world and their place in it”⁷¹; this reflection begins the book on traditional religion in the Late Middle Ages by the Cambridge historian Eamon Duffy. Even if the matter of liturgy as a starting point for any study of medieval religion seems to be controversial, there is no doubt about the truthfulness of Duffy’s claim: the liturgy was indeed a focal point of religious life, yet we believe this is valid not only in the Late Middle Ages as Duffy writes, but also in the earlier times of Gregory and his successors. Speaking of liturgy, we understand this term broadly, not only as a celebration of liturgical ceremonies, but as, according to Duffy’s remark, a ‘great seasonal cycle’ that shaped people’s perception of the world. First of all, the liturgical cycle formed the perception of time, dividing it into periods of fasts and festivals. In many cases the periods of a liturgical year were a fundamental way of measuring time. The days of the most significant Christian festivals were points of reference for people in shaping their idea of time. Secondly, liturgical ceremonies were the most accessible way for what was sacred to be available for the *illiterati*, the people without education who could not read. For them the liturgical ceremonies were the main factor that shaped their collective knowledge of the Christian doctrine, with the

⁷¹ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400- c.1580* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), p.11.

help of sermons preached during the mass. We must not forget that the whole canon of mass, all the prayers and invocations, were said in Latin, and only the sermons, as a pedagogical tool, were said in a vernacular language.

Therefore we can say that on the one hand, people received a frame for their behaviour, a paradigm as Duffy has called it, like the periods of fasting and celebrating. On the other hand what is even more significant is that within liturgy there are messages that shaped people's minds. The stories that were recollected during mass referred to the readings from the Bible that had been read earlier, and to other examples of Christian principles.

The stories of Saint Martin's life, as we have stated, are myths or legends, or perhaps it is better to say variants of the same legend, of the foundation of the cult of Saint Martin. The liturgy is, in turn, a ritual within which Saint Martin was commemorated. The word 'commemoration' seems to be a perfect one to describe the essence of ritual, for it brings to mind another one, namely 'memory'. Indeed, memory plays a crucial role in the creation of cults of saints. The sites of memory are places of significant meaning in popular devotion; the shrines, where the relics of saints are collected, are places of activity of the holy, they are a material proof of saints' presence, they join Heaven and Earth, eternity and temporality. The liturgy, a ritual of commemoration, has the same aim: to make a link between the sacred and the secular. Moreover, such rituals of commemoration of a saint took place, whenever it was possible, in the shrine devoted to him, by his grave. The liturgy, as the holy place where it was celebrated, shaped and consolidated the memory of a saint.

Therefore, Martin's appearance in the liturgy seems to be very significant. During both festivals in praise of Saint Martin the saint patron of Tours was commemorated in sermons, of which one survived and will be a matter of further analysis. It is very significant, however, that during his feasts Martin appeared not only in priests' preaching, but he was also present in the canon of the mass: in liturgical prayers and invocation. The essential source that presents Martin as a

character of liturgical ritual is *The Bobbio Missal*, a Gallican mass book, where we find a mass in praise of Saint Martin.

The mass in praise of Saint Martin presented in the following section, as well as the sermon, illustrate the events that were part of the Martinian celebrations. The prayers of the mass are as mentioned the record of the course of the liturgy on the 4th of July; the analysed sermon, in turn, was preached on the feast of the 11th of November. These two festivals, and especially the 4th of July as we have pointed it out, were the focal points of the celebrations in praise of the Saint during the liturgical year. However, when bishop Perpetuus established the new festival he also organised the rest of the celebrations of the liturgical years in Tours; he instituted the fasts and vigils which, as Gregory writes, were at his time “still observed in Tours throughout the course of the year”.⁷²

According to the list of the fast and vigils established by Perpetuus,⁷³ we can suppose that the main Christian solemnities (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Pentecost) took place in the cathedral, which was because the cathedral, as an Episcopal See, was the main church in Tours. The church of Saint Martin, in turn, was the place for veneration of local saints, of whom all were strictly connected with Saint Martin and the region of Tours.⁷⁴ Therefore, while the cathedral seems to be the centre of the most official Christian celebrities, Saint Martin’s Church appears as the heart of the local cult.

According to Sharon Farmer’s book which will be elaborated further, this division between the cathedral and the Church of Saint Martin seems to be very significant, especially when we refer to the events from the 10th century described by Sharon Farmer. At that time Martinopolis, the community of Saint Martin, split into three separate communities. The centres of two of them were the cathedral that represented the bishop’s authority, and the Church of Saint Martin that represented

⁷² Gregory of Tours HF, book 10, chapt. 31, p.596.

⁷³ Ibidem, p.596-597.

⁷⁴ See appendix no. 3 on feasts and vigils.

the canons who were guardians of the relics. Perpetuus therefore, establishing Martin's shrine as a centre of a local cult, lessened the position of the cathedral. This act had great consequences in the period described by Farmer, when bishops of Tours wanted to establish the cathedral as the centre of the Martinian cult.

The existence of several different liturgical rites (prescription for order of religious ceremony) reflects the strong position of the local churches, which, especially in the Early Middle Ages, were not under control of Papacy, but were led by their bishops. Later, when the position of the Pope and the Roman Curia grew, the Roman rite became obligatory.

