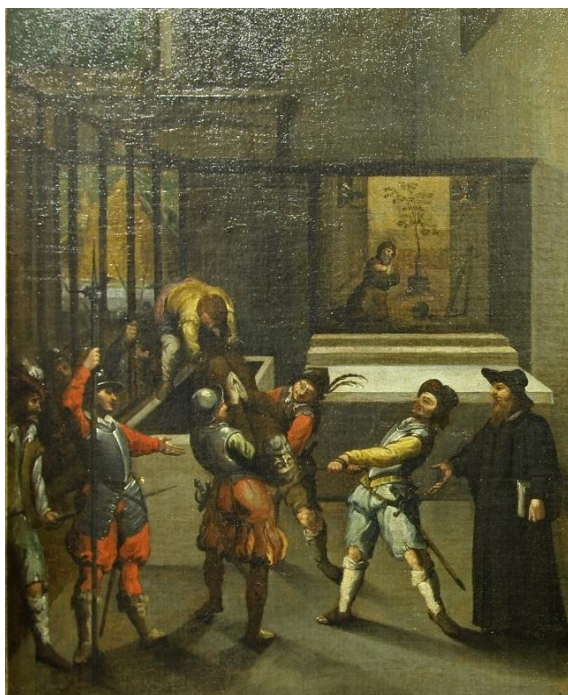


# **The Legacy of Iconoclasm: Religious War and the Relic Landscape of Tours, Blois and Vendôme, 1550-1750**



**Eric Nelson**



*St Andrews Studies in French  
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by  
ERIC NELSON

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French History and Culture



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Front cover: Detail from *Profanation du tombeau de Saint François de Paule par les protestants*, an anonymous seventeenth-century painting commissioned for the Minim church at Plessis-lès-Tours. (See page 109 for full picture.) Peinture provenant des collections de la Société Archéologique de Touraine, France. Cote HG 870.055.0001, [www.societearcheotouraine.eu](http://www.societearcheotouraine.eu)

To my wonderful wife Alice and to our daughter  
Evelyn, who came into our lives just as I began this  
project





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# Abbreviations in footnotes

ADIL	Archives départementales d'Indre et Loire
ADLC	Archives départementales de Loir-et-Cher
BAG	Bibliothèque Abbé Grégoire
BM	Bibliothèque Municipale
BnF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
BSASLV	<i>Bulletin de la société archéologique, scientifique et littéraire du Vendômois</i>
BSAT	<i>Bulletin de la société archéologique de Touraine</i>
MS	Manuscrit (Manuscript)
n.pub.	no publisher
PF	Provinces françaises

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## Notes on the author

**Eric Nelson** is a Professor in the Department of History at Missouri State University. His doctoral research at the University of Oxford formed the basis for his monograph *The Jesuits and the Monarchy: Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590-1615)* (Ashgate, 2005). He has also co-edited two scholarly volumes, the most recent entitled *Politics and Religion in Early Bourbon France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009); and has published a number of journal articles, most recently 'The Parish in its Landscapes: Parish Pilgrimage Processions in the Archdeaconry of Blois (1500-1700)' in *French History* 24 (2010). He is currently working on a larger monograph concerned with religious life in the rural parishes of the central Loire valley from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

# Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support of a number of organizations and individuals. It was first conceived during my time as a Cameron Research Fellow at the Institute for Reformation Studies at the University of Saint Andrews and largely finished during my time as a visiting professor in the Department of History, Philosophy and Religion at Oxford Brookes University. I would like to thank the members of both institutions for their hospitality, conversation and feedback which did much to improve this book. In particular I would like to thank Andrew Spicer who read parts of this manuscript and offered useful feedback and more general conversation on the legacy of iconoclasm in both France and the Spanish Netherlands. The Graduate College at Missouri State University and the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference gave invaluable financial assistance to this project, without which the research for this book would have been impossible. The Société Archéologique de Touraine kindly gave me permission to reproduce their painting *Profanation du tombeau de Saint François de Paule par les protestants*.

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# Introduction

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On 9 September 1636 the canons of Saint Martin's basilica in Tours chanted their patron's Mass before a large gathering of the faithful.<sup>1</sup> With Martin's reliquary displayed on the high altar, they celebrated the continued presence of his relics in the basilica and asked his support for Louis XIII's efforts to bring peace to all of Christendom and to drive out the heretics. To the canons, Saint Martin must have seemed a natural intercessor because in 1562 the Huguenots had cremated his remains when they melted down his shrine's reliquaries and treasure. This act was at the forefront of the canons' thoughts because a few days earlier they had opened his reliquary for the first time since 1564 and confirmed that it held the few fragments of Martin that had been recovered from the Huguenot foundry along with the remnants of two other patrons, saints Brice and Gregory. As the capitulary act recording the event noted, the ceremony was intended 'to serve as a reminder to posterity, that despite the fury of the Huguenots, God allowed the relics of the great Saint Martin, of Saint Brice, and of Saint Gregory of Tours to survive.'<sup>2</sup> But while this was a powerful public statement concerning the failure of the iconoclasts, the canons practised a very selective form of remembrance in their chronicle of the ceremony when they made no mention of the other major patrons of the basilica, saints Epain, Perpetuus, Eustoche and Euftron, whose relics were lost forever to the flames of the Huguenot furnace.

Saint Martin's shrine was the most prominent in the Touraine, but its experience was typical of the regions around Tours, Blois and Vendôme where most relic shrines were sacked during the religious wars. The Huguenots destroyed many relics, damaged shrines and looted treasuries accumulated over many centuries. The 'relic landscape' had experienced nothing approaching this level of destruction since the *chevauchée* raids by the English two centuries earlier. But the damage inflicted by the Huguenots was if anything more destructive to the relic landscape than that of the English or even the Vikings before them,

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<sup>1</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 576: Inventaire général des anciens fonds, revenus et droits de la fabrique de Saint-Martin et des 13 chapelles et semi-prébendes, 1744.

<sup>2</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 576: Inventaire général... Saint Martin.

because they consciously targeted relics and also singled out church fabric, images and ritual items associated with the liturgical life of shrines.

The process of physically rebuilding, renewing and reinventing the relic landscape following widespread iconoclastic damage provides an opportunity to explore its use and meaning after the religious wars. Much as the iconoclastic acts of the Huguenots cast light on their motivations, the rebuilding and repair of relic shrines along with efforts to remember the attacks provide insight into how Catholics understood and experienced these sites. In addition, an examination of renewal at damaged shrines, in the context of the relic landscape's ongoing evolution through the translation of relics and emergence of new veneration sites, offers a more complete perspective on how such landscapes heal after periods of disruption. Similar attacks by Protestants occurred across large swathes of northwestern Europe and the experience of the regions around Tours, Blois and Vendôme reflects those of many other places where iconoclasm was extensive but ultimately Catholics prevailed, rebuilding and renewing their relic landscapes in the context of the Catholic Reformation.<sup>3</sup>

Protestant iconoclasm has attracted considerable scholarly attention. The earliest historiography, written mostly by theologians and historians of intellectual history, focused on the underlying differences in thought between sixteenth-century Protestant theologians over the question of what to do with the legacy of medieval religious art. This field has continued to develop with recent studies examining the contexts in which Reformation thinkers wrote. These scholars emphasize that these were not abstract issues, rather Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, Jean Calvin and others wrote in the context of iconoclastic acts that forced theologians to address the question of images.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Spicer, *Conflict and the Religious Landscape: Cambrai and the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566-1621* (Leiden, forthcoming); Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge, 2009); Marc Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg and Basel* (Cambridge, 1995); Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: the Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (London, 1993); Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts: Volume I: Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988); Carlos Eire, *War Against the Idols: the Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986).