The Bobbio Missal is a liturgical book that describes a rite of the local church in Gaul. A missal itself is a book that records the sequence of celebration of the mass, as well as all prayers and invocations being said during this celebration. Liturgical books, and especially missals, are very precious sources for a historian that deals with religious life of an epoch. Missals, being a script of the mass, allow us to reconstruct the course of liturgy. The manuscript of *The Bobbio Missal*, as the editor has noticed, comes from about the 8th century, and it came into existence in one of the Italian scriptoria in the monastery of Bobbio. Although the manuscript comes from the 8th century, it is beyond doubt that it records the Gallican liturgy as it existed in previous centuries.⁷⁵ Liturgy has a conservative structure and can remain unchanged for centuries, making it a stable focal ritual of Christians' lives.⁷⁶ Therefore we believe that *The Bobbio Missal* lets us have a look into the focal point of religious life and worshippers of the early medieval Gaul.

The most significant part for our investigation in *The Bobbio Missal* is the feast when the figure of Saint Martin appears. Although in the missal there is no remark about the day when it was celebrated, we can easily figure out that it is the day of the

⁷⁵ E. A. Lowe, Introduction to: *The Bobbio Missal: A Gallican Mass-Book (MS. Paris. Lat. 13246)*, ed. by E. A. Lowe (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1991), p.7-10

⁷⁶ For instance the Gregorian Rite established at the Council of Trent (1541-1563) survived as obligatory in the Catholic Church until The Second Council of Vatican (1962-1965).

feast on the 4th of July. Since the mass devoted to Saint Martin appears in the missal between the mass in praise of Saints Peter and Paul – about whom we precisely know that they were commemorated on the 29th of July – and the mass devoted to Saint Michael Archangel, whose day of feast was the 29th of September, there is no possibility that the *missa Martini* from the Bobbio missal was celebrated on the 11th of November. However, in other liturgical sources that were not Gallic, the mass of Saint Martin appears only on November 11th.

One thing noticed by Ian Wood needs to be recalled. Wood, analysing the mass dedicated to Saint Sigismund (a Burgundian king, who was murdered and worshipped as a martyr), has observed that *Missa sancti Sigismundi* (Mass of Saint Sigismund) appears directly before the masses dedicated to the saint martyrs and to an unknown martyr. Martin, in turn, in the liturgical sequence follows the mass of an unknown confessor.⁷⁷ This sequence, as Wood argues, is not random; he has suggested that for a compiler of the Bobbio Missal, Sigismund was the model for a martyr and Martin was the model for a confessor.

In *The Bobbio Missal*, in the mass dedicated to Saint Martin at first appear the readings from the Bible that have been read during the mass.⁷⁸ There are three of them: from Jeremiah, from Paul's second epistle to Timothy and from the Gospel according to Matthew. It is remarkable that among all the masses dedicated to the saints in *The Bobbio Missal* only three of them contain three readings from the Scripture. They are: the mass in praise of the saint martyrs, the mass in praise of an unknown confessor and the mass dedicated to Saint Martin. Therefore Martin is the only saint called by name, to whom a solemn mass was dedicated, because only during a solemn mass three passages from the Scriptures were read.

Assuming that the passages incorporated into liturgy are not random, but designed for the occasion of the day of liturgy, we can easily guess that the readings

⁷⁷ Cf. I. Wood, 'Liturgy in the Rhône Valley and the Bobbio Missal', *The Bobbio Missal: Liturgy and Religious Culture in Merovingian Gaul*, ed. by Y. Hen and R. Meens (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), p.209.

⁷⁸ Cf. *The Bobbio Missal*, op. cit., p.107-108.

from the Scriptures put into a language of biblical readings the interpretation of the meaning of the celebration. Biblical readings on feast days were chosen for their relevance to the celebration, and the language of biblical passages can easily describe holy men, but also relate their lives to the most holy tradition represented by the Bible.

Let us briefly have a look into the content of the readings. First appears a passage from the book of the prophet Jeremiah. The reading starts with the words: “blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord”.⁷⁹ And the next line: “he is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and it is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit”, a perfect description of a saint and sanctity itself. By contrast, let us now for a moment recall a passage read during the mass in praise of the martyr Saint Sigismund. Here come two lines from the first epistle of Saint John: “do not love the world or the things in the world. If any one loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world”.⁸⁰ It is a very remarkable passage for the commemoration of a martyr. However, although Severus and Voragine tried to present Martin as a kind of martyr, he was a confessor.⁸¹ Therefore the readings present biblical figures to which Saint Martin can be referred.

In the second reading, taken from Paul’s epistle to Timothy, we read the instructions that Paul gives his friend: “preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be

⁷⁹ Jerem. 17, 7. Translation according to The King James Bible.

⁸⁰ 1John 2, 15-16. Translation according to The King James Bible

⁸¹ Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Three Letters on St. Martin*, op. cit., letter 2, p.53; Jacobus de Voragine GL, p.663.

steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry”.⁸² By this passage the Gallican Church describes its servant and puts him as an example of one carrying God’s will and fulfilling the words of the Scriptures. Martin, according to Paul’s directions, is a type of an evangelist who preaches the Gospel.

The passage from the Gospel according to Matthew, read during the mass, is an illustration of Paul’s instructions: it presents a parable about the foolish and wise maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.⁸³ The parable is well known, so let us just remind that the point of the story was that the foolish ones did not take oil for their lamps and went back to buy some. When the bridegroom came, he took the wise ones to the marriage feast. The foolish ones, who came late, remained outside.

We must be aware that the readings during the mass had a universal meaning; they first of all show the Christian ideal. However it is hard not to notice that all the readings from the mass devoted to Saint Martin describe saints similar to Martin. Unfortunately no sermon for the day of Saint Martin’s feast of the 4th of July survived. The sermon, which we will analyse later was prepared for the day of the feast of the 11th of November, so we are not able to compare its content with the readings. However, this sermon is integrally devoted to Saint Martin presenting his life and virtues. Therefore, taking into consideration the great significance of Saint Martin in Gallican liturgy, we can assume that the sermons preached on the 4th of July similarly paid the most attention to the figure of the saint patron of Tours. If so, then in this light the readings from *The Bobbio Missal* seem to be a great portrait of Saint Martin’s virtues. The mass is even more significant than his lives, because it is rooted in the Bible and spoken in the language of biblical texts. Martin, as a member of the *communio sanctorum*, the community of the saints in heaven, is no longer merely a person that lived in the 4th century Gaul, but he appears rather as a figure

⁸² 2 Tim. 4, 3-5.

⁸³ Cf. Matt. 25, 1-13.

described by the prophets; he becomes equal to the prophets and apostles, for he presents the same virtues as they did. Saint Martin appears as one in whom the words of the Scriptures were fulfilled.

On the one hand the readings confirm what has been said about Martin in his *Vitae*. Therefore we can say that we deal with another version of the story of his life. This is of course true, but on the other hand we are witnesses of how a myth, a story of Martin's life has been used in a practical act, and how the story was incorporated into ritual. As we have mentioned, describing Martin with biblical passages made the bishop of Tours independent from his historical context, made him into someone who is beyond historical time and is part of a mythical past. Moreover – we shall discuss it broadly in the following section – Martin appears in the mass, in the focal ritual of Christian life; he appears as a main figure of the Liturgy of the Word, while the main figure of the following part of the mass is Christ himself.

In the Eucharistic prayers the name of Saint Martin appears eight times. The first prayer, which begins with the words: “praise be to the holy in His miracles, miraculous God, in His saints and his confessor Martin, whose venerable day we are celebrating”.⁸⁴ This invocation, as we can see, reflects the particular position of Saint Martin in the mass. He is not, of course, an aim of the prayers, for the Eucharist is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice. However, he appears as the second significant figure in the liturgy. Through him, and through the rest of the saints recalled in the course of the mass, praise is given to God. Nevertheless, Martin is the only saint called by name in this mass. At the same time, during the same prayer, Martin is said to be “numbered among the apostles” and “attached to martyrs”.⁸⁵ The fact that Martin was depicted in the same prayer as a martyr is very interesting. Just after numbering him among the apostles and martyrs – who were, as we remember, the most venerated saints – the prayer presents him as follows: “There is no doubt that it

⁸⁴ *The Bobbio Missal*, op. cit., p.108.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*.

is a martyr in Heaven one who was a confessor, although we do not know Martin's martyrdom in flesh, we know that he wished to be a martyr".⁸⁶ By these words the liturgy, in order to emphasise Martin's significance among the community of saints, makes the bishop of Tours a kind of spiritual martyr. Although he was not martyred in flesh, he deserves the praise proper for martyrs, because he would undoubtedly have suffered and died for Christ, if he only had opportunity to do it.

This passage from the prayers about his desire to be a martyr calls to mind writings of Martin's hagiographers. Martyrdom was bizarrely tied with the figure of Saint Martin. Although the description of his calm death appeared in Severus' *Dialogues* as well as in Gregory's book of *The History of the Franks*, the motif of depicting Martin as a martyr implicitly existed in the Martinian legend. Sulpicius has made an allusion, suggesting that the only reason why Martin did not become a martyr was lack of opportunity. In the 13th century, in the handbook version of saints' *Vitae*, Jacobus de Voragine has also put an etymological explanation of Martin's name as *martyrum unus*, one of the martyrs. The explanation of this etymology according to Martin's life goes in the same direction as the prayer in *The Bobbio Missal*: "for he was a martyr, at least by desire, and by mortification of his flesh"⁸⁷ parallel to what Voragine has written. In all probability it is a result of commemorating Martin as a sort of spiritual martyr in the liturgy. Through liturgy the explanation of Martin's 'martyrdom' has been rooted in the traditional way of presenting the saint.

We can find origins of such associations with martyrs in the Early Christianity: until the mid 4th century all venerated saints were either apostles or martyrs. Therefore these two patterns of sanctity were the point of reference for depicting further saints. Martin was known as the apostle of Gaul, making him similar to the biblical apostles, the disciples of Christ. Making him a martyr,

⁸⁶ Ibidem, p.109.

⁸⁷ Jacobus de Voragine GL, p.663.

however, was much more difficult. Nevertheless, after the periods of great persecutions alternative types of martyrdom appeared in almost all possible colours: grey, for monks, white for virgins, green for missionaries; red was reserved for true-born martyrs. All explanations confirming alternative martyrs sound similar: although they were not put to death, they offered their lives to God and by that they were dead for the world. The great meaning of martyrdom, even though symbolical, was associated with the significance of martyrs among saints. Until the High Middle Ages the cult of confessors was peripheral, and the main role in spiritual life belonged to apostles and martyrs. Therefore in order to establish an influential cult it was needed to make the man who was the object of veneration, at least symbolically, alike to a martyr.