A second line of inquiry, which also centres on the physical acts of iconoclasts, emerged in 1973 with the publication of Natalie Zemon Davis's seminal article 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth Century France'.<sup>5</sup> Davis's examination of religious riots in Lyon demonstrated that intense confessional divisions, rather than socio-economic factors, sparked popular violence in the city. Situating the acts of Huguenots in the context of a more general challenge to Catholicism, she defined iconoclasm broadly to encompass acts that destroyed objects subject to veneration including relics and images, and items associated with the Mass including altars, liturgical vessels and, especially, the consecrated host. This book uses the term 'iconoclasm' in this broader sense, privileging the intention of the iconoclast to cleanse the landscape of idolatry rather than its more restrictive traditional meaning focused on the destruction of images.<sup>6</sup>

Since the appearance of 'The Rites of Violence', scholars have deepened and refined our understanding of the motivations that drove both the iconoclasts and the Catholics who responded to them. A number of urban studies of other French cities, including Paris, Rouen, Toulouse and Nîmes, have made important contributions to this growing body of work, while Denis Crouzet has identified an underlying mindset embedded in contemporary eschatological and apocalyptic fears that were expressed in iconoclastic acts and Catholic responses to them.<sup>7</sup> Olivier Christin has produced the most in-depth study to date, bringing together both the theological debates surrounding iconoclasm in France and the manner in which iconoclastic acts and the Catholic responses to them played out on

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<sup>5</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,' *Past and Present* 59 (1973), 53-91.

<sup>6</sup> The distinction between image and relic in practice was frequently unclear as relics were regularly displayed in image reliquaries or in reliquaries decorated with images.

<sup>7</sup> Allan Tulchin, *That Men Would Praise the Lord: the Triumph of Protestantism in Nîmes, 1530-1570* (Oxford, 2010); Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford, 1991); Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-vers 1610* (2 vols., Seyssel, 1990); Mark Greengrass, 'The Anatomy of a Religious Riot in Toulouse in May 1562,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34 (1983), 367-91; Philip Benedict, *Rouen during the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge, 1980).

the ground from the 1530s into the early seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> Beyond France scholars, particularly of the Low Countries, have also deepened our understanding of iconoclasm's role in sectarian conflicts.<sup>9</sup> This field remains a dynamic one, with a recent collection of essays reflecting on 'The Rites of Violence' forty years after its publication pointing to new lines of inquiry still to be explored.<sup>10</sup> Collectively these studies have redefined our understanding of iconoclasm, identifying it as an important flashpoint in the struggle over ideas and the sacred landscape during the religious wars.

With a few notable exceptions, Catholic efforts to rebuild and renew sacred sites after iconoclastic attacks, and especially initiatives to replace lost images or relics and rebuild relic shrines, have received considerably less scholarly attention than acts of iconoclasm. Part two of Christin's study explored in some depth the efforts of theologians, jurists, artists and the faithful in the latter half of the sixteenth century to rebuild and renew the image and relic landscape by defending the veneration of saints, undertaking rituals to purify sites and replacing church fabrics.<sup>11</sup> More recently Andrew Spicer has examined how Catholics reclaimed, restored and reinvented their sacred spaces in Orléans during the half-century following the iconoclastic attacks of the 1560s, while Philippa Woodcock has explored the refitting of church fabrics in the diocese of Le

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<sup>8</sup> Olivier Christin, *Une révolution symbolique: l'iconoclisme huguenot et la reconstruction catholique* (Paris, 1991).

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Spicer, 'Iconoclasm on the Frontier: le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1566,' in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, edited by Kristine Kolrud and Marina Prussac (Farnham, forthcoming); Alastair Duke, 'Calvinists and "Papist Idolatry": the Mentality of Image-breakers in 1566,' in *Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, edited by Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Farnham, 2009), pp. 179-97; Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts and Civic Patriots: the Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca NY, 2008); Solange Deyon and Alain Lottin, *Les casseurs de l'été 1566: l'iconoclisme dans le Nord* (Paris, 1981); Phyllis Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544-1569* (Cambridge, 1978). England also possesses an extensive historiography: see most recently Alexandra Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Graeme Murdock, Penny Roberts and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Christin, *Révolution*, pp. 175-285.

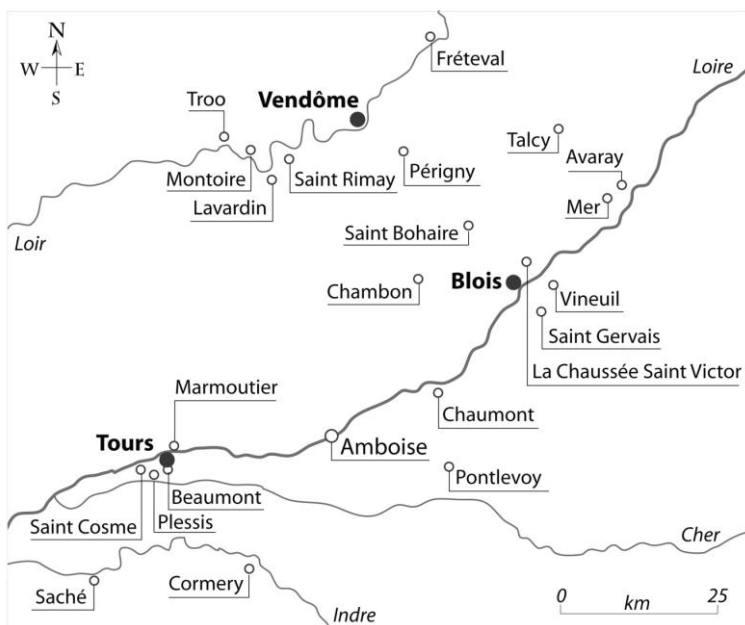
Mans during the same period.<sup>12</sup> Some studies of parish churches and diocesan reform have also explored the rebuilding process during and after the religious wars, although none address in any detail relics or relic shrines.<sup>13</sup>

This book takes a longer term perspective than previous studies by examining the renewal of a relic landscape in the aftermath of iconoclasm over two hundred years, from the mid-sixteenth through to the mid-eighteenth centuries. In this study the term 'relic landscape' refers both to the places where relics regularly resided and the set of real and conceived spaces and landscapes that relics helped to articulate through rituals, processions, translations and other activities. 'Relic shrine' refers to a sanctuary that contained the primary or secondary relics of saints, the Virgin Mary or Christ. Relics in their sanctuaries were focal points in the landscape where the faithful could come into the direct physical presence of the sacred. While anchored in these shrines, relics also moved through the landscape in rituals that defined the sacred community and tied together sites viewed as particularly holy by the faithful. The book explores what the physical renewal of the landscape can tell us about evolving beliefs and practices concerning relics during the Catholic Reformation and what rebuilding activities reveal about the meaning and experience of relic veneration. Thus the study is concerned less with acts of iconoclasm than the repair, evolution and reinvention of the relic landscape and how iconoclasm was remembered or forgotten after the religious wars in a new devotional context.