The second prayer within the mass is in the Bobbio Missal called *Collectio*. This is the prayer of giving praise and thanksgiving to God. In all probability it was followed by “Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might” sung by the choir. In an invocation to God the figure of Saint Martin also appears: “O God, You who, for the sake of all who stay before You and for the sake of Your confessor Martin, shine upon your brightness we pray you to protect your church against being turned in tribulations”.⁸⁸ The role he plays in this moment of liturgy, as well as in the following prayers clearly points out his function as a mediator between God and His worshippers. The liturgy is a very concrete example of what Peter Brown has said about the joining of Heaven and Earth in the cult of saints. The day of Martin’s festival is very special for the worshippers of Tours, because they have their agent whose intercession will make all their prayers heard by God.

“Let us pray, dearest brothers, for plentiful mercy of omnipotent God the Father by intercession of his saint and the most blessed bishop Martin, whose commemorating liturgy we celebrate in the present day”⁸⁹ – the next prayer says, the

⁸⁸ *The Bobbio Missal*, op. cit., p.109.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

third in the sequence of the liturgy. In the fourth prayer it goes similarly: “Hear graciously, o Lord, our prayers, which we bring on the day of commemoration of Your saint confessor and bishop”.⁹⁰ In the first passage, the reference to Martin’s intercession (*intercessio*) appears explicitly. Moreover, both prayers emphasise the uniqueness of the day of Saint Martin’s feast.

The last passage from the final prayer of the mass in praise of Saint Martin says: “It is truly right and just, o omnipotent God, to honour you in the celebration in praise of your beloved Martin”.⁹¹ What is significant in this, and the earlier mentioned fragments of prayers, is the incorporation of the invocations to Martin into a regular order of the mass. The prayers and invocations themselves are similar to the rest of the masses the missal contains, but refer directly to Martin. It is, of course, a very characteristic expression of the need of mediators, who could support prayers offered during the mass. Therefore, at the mass in praise of, for instance, the Apostles Peter and Paul, saints are recalled during the prayers.⁹² Nevertheless the prayers of the mass commemorating Saint Martin are the most extensive in the whole missal as well as the name of Martin is called the most frequently.

The above observations give evidence of the very special position of Saint Martin in the Gallican church. In the liturgy we can see how mediators, saint patrons, were used in practice. However, the uses of Martin’s intercession are the clearest example of how the saint patron was made a mediator between God and people. According to the records of the prayers, Martin seems to pray for his people and support them before God, and for the people of Tours this was a matter beyond doubt.

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁹² Cf. Ibidem, p.99.

‘Such a Respected Patron’: The Sermon in Praise of Saint Martin

Although we are unable to investigate the exact details of how the annual festival on November 11th took place, we can let the sermon for Saint Martin, which is probably from the 6th century, give a picture of how the hagiographical writings were used to present him to the community. As mentioned above, it is clear that the sermon was intended for the day of Martin’s death, and its most apparent purpose was primarily to seek forgiveness for the sins of the congregation with the assistance of Martin and his powers. This can be seen when Martin is asked to “bring back from him (Jesus) to us the forgiveness of heavenly favour”.⁹³ Here we can see Martin’s position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy: Martin is spoken to directly, for example by a title such as “sweet father” or simply by the pronoun ‘you’, showing how the clergy addressed him and probably also how ordinary members of the congregation thought of their dear saint. He was one of them, one with whom they could communicate directly. Christ, in the sermon also called the Redeemer or the King of Heaven, was not spoken to. Instead the sermon shows how Martin is being considered an intermediary between heaven and earth, asked to “bring back forgiveness”. It is Martin who had “become closer to the contemplation of God”, and who could help other members of the church to be given eternal life.

It is in the background that we find God, the omnipotent Lord and Creator, whose sentence is feared, and from whom mankind is in exile, “weighed down by the corruption of the body”.⁹⁴ Already in the first sentence of the sermon the congregation is being reminded of the “omnipotence of the Lord’s majesty”, and there was no doubt in the mind of the participants of this sermon that there was a presence of something superior and holy. It is very probably that the sermon took place inside the church containing the tomb of Saint Martin, a place considered

⁹³ Sermo, p.305.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, p.305-306.

sacred and holy by the thousands of pilgrims that arrived to be healed by the divine powers held by the relics. Speaking of the church the sermon says: “this place that is ornamented so gloriously with the tomb of his most holy body must be considered more fortunate and more exalted than all these others”.⁹⁵ The crevice between graves of the dead and the cities of the living that had existed in Antiquity was bridged by the time this sermon was written. In Peter Brown’s *The Cult of the Saints* we read: “by the end of the 6th century, the graves of the saints...had become centres of the ecclesiastical life of their region”.⁹⁶ The location of Martin’s tomb was a gateway for transmission between heaven and earth; prayers could be heard and miracles could be received as long as the believers came to Martin’s grave.

Thus there was a firm belief in the presence of holy due to the many believers and miracles being recorded, allowing the sermon to appeal to a unified experience of the holiness in the following words: “with rejoicing in our souls, complete devotion, unlimited eagerness, and a single-minded heart let us praise the ceremonies in our celebration”.⁹⁷ What we see here is a request for all participants to be spiritually unified because “the goodness of our own shepherd is delighted with the obedience of pious devotion”.⁹⁸ Everyone present is filled with wonder and awe due to the knowledge of the enormous power that stands above them. The awe before the almighty God, Christ, Holy Ghost and Trinity in all the various roles of King, Redeemer and Judge, with infinite power, goodness, omniscience and glory can make anyone conscious of the feeling of littleness standing before something supernatural. Thus, the insistent awefulness in combination with tradition and firm belief would have created a feeling of strong unification of all present.

In relation to the quote by Durkheim mentioned in the previous section, this unification through the sermon shows how the ritual of the festival connects

⁹⁵ Ibidem, p.306.

⁹⁶ Peter Brown, op. cit., p. 3.

⁹⁷ Sermo, p.305.

⁹⁸ Ibidem.

much more than just heaven and earth. The holiness of Saint Martin is a centripetal force, tying together all of the Catholic Church, as can be seen in following: “For this is the day on which the holy Catholic church, although spread far and wide throughout the world, dances in manifold joy”.⁹⁹ The particular combination of being both a local and universal saint makes Saint Martin important as a point of reference for both the clergy and the laymen, in Tours as well as the more distant locations of Christendom. Instead of reducing religion to a mental state and personal beliefs, the collective celebration of Saint Martin unites the young, old, rich and poor, and becomes a social pivot for a Christian community.

The sermon further says that the example of Saint Martin is one to follow, and all of mankind is lucky to have had such a saint among them, but Tours is the most fortunate place because it was from there that he was sent on to the palace of heaven. In the sermon we read: “more fortunate [still is the region] that has sent him on ahead as its intercessor in the palace of heaven. Fortunate therefore is Tours, which was illuminated by the teachings of such a great shepherd”.¹⁰⁰

There is no mention of Candes where Martin died, or how his body was stolen back to Tours later, but there is an emphasis on Martin as a bishop: “the glorious bishop of God”. The author of this sermon seems therefore to have intentions similar to those of Gregory of Tours when writing about Martin. Both authors speak of Martin as a bishop, and both seek to make him a patron of Tours: “blessed are the inhabitants of the holy see of Tours to whom it was permitted to have such a respected patron”.¹⁰¹ Because of the possession of Martin’s body, Tours is deemed worthy of becoming “the head of the entire region of Gaul”.¹⁰² The political importance of having Saint Martin as a powerful miracle-doer is worth keeping in mind. His death makes it easier for the men of power in Tours to use him for their

⁹⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, p.306.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

¹⁰² Ibidem.

own purposes, and this can be accomplished with acceptance of the people as long as the motivations seem to be derived from religious zealousness.

The feast of Saint Martin reminded people of the remarkable man whose example should be followed, establishing through annual repetition a large cult of followers who would spread stories about the miracles, drawing people to Tours. The later developments of the festival could further strengthen the memory of the powerful saint, namely by combining education and liturgy, thereby showing the mythological content through the sermon and rituals. Then he would not merely be alive in memory, but the memory of *illud tempus* would materialise and become.

Further Perspectives: The Feast of December 1st

As it has been mentioned above, there was a certain division between the three ecclesiastical communities of Tours.¹⁰³ The monastery of Marmoutier argued for their connection to Saint Martin because it was him who originally founded this monastery, and the basilica of Saint Martin argued for its importance because they were guardians of his relics. Both of these communities were hoping to free themselves from the dominance of the cathedral¹⁰⁴, which in turn claimed that it was closest to Saint Martin because he had been a bishop there. Each of the clerical successors of all three communities claimed to be depositaries of his authority, and they all had an interest in being the location where Saint Martin could be reached, and through Martin also God himself. This dispute between them had the effect of making Saint Martin even more local than just the patron of Tours, since they each claimed that he belonged to different parts of the city.

This process of decentralization of the ecclesiastical community of Tours began after the rule of Charlemagne (741-814). Under his rule, the royal power was very centralized. However, his successors were all very weak and unable to unite the Frankish country under their command. In the same way that the three communities of Tours were decentralized after Charlemagne, the whole country became a conglomeration of decentralized regions under the rule of local dukes.¹⁰⁵ Kings were no longer powerful enough to give their support to the local bishop, and their authority was limited to their capital, Paris. Local dukes had a personal interest in supporting the cathedral, basilica and monastery of Tours, and therefore the bishops' power over their diocese became reduced.

¹⁰³ The following section is mainly based on: S. Farmer, *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, p 20.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, p 302-303.

The Capetian dynasty (987-1328) culminated with the inauguration of King Charles IV in 1322, when he successfully managed to unite the kingdom and become King of France. This process of centralization of the state came to happen through local centralization as well, and in Tours this involved an additional translation of Saint Martin's relics. To take the power away from the self-serving dukes, the king regained control over Tours by delegating power to the bishop. We can observe that there was a general trend of centralization during the Late Middle Ages. King Charles IV was permitted by the pope to separate Martin's head from his body in the basilica of Saint Martin, and translate it to the cathedral of Tours.

In order to commemorate the translation of the head, an additional feast was established on December 1st. This was thus the third translation and therefore the third feast established in praise of Saint Martin. The symbolical meaning of this translation had an influence on the hierarchy of the communities in Tours, since the head of Saint Martin was given to the head of the community of Tours, to the cathedral. The establishment of this feast reunited the three communities of Tours, but were again under the power of the cathedral, which in turn meant that they were in control of a centralized church led by the pope.