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<sup>12</sup> Andrew Spicer, '(Re)building the Sacred Landscape: Orléans, 1560-1610,' *French History* 21 (2007), 247-68; Philippa Woodcock, 'Was Original Best? Refitting the Churches of the Diocese of Le Mans, 1562-1598,' in *The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Religion*, edited by Chris King and Duncan Sayer (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 39-52.

<sup>13</sup> Marc Venard, 'La construction des églises paroissiales, du XVe au XVIIIe siècle,' *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 73 (1987), 7-24; Isabelle Pebay-Clottes, 'Réparations et reconstruction d'églises dans le diocèse de Pamiers au début du XVIIe siècle,' *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 73 (1987), 26-29; Robert Sauzet, *Contre-Réforme et réforme catholique en Bas-Languedoc: le diocèse de Nîmes au XVIIème siècle* (Paris, 1979).



*Map 1: Map of the region around Tours, Blois and Vendôme, including places cited in this study.*

Geographically, this study focuses on the regions anchored by the towns of Tours, Blois and Vendôme. These three cities form a triangle with the sixty kilometres of the River Loire between Tours and Blois creating the base, and Vendôme providing the third point along the Loir River roughly sixty kilometres northeast of Tours and thirty-five kilometres north-northwest of Blois. At around 16,000 inhabitants Tours and Blois were of comparable size in the sixteenth century but followed different trajectories over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After growing to a population of about 18,000 in 1650, Blois's population declined to around 14,500 inhabitants in 1700 and 13,500 in 1790 as a result of a stagnating economy and the end of regular royal residence in the town. Tours grew more robustly in the 1600s, reaching a peak of about 32,000 inhabitants in 1700 before the declining fortunes of its silk industry

led its population to fall to around 22,000 by the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Vendôme was a significantly smaller urban centre. Its population hovered around 7,000 inhabitants through the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and was likely of a similar size during the wars of religion.<sup>15</sup> This study leaves to one side Amboise, the other substantial urban centre in the region, because it remained under the control of the crown throughout the religious wars and thus its sacred sites never experienced the iconoclastic damage that shrines in other cities suffered.

By 1550 Tours and Blois were part of the royal demesne. Vendôme, seat of the Bourbon family, briefly became part of the royal domains following Henri IV's accession to the throne in 1589, only for the duchy to be given as an *apanage* to Henri's natural son César de Bourbon in 1598. It returned to the crown once again in 1712 on the death without heir of César's grandson, Louis Joseph, duc de Vendôme. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the region reached its height of importance in the political landscape of France with the king and his court frequently residing in the châteaux of the region. This prominence declined rapidly from the early seventeenth century when the monarchs of France largely abandoned their residences in the region in favour of their châteaux in Paris and the Île-de-France. As to their place in the church structure, Tours, Blois and Vendôme were part of several different ecclesiastical jurisdictions. Tours was the archiepiscopal seat of the diocese of Tours, while Blois and Vendôme were the seats of the two most southern archdeaconries in the diocese of Chartres. The western portions of the Vendômois fell within the diocese of Le Mans.

The presence and patronage first of the powerful feudal lords of Blois, Vendôme and Anjou and later the royal family made the late medieval and renaissance sacred landscape of the region one of the richest in France. In terms of relic shrines the most prominent in the Touraine was the basilica of Saint Martin in Tours. This impressive church had been the resting place of Saint Martin, a patron saint of France, for over a

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<sup>14</sup> Philip Benedict, 'French Cities from the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution: an Overview,' in *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France*, edited by Philip Benedict (London, 1989), pp. 24-25.

<sup>15</sup> Jean-Luc Bourges, 'Vendôme et sa population au XVIIIe siècle (1686-1789),' *BSASLV* (1996), 55. Vendôme likely possessed a roughly similar population in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the first half of the sixteenth century it was required to provide the resources for 50 royal soldiers, while Blois was expected to contribute 100 and Tours 200. See Benedict, 'French Cities,' p. 9.

millennium and had enjoyed the patronage of the French crown for centuries. In contrast to Saint Martin's shrine, the second most prominent relic veneration site in the Touraine was one of the newest, only taking shape upon the death of Saint Francis of Paola in 1507. In the grounds of the royal chateau at Plessis-lès-Tours in the suburbs of Tours, the tomb-shrine of this Italian ascetic who came to France by the invitation of Louis XI had emerged as a pilgrimage site of international importance by the 1560s. The two great Benedictine abbeys of Saint Julien in Tours and Marmoutier in the suburbs also held significant relic shrines in the late Middle Ages, as did the Cathedral of Saint Gatien and several of the parish churches in the region.

In the Blésois, the town of Blois possessed a number of significant relic shrines, including those at the Benedictine abbey of Saint Lomer, the Augustinian foundation of Bourgmoyen, and the parish church of Saint Solenne. Saint Lomer possessed a collection of relics including their patron, Saint Marie Égyptienne, the handkerchief of Saint Margaret and a piece of the True Cross, all of which attracted devotions. Bourgmoyen held a thorn from the Crown of Thorns given to the Augustinians by Saint Louis in 1269, while Saint Solenne possessed the remains of its eponymous patron. As in Tours, several of the parish churches in Blois and the surrounding countryside also possessed relics that attracted considerable devotions.

In the Vendômois, the two most prominent relic shrines were both founded and by tradition given their most important relics by Geoffroy I 'Martel', comte de Vendôme, upon his return from the eastern Mediterranean in the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>16</sup> The shrine of the Sainte Larme, a rock crystal believed to hold a tear shed by Jesus on Lazarus's tomb, at the Benedictine Trinité abbey in Vendôme possessed a local, regional and national reputation for miraculous cures of eye diseases and for bringing rain. The collegiate church of Saint Georges, burial place of the *comtes* and *ducs* in the chateau at Vendôme, held the arm of Saint Georges, patron of the city, along with relics of Saint Sebastian, the abbess Saint Opportune and others, making it the second most important relic shrine in the urban landscape.

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<sup>16</sup> There is some question as to whether the tradition was true in the case of the Sainte Larme. See Jean-Jacques Loisel and Jean Vassort (eds.), *Histoire du Vendômois* (Vendôme, 2007), pp. 104-5.

Over the last century scholars have published few studies of the religious wars or religious life during the early modern period in this region.<sup>17</sup> For Tours, David Nicholls and Pierre Aquilon have both written articles on the sectarian make-up of the city during the religious wars, while Robert Sauzet and Guy-Marie Oury have published largely synthetic works on the Catholic Reformation in the Touraine.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, with the exception of Marc Bouyssou's work on wills, the present author's article on processions, and a few studies of individual foundations little research has been published over the past century on religious life in the Blésois or

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<sup>17</sup> In all three regions, the standard histories of the religious wars and religious life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries date from the nineteenth century. For the Touraine, see Alfred Boulay de la Meurthe, *Histoire des guerres de religion à Loches et en Touraine* (Tours, 1906); Armand Dupin de Saint-André, *Histoire du protestantisme en Touraine* (Paris, 1885). See also, Charles Loizeau de Grandmaison, *Procès-verbal du pillage par les Huguenots des reliques et joyaux de Saint Martin en mai et juin 1562* (Tours, 1863); Jean-Louis Chalmel, *Histoire de Touraine depuis la conquête des Gaules par les Romains jusqu'à l'année 1790* (Tours, 1828). For the Blésois, see Paul de Félice, *La Réforme en Blaisois: documents inédits, registre du Consistoire (1665-1677)* (Orléans, 1885); Paul de Félice, *Mer (Loir-et-Cher), son église réformée, établissement, vie intérieure, décadence, restauration* (Paris, 1885); Louis Bergevin and Alexandre Dupré, *Histoire de Blois* (Blois, 1846). For the Vendômois, see Achille de Rochambeau, *Le Vendômois: épigraphie et iconographie* (2 vols., Paris, 1889); Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret et la spoliation de l'église Saint-Georges de Vendôme le 19 mai 1562: inventaire des bijoux et reliquaires spoliés par Jeanne d'Albret à la collégiale,' *BSASLV* 20 (1881), 297-328; François Jules de Pétigny, *Histoire archéologique du Vendômois* (Vendôme, 1849).