The feast on December 1st is the third act of foundation, or turning point of Martin's cult in Tours. As we remember, Martin was originally celebrated on November 11th by the whole church, in other words decentralized. Then, bishop Perpetuus translated Martin's relics to the church he built and established a celebration on July 4th, when Martin was venerated as a local saint. The third feast on December 1st might be seen as a return to the origins of the cult of Saint Martin, by presenting him as a uniting figure. He was thus a sign of unity for Tours locally, for France nationally and for the Church under papal rule.

The last act of foundation reinforced Saint Martin's importance among royalty, which he had had under the rule of King Clovis, during who Saint Martin was a

patron of royalty.¹⁰⁶ After the rule of Charlemagne, local dukes by supporting the individual communities of Tours all wanted to make Saint Martin their own particular saint. Under the rule of Charles IV, Saint Martin again became a patron of the Kings of France, thus removing the focus on Tours and making Martin national along with two other saints, a status which has been maintained until the present day.

¹⁰⁶ Ibidem, p 25.

Conclusion

Throughout this project, we have found that there are two intertwining elements in the making of a saint. There is the written aspect in terms of hagiographies, which by establishing the legend provide a basic knowledge about the life of a saint, and then we have the cult as the devotional practices in praise of a saint. In the making of Saint Martin we observe a parallel development between the *vitae* and the cult. In the period of our interest we detect the making of Saint Martin developing from universal to local, and finally as we learn from Sharon Farmer's study the cult of Saint Martin again returned to a universal status.

In the hagiography which established the legend of Saint Martin Sulpicius Severus describes Martin in all categories of sainthood known in his time; he combined the Eastern tradition, which presented saints as hermits and monks, with the Western religious custom in which the bishops were crucial figures. Additionally, Severus emphasises the greatness of Martin being a healer, exorcist and promoter of the Christian faith by fighting paganism through his depiction of the miracles. This depiction of Martin seems to be an establishment of a universal saint. Furthermore, the first festival in praise of Martin on the 11th of November was commemorating his funeral and was a universal feast celebrated by the Church.

The turning point in the development of Martin's cult took place when Perpetuus was bishop of Tours. He established a new feast in praise of Saint Martin on the 4th of July when Martin was venerated as a local saint of Tours. Gregory follows the same idea in his works with the focal point being Martin as a bishop of Tours, thus making him local.

As we learn from Sharon Farmer in the centuries following Gregory of Tours the cult of Saint Martin as a local institution was still supported and recognised as important, but in the Late Middle Ages political and ecclesiastical centralisation caused the local

boundaries of the cult to disperse and Saint Martin to become more important as a saint of the Church rather than a local saint of Tours. The *vita* written by Jacobus de Voragine also shows the tendency of this development by presenting him only on the 11th of November, the original day of his feast.

Based on our investigations, we see Saint Martin as being made by the written *vitae* and devotional practises strengthening each other. The *vitae* create a legend, which serves as a foundation of the cult. The devotional practises keep the cult of Saint Martin alive, but are simultaneously dependent on the written legend as a legitimisation of the cult.

Apart from having analysed the hagiographical writings about Saint Martin in terms of literary sources, we believe that they also had much to say about the time in which they were written as well as being a reflection of human desire for the element of holy. On a wider scale we see that the cult of the saints perhaps was not so much a continuation of pagan beliefs, but rather a transformation of these beliefs, which continued fulfilling people's need for a supernatural experience. Religion was not then, and is still not, an independent entity unaffected by society. The time of Gregory was full of activity and violence, and in this period we can observe how the interest in relics suddenly increased. There was a manifold interest in miracles, giving people hope of improving their existence and making them feel safe by having protectors who were mediators of divine powers. We can therefore observe that the tradition of cults was mainly related to popular beliefs or popular devotional practices, while the hagiographies that were a product of ecclesiastical circles created a legend based on Christian beliefs, and thereby reshaping old pagan traditions.

As noted in our analyses, the cult of Saint Martin was supported by clerical authority and approval by such men as Perpetuus, who created the physical circumstances for

the worship of Saint Martin, something that was evident to all people of Tours regardless of their level of education or social position. This made it possible for the cult to develop among people who needed a protector as Saint Martin. At the time of Voragine, when France was politically stable, the need for a virtuous example that people could follow and imitate was more necessary than Saint Martin's ability to perform miracles.

As the famous medieval historian Jacques Le Goff writes, "clerical culture did undoubtedly accept folklore to some degree"¹⁰⁷ but he does not neglect the reverse process: "ecclesiastical culture frequently had to take its place within the framework of folkloric culture".¹⁰⁸ We can therefore say that the hagiographies of Saint Martin were influenced by popular culture, but that the popular culture in turn was reshaped by the workings of ecclesiastical circles.

¹⁰⁷ J. Le Goff, 'Clerical Culture and Folklore Traditions in Merovingian Civilization', *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*, transl. by A. Goldhammer (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p.156.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem.

Epilogue

As we were writing this project, numerous things were occurring in the world, but an event of unexpected relevance also took place: Pope John Paul II became reborn in God to eternal life. Immediately after his death, he became an object of immense veneration, with tremendous attention from the media as well as the public. Numerous believers began demanding his canonisation, a process, which normally cannot take place during the first five years after death. In spite of this tradition, the process of canonisation was commenced a little more than a month after his death, due to his fame as a holy man. Thus there seems to appear a need for the notion of holy today, similarly to how we found that some saints were venerated in the Medieval Gaul.

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Formalities

Group work process

The group consists of five members, originally six, reduced only two weeks before deadline, due to personal matters. As students of International Cultural Studies we have the advantage of mixed nationalities; we are four Danes and one exchange student from Poland.