<sup>18</sup> David Nicholls, 'Protestants, Catholics and Magistrates in Tours, 1562-1572: the Making of a Catholic City during the Religious Wars,' *French History* 8 (1994), 14-33; Pierre Aquilon, 'Milieux urbains et réformes à Tours entre les "cent jours" et la Saint-Barthélemy: les protestants de la paroisse de Saint-Pierre-du-Boille,' in *Les Réformes: enracinement socio-culturel*, edited by Bernard Chevalier and Robert Sauzet (Paris, 1985), pp. 73-94. The best single overview of Catholic Reformation in Tours is Guy-Marie Oury, 'Le mouvement de restauration catholique en Touraine, 1598-1639,' *Église et Théologie* 1 (1970), 39-59 and 171-204. See also Robert Sauzet, 'Le milieu dévot Tourangeau et les débuts de la réforme catholique,' *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 75 (1989), 159-66; Guy-Marie Oury (ed.), *Histoire religieuse de la Touraine* (Chambray-lès-Tours, 1975), pp. 151-88. Several masters theses completed at the University of Tours are also worth consideration: see Sauzet, 'Milieu,' 159-66.

Vendômois during the *ancien régime*.<sup>19</sup> In terms of the religious wars, Vendôme has attracted some recent scholarly attention but Blois has not.<sup>20</sup> The dearth of research reflects the meagerness of serial sources used in urban or diocesan studies and the loss of many documents when the municipal library in Tours was bombed in 1940.<sup>21</sup>

This study focuses on relics, their shrines and the communities that oversaw these cult sites in order to explore relic veneration, an important aspect of lived religion that manifested itself in pilgrimage

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<sup>19</sup> Marc Bouyssou, *Réforme catholique et déchristianisation dans le sud du diocèse de Chartres: les testaments des ruraux du Blésois et du Vendômois, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Chartres, 1998); Eric Nelson, 'The Parish in its Landscapes: Parish Pilgrimage Processions in the Archdeaconry of Blois (1500-1700),' *French History* 24 (2010), 318-40; Marie-Thérèse Notter, 'Les religieuses de la Guiche: dots et dons aux XVIème et XVIIème siècles,' *Vallée de la Cisse: Bulletin de la section culturelle du syndicat d'initiatives de la vallée de la Cisse* 14 (1998), 25-38; Bénédicte Dujardin-Langard, 'Le couvent des ursulines de Vendôme,' *BSASLV* (1997), 53-63; Jacques Aubert, 'Histoire du couvent du Saint-Cœur-de-Marie à Vendôme,' *BSASLV* (1995), 52-60. As with Tours there have been a *thèse* and several *mémoires de maîtrise* written concerning the Blésois: see Marie-Thérèse Notter, 'Les ordres religieux féminins blésois. Leurs rapports avec la société 1580-1670' (thèse de doctorat de 3ème cycle, Centre d'études supérieures de la Renaissance, Université François-Rabelais de Tours, 1982); Xavier Anquetin, 'Le huitième livre des choses mémorables qui se sont passées dans le monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois depuis la réforme' (mémoire de maîtrise, Université François-Rabelais de Tours, 1970-1971); Lillian Bariteaud, 'Les protestants en pays blésois au xvii siècle' (mémoire de maîtrise, Université François-Rabelais de Tours, 1973); Thierry Holleville, 'L'Abbaye Saint-Laumer de Blois et la réforme de Saint Maur (1600-1650)' (mémoire de maîtrise, Université François-Rabelais de Tours, 1986).

<sup>20</sup> Alexia Noulín, 'La relique et ses tergiversations pendant les guerres de religion,' *BSASLV* (2012), 19-25; Alexia Noulín, 'Vendôme aux mains des Ligueurs: la victoire de Mayenne sur Vendôme en avril 1589,' *BSASLV* (2012), 27-33; Jean-Claude Pasquier, 'Présence de Henri de Bourbon en Vendômois: de la tradition à la réalité,' *BSASLV* (2012), 35-40; Jean-Pierre Babelon, 'Henri IV à Vendôme,' *BSASLV* (2003), 67-71; Jean-Claude Pasquier, 'Henri IV et le "sac" de Vendôme,' *BSASLV* (1991), 71-88. See also, Alexia Noulín, 'La ville de Vendôme pendant les guerres de religion' (mémoire de maîtrise, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> For urban sources, see Nicholls, 'Protestants,' p. 15. For ecclesiastical sources, see Sauzet, 'Milieu,' 159; also Robert Sauzet, *Les visites pastorales dans le diocèse de Chartres pendant la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Rome, 1975).



devotions and the ritual and liturgical lives of communities. This topic is well suited to the surviving sources in the region because the material and spatial aspects of relic veneration provide windows into aspects of religious life that are otherwise absent from the historical record. This study draws on the approaches and techniques used in recent works by a number of scholars including Alexandra Walsham, Andrew Spicer and Keith Luria that have demonstrated how a focus on sacred places, spaces and landscapes can offer new insights into religious life and help to interpret beliefs and practices.<sup>22</sup> It also draws on recent work on memory and commemoration to explore how acts of iconoclasm were remembered through ritual, art, memorials and the telling and retelling of accounts in oral or written forms. In particular it will build on recent work concerning remembrance of the French religious wars by Barbara Diefendorf, Philip Benedict and others, to explore how communities that oversaw relic veneration sites commemorated and memorialized acts of iconoclasm in the context of royal efforts to impose *oubliance*, the leaving behind of the past.<sup>23</sup> These approaches accentuate the strengths of surviving written,

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<sup>22</sup> Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*; Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2005); Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (eds.), *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2005); Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, DC, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Andrea Frisch, 'Caesarean Negotiations: Forgetting Henri IV's Past after the French Wars of Religion,' in *Forgetting Faith: Negotiating Confessional Conflict in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwielerlein and Inga Mai Groote (Berlin, 2012), pp. 63-79; Philip Benedict, 'Divided Memories? Historical Calendars, Commemorative Processions and the Recollection of the Religious Wars during the Ancien Régime,' *French History* 22 (2008), 381-405; Spicer, '(Re)building,' 247-68; Jacques Berchtold and Marie-Madeleine Frangonard (eds.), *La mémoire des guerres de religion: la concurrence des genres historiques (XVI-XVIII siècles)* (2 vols., Geneva, 2007); Barbara Diefendorf, 'Waging Peace: Memory, Identity, and the Edict of Nantes,' in *Religious Differences in France: Past and Present*, edited by Kathleen Perry Long (Kirkville MO, 2006), pp. 19-49; Andrea Frisch, 'French Tragedy and the Civil Wars,' *Modern Languages Quarterly* 67 (2006), 287-312; Pascal Julien, 'Assaut, invocation tutélaire et célébrations séculaires: le 17 mai 1562 "délivrance de Toulouse",' in *Prendre une ville au XVIe siècle*, edited by Gabriel Audisio (Aix-en-Provence, 2004), pp. 51-62; Hillary Bernstein, *Between Crown and Community: Politics and Civic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Poitiers* (Ithaca NY, 2004), pp. 164-85; Mark Greengrass, 'Hidden Transcripts: Secret Histories and Personal Testimonies of Religious Violence in the French Wars of Religion,' in

architectural, artistic and archaeological sources for the exploration of relic veneration in the region.