In truth, we have been a rather harmonious group who right from the beginning of the semester all agreed on the main topic of the project, namely *the making of Saint Martin*. However for four of us, as newcomers in the discipline of history, this project has not been without complications, especially in regards to historical methodology. In this respect exactly the harmony of the group has been of great help in the way in which have complemented each other.

Originally we intended to do a history project about Saint Martin also including philosophical aspects, such as philosophy of religion. However, during the process we acknowledged that making the historical part of our project function, was work enough in itself, and therefore the outcome of the project is not as interdisciplinary as we would have liked it to be.

This endeavour has been a thorough introduction to the field of history giving us an overview of academic tradition within the area.

Abstract Paper

As students of the 21st century, without deep religious knowledge, we found ourselves puzzled by the notion of sainthood in Catholicism. Consequently, queries about saints' roles in history and their construction of saints became our point of departure. Saint Martin was a very influential saint from 300 AD and our problem

field therefore centred around how Saint Martin and his cult was established In order to study this fields of interest we analysed primary sources; hagiographies of Saint Martin, a sermon and mass in praise of him and finally a chronicle; a record of historical events. The analysis of these different sources was aimed at creating a more complete depiction of the celebration of Saint Martin and his cult.

Danish Summary

Idet vores område var helgener blev det tidligt i processen klart, at vi alle satte spørgsmålstegn ved den Katolske helgendyrkelse og dennes oprindelse. Hvordan en helgen blev konstrueret og den rolle disse hellige mænd fik i middelalderen blev et omdrejningspunkt i vores opgave. Derfor beskæftigede vi os med St. Martin, som er en meget populær helgen fra 300 A.D og med hvordan hans kult blev skabt på baggrund af forskellige typer skrifter, der hyldede ham. Ved undersøgelse af dette anvendte vi forskellige primære kilder; hagiografier om St. Martin, en prædiken og messe til hans hyldet og en historieskrivning. Formålet med at inkludere så forskellige typer kilder har været at skabe en mere komplet forståelse og fremstilling af St. Martin selv og hans kult.

Appendix I - Glossary

Abbot – a head of a community of **monks** living in a **monastery**

Ascetic – one who for religious reasons does not allow himself physical pleasures

Basilica – originally a central public building in an ancient town, in Christian era used as a place of religious worship; also a church founded over saint's grave on a cemetery beyond town walls.

Bishopric – see: **diocese**

Canonisation – a juridical process of official approving one as a saint by the pope; it began in the late 10th century (the first officially canonised saint was Ulric of Augsburg in 993)

Catechumen – in the early Christianity a person who prepares himself for being baptised

Cathedral – the main church in diocese, the office of bishop. See also: **diocese**

Christendom – a part of the world where **Christianity** exists

Christianity – the religion derived from Jesus Christ. See also: **Christendom**

Chronicle – a historical account of events arranged in chronological order

Confessor – a saint that gives evidence of faith but does not suffer **martyrdom**

Cult – a system of religious beliefs and rituals

Diocese – an ecclesiastic area being under authority of bishop

Ecclesiastic – adj. (Lat. *ecclesia*: meaning church) of or relating to church

Episcopal – adj. (Lat. *episcopus*: meaning bishop) of or relating to bishop

Eschatology – beliefs relating to the final events after death

Eucharist – a Christian sacrament of transubstantiation of bread and wine into body and blood of Christ; also a celebration of this sacrament. See also: **mass**

Fast – the period of abstention from food during the **liturgical year**

Feast – also: festival; the day of veneration of a saint

Gaul – ancient country, a part of the Roman Empire, today occupied by France and Belgium

Hagiography – (Gr. *hagios* + *graphos*) literally: writing about saint; a literary genre describing the life of a saint. See also: *vita*

Hermit – one that for religious reasons leaves society and lives in solitude, especially in a desert; the first saints that were not martyrs

Liturgical year – the sequence of church celebrations including the periods of fasts and festivals during the year. It starts in the Advent Sunday, the first Sunday after St. Martin's Feast on the 11th of November.

Liturgy – a solemn celebration of Christian worship. See also: **mass**

Martyr – a saint that suffering **martyrdom** for faith; the first saints venerated by the Church were martyrs

Martyrdom – an act of suffering and dying for faith

Mass – the central point of Christian religious life; the liturgy of Eucharist commemorating events of the Last Supper and Christ's sacrifice. See also **Eucharist**

Miracle – an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in the material world

Missal – a liturgical book describing order of prayers during the **mass**

Monastery – a building where **monks** live together. See also: **abbot**

Monk – a member of a close religious community. See also: **monastery**, **abbot**

Paganism – a system of religious beliefs and practices devoted to ancient gods and heroes

Parish – a local church community; the smallest area of the church administration

Patron – a person honoured as a special guardian and protector of human or human communities

Relics – bodily remains of a saint venerated by the Catholic Church; also material things connected to a saint (especially his cloths) or his grave