This study focuses primarily on the region's most prominent relic shrines, but it also explores other sites whenever sources survive to draw wider conclusions about the landscape as a whole. In terms of written sources, several of the best documented relic shrines are located in Benedictine abbeys thanks to the Monasticon initiative within the Saint Maur reform congregation. From the second decade of the seventeenth century, the leaders of this movement encouraged monks to write histories of their monasteries and to keep chronicles of significant events in their communities.<sup>24</sup> The abbeys of Saint Julien, Cormery and Marmoutier in the Touraine, Saint Lomer and Pontlevoy in the Blésois, and Trinité in Vendôme all participated in this initiative to varying degrees. Significant sources also survive for the basilica of Saint Martin in Tours and the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme, along with the Minim house at Plessis that held the tomb shrine of Saint Francis of Paola. Account books, inventories and other documents from a number of parish churches provide another fruitful set of sources, especially for rural parishes outside of Blois and urban parishes in Tours. By contrast, Augustinian and Carthusian monasteries along with the mendicant orders are less well documented. Moreover, little survives for many parish churches and some collegiate churches like that of Saint Sauveur in Blois.

In terms of physical evidence, many of the churches in which the most prominent relic shrines were located have disappeared from the

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*The Massacre in History*, edited by Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (New York, 1999), pp. 69-88; André Sanfaçon, 'Traditions mariales et pouvoir ecclésiastique à Chartres sous l'Ancien Régime,' in *Les productions symboliques du pouvoir, XVIe-XXe*, edited by Laurier Turgeon (Sillery [Quebec], 1990), pp. 45-64; Sanfaçon, 'Événement, mémoire et mythe: le siège de Chartres de 1568,' in *Événement, identité et histoire*, edited by Claire Dolan (Sillery [Quebec], 1990), pp. 187-204; André Sanfaçon, 'Légendes, histoire et pouvoir à Chartres sous l'Ancien Régime,' *Revue Historique* 279 (1988), 337-57.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel-Odon Hurel, 'Les Mauristes, historiens de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: méthodes, justifications monographiques de la réforme et défense de la centralisation monastique,' in *Écrire son histoire: les communautés régulières face à leur passé*, edited by Nicole Bouter (Saint-Étienne, 2005), pp. 257-74; Annick Chupin, 'Historiens de l'abbaye de Cormery au XVIIIe siècle,' *BSAT* 45 (2000), 253-68. This same initiative also produced the substantial collection of manuscript material held in the Provinces Françaises, Touraine-Anjou collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

landscape. This is the case for the basilica of Saint Martin in Tours, the Minim church at Plessis and Marmoutier abbey outside of Tours, the Augustinians of Bourgmoyen in Blois and the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme. Two important exceptions are the churches of the Benedictine abbeys of Saint Lomer in Blois and Trinité in Vendôme, both of which became parish churches after the Revolution. In addition, a number of parish churches especially in rural areas survived the Revolution more or less structurally intact, even if church furnishings were redistributed in the region following the Revolution.<sup>25</sup> Reliquaries and other precious items fared even worse than churches during the 1790s, although a few, like the reliquary of Saint Bohaire in the parish church of Saint Bohaire in the Blésois, survive today.<sup>26</sup> Much artwork was also lost or displaced during the Revolution, but a number of pieces survive, the most important of which for this study is a commemorative painting of the desecration of Saint Francis of Paola's tomb at the Minim house in Plessis.<sup>27</sup> (See Figure 3, p. 109 below.) Finally, some archaeological work in the region has produced useful evidence, particularly for the tomb of Saint Martin in Tours and the Sainte Larme shrine in Vendôme.<sup>28</sup>

This study is comprised of four chapters. The first examines iconoclasm in the region during the religious wars. The Touraine, Blésois and Vendômois experienced less sustained fighting than many other regions of France. Nonetheless, two periods during 1562 and 1568 when Protestant forces gained the upper hand had a profound impact on the region's relic landscape. During these brief occupations, systematic iconoclasm alongside more random acts of pillaging permanently altered the late medieval sacred landscape. Taking a closer look at the damage in the region provides an opportunity to better understand the impact that these acts had on relic shrines, offering the context with which to explore the physical renewal of the landscape and how the destruction was remembered.

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<sup>25</sup> Frédéric Lesueur, *Les églises du Loir-et-Cher* (Paris, 1969).

<sup>26</sup> Jules Laurand, 'Notice archéologique sur l'église de Saint Bohaire,' *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de l'Orléanais* 1 (1851), 371-72.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Fiot, *Jean de Bourdichon et Saint François de Paule* (Tours, 1961), pp. 83-84; Blois: *un amphithéâtre sur la Loire* (Blois, 1994), pp. 108-23.

<sup>28</sup> Casimir Chevalier, 'Le tombeau de Saint Martin à Tours,' *BSAT* 5 (1880-1882), 11-64; Achille de Rochambeau, *Voyage à la Sainte-Larme de Vendôme* (Vendôme, 1874).

Chapter two examines those heavily damaged sites in the landscape where relics survived and veneration continued after the religious wars. It concerns itself with the rebuilding of relic shrines, renewal of relic treasuries and the long-term impact of iconoclasm on the experience of relic devotion sites. Surviving sources allow for the detailed examination of three such sites in the region: Saint Martin's basilica in Tours, and the Benedictine abbeys of Marmoutier outside of Tours and Saint Lomer in Blois. They will provide the central focus for this chapter; however, wherever possible the experience of other sites will be considered in order to gauge whether these foundations were typical of other shrines. In the final section of the chapter attention shifts to the relatively new tomb shrine of Saint Francis of Paola at the Minim house in Plessis. Renewal at this site followed a different trajectory to its more established counterparts, reflecting the needs of its growing relic devotion.

Chapter three broadens our perspective, to consider how the relic landscape continued to evolve in the two centuries after the religious wars through relic translations. Unlike other aspects of religious life, the impact of the Catholic Reformation on the relic landscape was modest. The church fathers affirmed relic veneration at the Council of Trent, even if authorities were cautious in recognizing new holy figures who attracted devotion. In our area some relics destroyed during the religious wars were replaced while the displacement of relics across western Europe resulted in the arrival of new relics in the region. After the wars, the needs of the faithful and the gifts of patrons ensured that new relics continued to flow into and out of the region strengthening relic devotion even as these new arrivals altered patterns of relic veneration in the landscape. Translation of relics from Rome provided the greatest physical impact on the region, but unlike elsewhere substantial devotions failed to develop around all but one of these new saints.

The final chapter explores how communities that oversaw relic shrines remembered the iconoclastic acts of the religious wars through liturgical and ritual commemorations, memorials, artistic renderings, oral traditions and written accounts. Sources from four prominent sites allow us to examine in some detail how iconoclasm was remembered in relic devotion sites that were heavily damaged during the wars. In the decades following the destruction of the 1560s, the communities who oversaw the two most prominent relic devotion sites of the Touraine – the tomb shrines of Saint Martin in Tours and Saint Francis of Paola in Plessis – both celebrated the Huguenot attacks as God's wish to honour their patrons with the laurel of martyrdom. For the Benedictine abbeys of Saint Lomer

in Blois and Marmoutier outside Tours meaning was ultimately found in the decline and later renewal of their communities. This chapter examines how these remembrances took shape and were reinforced in the collective and historical memories of these communities.

# 1 Religious war and the relic landscape

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The frequent presence in the Touraine and Blésois of the last Valois monarchs made the region a stage on which some of the most dramatic events of the religious wars took place. In 1560 the conspiracy of Amboise reached its bloody conclusion in the region, while in 1588 the Guise brothers met their end at the hands of Henri III's mignons in the royal chateau at Blois. In 1576 and again in 1588 Blois hosted meetings of the Estates General and in the early 1590s Tours was the effective capital of France with the royal administration in exile from Paris occupying major public and ecclesiastical buildings in the city.

The region also played a prominent role in the religious wars because of its strategic position straddling the river Loire. The Loire served as an effective barrier to the movement of armies, splitting the country into two and making crossing points like the bridges at Beaugency, Blois, Amboise and Tours crucial for military operations. The strategic importance of the region was at its height during the wars of the 1560s. In both 1562 and 1567 Louis de Bourbon, prince de Condé and leader of the Huguenots, opened hostilities by seizing Orléans upstream from Blois. However, the Huguenot heartland was in southwest France. Our region lay in between and was hotly contested in both wars.

Military operations during the wars of the 1570s shifted to the south and west of the region. The Touraine, Blésois and, to a lesser extent, the Vendômois became a staging ground for royal armies massing to strike into Poitou and points further south. Periodically the region was threatened by Protestant forces as they sought to secure crossing points on the Loire, but these efforts increasingly focused on Saumur, Angers and other crossing points to the east of Tours. Protestant armies occasionally operated on the borders of the region and Henri de Navarre marched into the Vendômois in 1576 basing his troops in Montoire as peace negotiations progressed, but the region did not experience significant fighting in the 1570s or most of the 1580s.

During the wars of the League after 1588 fighting shifted further north to Normandy and the Île-de-France, while royal armies once again used the Touraine and Blésois as a base for operations. While Tours was threatened in 1589 by a Leaguer army the regions around Blois and Tours were largely spared in the early 1590s. The Vendômois was not so

fortunate, becoming a battleground for Leaguer and royalist forces. Vendôme declared for the League despite the support given by its *duc*, Henri, King of Navarre, to King Henri III, and it would pay a heavy price when it was seized and sacked by Navarre, now King Henri IV of France, in November 1589.

The Touraine, Blésois and Vendômois experienced less sustained fighting than many other regions of France. Nonetheless, two brief periods in 1562 and 1568 when Protestant forces gained the upper hand had a profound impact on the region's relic landscape. During these occupations, systematic iconoclasm alongside more random acts of pillaging permanently altered the late medieval sacred landscape. Taking a closer look at the damage in each region provides an opportunity to better understand the specific impact that these acts had on relic shrines, offering the context in which to explore the physical renewal of the landscape and how the destruction was remembered.

On the morning of 2 April 1562 several hundred armed Huguenots seized the royal chateau in Tours ushering in one-hundred days of Protestant rule that dramatically transformed the relic landscape of the city and the surrounding countryside.<sup>1</sup> This was the decisive moment in an increasingly bitter struggle between local Catholics and Protestants. Paralleling events across the kingdom, the sectarian conflict had grown in intensity and violence from the summer of 1561.<sup>2</sup> So tense was the situation by July that the canons of Saint Martin's basilica chose not to expose the relics of their patron on the feast of his translation, and by the end of August they had fortified their church and cloister, hired soldiers and stockpiled weapons, effectively turning the basilica into an urban stronghold.<sup>3</sup>

Tensions peaked on 4 October, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, when armed Huguenot activists seized the Franciscan church within the walls of the city. Foreshadowing the more widespread destruction of the following spring, they cleansed the church of what they viewed as idolatrous pollution by breaking images, toppling altars and

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<sup>1</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, pp. 359-60: Raoul Monsnyer and Michel Vincent, *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini ecclesiae historia*.

<sup>2</sup> Nicola Sutherland, *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 101-36.

<sup>3</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 355: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

despoiling liturgical objects.<sup>4</sup> The attackers intended to seize the church for Protestant worship, but six days later the Catholic Louis II de Bourbon, duc de Montpensier and governor of the Touraine, secured its return to the Franciscans through his personal intervention. Beyond restoring the church he also initiated a series of measures designed to disarm the population, which calmed tensions for a time.<sup>5</sup>

However, in conjunction with the deteriorating political situation on the national level, confrontations in Tours once again intensified in the early months of 1562. Most notably the Huguenots sacked the parish church of Saint Pierre du Chardonnet on the night of 11 February. As at the Franciscan church in October, the Huguenots overturned altars and destroyed images, books and liturgical items.<sup>6</sup> Saint Pierre lay outside the city walls and its seizure may have been another abortive attempt to secure a place of worship for the Huguenot congregation. The Edict of January issued by the king weeks earlier had granted Protestants the right to worship outside of towns, even if it prohibited the seizure of church property for such a purpose.<sup>7</sup>

These earlier iconoclastic outbursts foreshadowed the days of widespread destruction to the relic landscape of Tours and the surrounding region that followed the Huguenot seizure of power in early April.<sup>8</sup> The Huguenots, who included a number of prominent city officials along with members of the royal financial and judicial administration, took complete control of Tours in the days following their seizure of the royal chateau.<sup>9</sup> The predominantly Catholic population initially offered little opposition and both the governor and archbishop withdrew from the city. Only the

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<sup>4</sup> Ioannis Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana ecclesia Turonensis* (Tours, 1667), p. 197; BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 356: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>5</sup> Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, p. 197.

<sup>6</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 359: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*; BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 15, f. 268: Extraits des registres de Saint Martin de Tours.

<sup>7</sup> Sutherland, *Huguenot Recognition*, pp. 354-56.

<sup>8</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 359: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*; Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, pp. 198-99.

<sup>9</sup> David Nicholls, 'Protestants, Catholics and Magistrates in Tours, 1562-1572: the Making of a Catholic City during the Religious Wars,' *French History* 8 (1994), 14-33; Pierre Aquilon, 'Milieux urbains et réformes à Tours entre les "cent jours" et la Saint-Barthélémy: les protestants de la paroisse Saint-Pierre-du-Boille,' in *Les Réformes: enracinement socio-culturel*, edited by Bernard Chevalier and Robert Sauzet (Paris, 1985), pp. 73-94; Armand Dupin de Saint-André, *Histoire du protestantisme en Touraine* (Paris, 1885).



canons of the cathedral and those of Saint Martin's basilica put up resistance from their fortified cloisters, but both were quickly overcome.<sup>10</sup> In the days that followed no relic shrine in the city was spared and a pattern of despoilment at these sites emerges from the accounts. In each instance, Huguenots singled out for destruction reliquaries and images associated with the cult of saints and church fabric associated with the Mass, including altars and liturgical objects. Those items made of precious metals were systematically seized by Huguenot authorities or looted by individuals, especially liturgical items, reliquaries and treasure displayed at relic shrines.