Rite – a prescribed order of words and actions for a ceremony

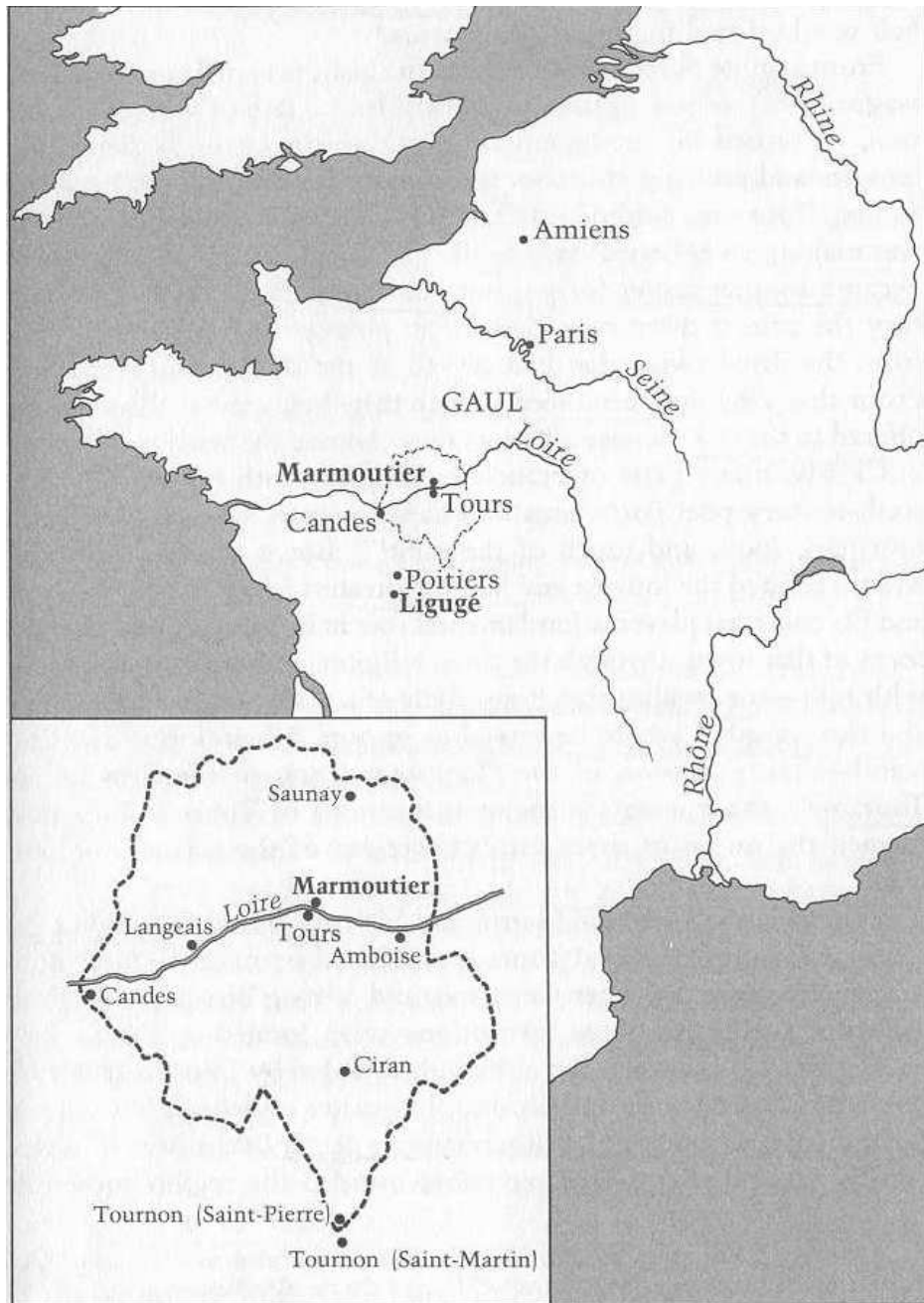
Sermon – a religious speech during the mass

Shrine – a place of veneration of a saint, especially his tomb

Translation – (Lat. *translatio*) solemn moving of relics of a saint from one place to another. The day of translation was one of the greatest celebrations in praise of the saint.

Vita – (pl. *vitae*; Lat. meaning: life of saint) writings about the life of a saint. See also: **hagiography**

Appendix II - Map



Map of Gaul (large map), diocese of Tours (inset)

Source: Sharon Farmer, *Communities of Saint Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours*, (Ithaca, London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), p.15.

Appendix III – Fasts and vigils

List of fast and vigils established by Perpetuus

(Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, book 10, chapter 31)

Fasts

At Whitsun, the fourth and sixth days of the week, until the Nativity of Saint John.

From 1 September to 1 October, two fasts each week.

From 1 October until the Burial of Saint Martin, three fasts each week.

From the Burial of Saint Martin until Christmas, three fasts each week.

From the Nativity of Saint Hilary until the middle of February, three fasts each week.

Vigils

At Christmas, in the cathedral.

At Epiphany, in the cathedral.

On the Nativity of Saint John, in Saint Martin's church.

On the anniversary of the Episcopate of Saint Peter in Saint Peter's church.

On the Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, 27 March, in Saint Martin's church.

At Easter, in the cathedral.

On Ascension Day, in Saint Martin's church.

On Whit-Sunday, in the cathedral.

On the Passion of Saint John, in the baptistery of Saint John's church.

On the Feast of the Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul, in their own church.

On Saint Martin's Day, in Saint Martin's church.

On Saint Symphorian's Day, in Saint Martin's church.

On the Day of Saint Litorius, in the church of Saint Litorius.

On Saint Martin's Day, in Saint Martin's church.

On the Day of Saint Bricius, in Saint Martin's church.

On Saint Hilary's in Saint Martin's church.