One of the first churches sacked by the Protestants was the cathedral of Saint Gatien. The event, as described by the seventeenth-century historian Ioannis Maan, working from the now largely lost archives of the cathedral chapter, is typical of accounts from other religious sites in the region:

They [the Huguenots] irrupted en masse into the church, into its chapels, then its choir; they broke the bronze gate that protected it; they bounded onto the altars, despoiling and toppling them; they demolished the statues of saints and the reliquaries which rested in their shrines and dispersed them in pieces; they took the bracelets, the earrings which decorated them; they finally placed a sacrilegious hand on the very holy Eucharistic pyx itself and on that which it piously conserved, the respectable body of Christ; they annihilated and crushed it in the greatest of crimes. Not content with this they broke in a moment the doors of the sacristies and competed for the gold and silver vessels that they found there; they invaded and pillaged the treasury; they burnt the public archives after having taken what would be useful to them personally; they penetrated the most profound recesses of the building; they broke open the tombs of the dead and spread the bowels of the earth to see if they would be able finally to find some vessels:

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<sup>10</sup> Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, p. 198; BM Tours, MS 1295, pp. 355-60: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

and this was accomplished in only an hour by these most abominable robbers.<sup>11</sup>

The sacking of Saint Gatien mixed acts that cleansed the church of what Huguenots viewed as idolatrous pollution, like the breaking of images and destruction of relics; with those that expressed their rejection of the Mass, including the overturning of altars and the destruction of liturgical objects; with more rapacious acts of pillaging. A later passage in Maan sketches out a systematic approach to the seizure of treasure that was repeated in other churches: 'In fact, what each stole, he took in secret; the statues of saints, small reliquaries, crosses, the largest candlesticks [and other items] that they could not conceal, they crowded into the treasury of Saint Martin, after having burned the bones.'<sup>12</sup> Maan recounts some looting, but also the systematic gathering of church treasure by Huguenot authorities, which was an important feature of attacks on relic sites. Large numbers of precious items from across the city and its neighbouring regions were deposited in the treasury of Saint Martin's basilica during the first weeks of April. This treasure was the focus of a second phase of iconoclasm that occurred weeks later in May and June when representatives of the prince de Condé melted the images, statues, reliquaries and other precious items gathered in the basilica and burnt the relics that they found in them.<sup>13</sup>

The basic pattern established at Saint Gatien was repeated in churches across the city. On 5 April the Huguenots sacked the most prominent relic site in all of the Touraine, the basilica of Saint Martin. This impressive church had been the resting place of Martin, a patron saint of France, for over a millennium and in that time it had accumulated one of the richest treasuries in the kingdom. According to the 5 April entry in the canons' chapter minutes, the Huguenots broke into the basilica 'knocking over and breaking into pieces the reliquary of Monsieur Saint Martin all together with the silver lamps and other reliquaries and placed them in the treasury and all the images of the church were knocked over

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<sup>11</sup> Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, p. 198.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 198.

<sup>13</sup> The systematic seizure and melting down of church treasure occurred in many cities: see Mark Greengrass, 'Financing the Cause: Protestant Mobilization and Accountability in France (1562-1598),' in *Reformation, Revolt and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585*, edited by Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop and Marc Venard (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 233-54.

and broken.<sup>14</sup> A later entry notes that the Huguenots returned on 9 May to destroy the altars, pulpits and Saint Martin's tomb shrine.<sup>15</sup>

While the iconoclasts who sacked the basilica were thorough and destructive, Huguenot authorities exerted more control over their activities than at many other sites in the region as is reflected in the survival of prominent tombs, like those of Charles VII's children, in the choir of the church.<sup>16</sup> At many other sites, like the cathedral of Saint Gatien, the Minim house in Plessis and the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme, iconoclasts desecrated and looted the tombs of prominent individuals to the embarrassment of many Huguenot leaders. At Saint Martin, which remained under the firm control of authorities because of its role as the central collection point for church treasure in the region, destruction was limited to the basilica's altars, pulpit, images and tomb shrine.

Accounts are less detailed for other foundations in Tours, but it is clear that all the major holy sites of the city were sacked, including the parish churches, the Benedictine abbey of Saint Julien, and the Augustinian, Dominican and Carmelite foundations.<sup>17</sup> What information survives reflects the pattern seen at the cathedral and basilica. Thus at the collegiate parish church of Saint Venant, parishioners confirmed in a *procès verbal* in 1563 that the Protestants who came to the church broke up and removed its reliquaries.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, Maan reports that 'The Protestants seized from Saint Julien nearly the entire body of Paul, bishop of Laon, Antoine, anchorite, Colombe, virgin, and Odo of Cluny, Pantaleon and Laur, abbots, enclosed in five silver coffers.'<sup>19</sup> A seventeenth-century history of the abbey confirms that these relics were permanently lost.<sup>20</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 361: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*; BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 15, f. 267: Registres de Saint Martin.

<sup>15</sup> BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 10, no. 4320: Extraits des registres capitulaires de Saint Martin de Tours.

<sup>16</sup> The tombs of Charles VII's children survive to this day in the cathedral in Tours.

<sup>17</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, pp. 359-69: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*; Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, pp. 197-200; Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Histoire universelle* (London, 1734), vol. 4, pp. 220-21; ADIL, G 1016, f. 46: Inventaire de Saint Étienne de Tours.

<sup>18</sup> BM Tours, MS 1294, p. 52: Raoul Monsnyer and Michel Vincent, *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini ecclesiae historia*.

<sup>19</sup> Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, p. 199.

<sup>20</sup> BnF, MS Latin 12677, f. 141v: *St Iuliani in urbe Turonensi abatia*.

each case iconoclastic attacks were accompanied by the systematic removal of treasure to Saint Martin's basilica.<sup>21</sup>

A similar pattern emerges from attacks on religious sites in the immediate vicinity of Tours. The sacking of the Benedictine abbey at Marmoutier on 5 April was typical for churches in the region.<sup>22</sup> Marmoutier, originally founded as a religious retreat by Saint Martin in the fourth century, was a second important pilgrimage site associated with the saint. Gilles Robiet, a Benedictine monk of Marmoutier who lived through the events of 1562, reported that the Huguenots arrived in force and took all the treasures of the church and especially those of the high altar 'that were melted down in the town of Tours into ingots and currency to pay the Germans who had come to help the Huguenots.'<sup>23</sup> Unlike at Saint Gatien, Saint Martin or Saint Julien, the monks succeeded in removing ahead of time their most precious relic, the Holy Ampoule of Saint Martin, and some small reliquaries.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, good fortune also saved some of their relics from destruction.<sup>25</sup> The historian Martène reports that the Huguenots broke up the reliquaries 'so they occupied less space in the carts and they would be able to transport them more easily, and this was how the relics were saved, abandoned to the religious, they [the Huguenots] being content with the precious metals.'<sup>26</sup> However, not all the relics were saved. For instance, Martène notes with great regret that those of Saint Martin were held in a reliquary small enough to transport without breaking apart and emptying. These relics were hauled away and presumably burnt when the reliquary was melted down, but in any case were lost forever to the monks of Marmoutier.<sup>27</sup>

As elsewhere, looting of the treasure was accompanied by iconoclastic acts and those aimed at the Mass, including the breaking of stained glass windows and the smashing of organs. Marmoutier suffered more physical damage to its church than many of its counterparts in

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<sup>21</sup> BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 15, f. 267: Registres de Saint Martin.

<sup>22</sup> Edmond Martène, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier* (Tours, 1875), vol. 2, pp. 373-77.

<sup>23</sup> Robiet's chronicle is now lost, but is reproduced in Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 373.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 375-77.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 377.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 376.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 376. Other relics were also lost: see vol. 2, p. 230.

Tours.<sup>28</sup> Not only were its windows destroyed, but looters took the iron and lead that once held the stained glass in place. However, the Huguenots failed in their most ambitious effort to damage the church when their attempt to collapse the pillars of its central crossing failed.<sup>29</sup> This damage to the church structure occurred in the weeks following the initial looting of the monastery when a man named Chastillon, who called himself the abbot of Marmoutier, occupied the site with his followers claiming it as his own.<sup>30</sup> Marmoutier was not alone. Other important sites near Tours were also pillaged including the priory of Saint Cosme, the abbey of Cormery and the important Benedictine nunnery of Beaumont, although little is known of the events that transpired at these places.<sup>31</sup>

Far more is known about the sacking of the Minim house on the estate of the royal chateau at Plessis. By 1562 this site had become the second most important relic shrine in the region after the basilica of Saint Martin, despite only emerging in the landscape following the death of Saint Francis of Paola, its founder, in 1507. This Italian ascetic, who came to France by the invitation of Louis XI, was known during his life for his working of miracles, a reputation that continued after his death.<sup>32</sup> Louis's son Charles VIII provided resources and land near his chateau at Plessis for a monastery to house Francis and his growing band of followers, who before his death were formally constituted into the Minim order. Canonized by Leo X in 1519 following an intense campaign by powerful political and ecclesiastical figures, his cult grew rapidly.<sup>33</sup> The Minim

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<sup>28</sup> An exception in Tours was the parish church of Notre Dame de la Riche: see ADIL, G 999: Requête, en 1783, des fabriciers et commissaires de la paroisse à l'intendant, pour obtenir de faire disparaître un grand pilier situé en face la principale porte de leur église, seul reste de l'ancienne église brûlée par les Huguenots.

<sup>29</sup> Robiet in Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 374.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid..

<sup>31</sup> For Cosme and Beaumont, see Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, p. 199; BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 10, no. 4320: Registres de Saint Martin. For Cormery, see Jean-Jacques Bourasse, *Cartulaire de Cormery précédé de l'histoire de l'abbaye et la ville de Cormery* (Tours, 1861), pp. xciv-xcv.

<sup>32</sup> ADIL, H 675: Copie des actes du procès de canonisation de Saint François de Paule.

<sup>33</sup> ADIL, H 675: Procès de canonisation de Saint François de Paule. For the most recent account of his canonization process, see Ronald Finucane, *Contested Canonizations: the Last Medieval Saints* (Washington, DC, 2011), pp. 117-66.

house continued to receive royal support.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Francis enjoyed a considerable following in his homeland of southern Italy. Pilgrims from the region frequently visited his tomb and Frederick of Aragon, the King of Naples who was exiled to Plessis following the French conquest of his kingdom, was buried in the Minim church. As Saint Francis's international reputation grew, so did his following in the Touraine. By the 1560s, his tomb was the site of considerable local popular devotion.<sup>35</sup>

On 7 April armed Huguenots forced their way into and then sacked the monastery.<sup>36</sup> In the aftermath, Marin Pibaleau, sieur de la Bedoïere, and some of his armed followers took up residence in its buildings much like Chastillon at Marmoutier.<sup>37</sup> During the occupation Huguenots heavily damaged the church furnishings: overturning altars, burning the large crucifix at the entry to the choir, destroying images and paintings, and breaking the stained glass windows. They also despoiled the graves in the church, including that of Saint Francis whose remains they burnt.<sup>38</sup> Much of this destruction likely took place on the first day of occupation. Charles Royer claimed in a deposition to have been in a crowd of curious Catholics that entered the site hours after its initial seizure, viewing for himself the cremated remains of Saint Francis in the fireplace of the guest chamber.<sup>39</sup> But Nicolas Baron, another eyewitness who was held against his will in the monastery for several weeks, testified that the systematic looting of the foundation's furnishings took considerably

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<sup>34</sup> ADIL, H 690: Inventaire historique de l'arrivée et installation de saint François-de-Paule au Plessis le 24 avril 1482; ADIL, H 693, p 8: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>35</sup> Benoist Pierre and André Vauchez (eds.), *Saint François de Paule et les Minimes en France de la fin du XVe au XVIIIe siècle* (Tours, 2010).

<sup>36</sup> *Acta sanctorum quotquot tot orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur* (Paris, 1866), vol. 10, p. 221; ADIL, H 680: Requête des Minimes contre Marin Piballeau, sa femme et ses compagnons, 1562; Hilarian de Coste, *Le portrait en petit de S. François de Paule, instituteur et fondateur de l'ordre des Minimes: Ou l'histoire abrégée de sa vie, de sa mort, & de ses miracles* (Paris, 1655), pp. 482-89.

<sup>37</sup> There is some uncertainty over whether the monastery was seized on 7 or 8 April: see ADIL, H 693: p. 65: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes; ADIL, H 680: Requête des Minimes.

<sup>38</sup> ADIL, H 680: Requête des Minimes; Coste, *Portrait... François de Paule*, pp. 483-84.

<sup>39</sup> *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 10, p. 221.

longer to complete.<sup>40</sup> When the Minims of Plessis finally regained possession of their monastery they found that the church was structurally sound, but that the Huguenots had destroyed its furnishings, despoiled its tombs, looted its liturgical vessels, and broken its stained glass windows.<sup>41</sup> Most troubling, however, was the cremation of their founder Saint Francis's remains, only a few fragments of which had been saved by a local farmer named René Bedouët.<sup>42</sup>

All the religious sites of the region were plundered within a week of the seizure of Tours. But many of the most precious relics from these shrines survived this initial period because Huguenot authorities transported them in their reliquaries to the treasury of Saint Martin's basilica where they were secured. This reprieve was short lived. In the coming weeks the basilica became the venue for a second wave of iconoclastic destruction when under the watchful eyes of Condé's agents and in the presence of local officials and several canons of Saint Martin these items were inventoried and then systematically melted down in a foundry purpose-built in the basilica vestry for the task.<sup>43</sup> The precious metals were then minted into coinage much of which was forwarded to Condé for the war effort. An entry dated 25 May 1562 in the capitulary acts of Saint Martin records that the relics of the basilica were cremated in the same foundry used to melt the treasure, although the *prêtre marguillier* Canon Saugeron, who was present at the event, recovered Saint Martin's radius and a few pieces of his skull along with fragments of saints Brice and Gregory.<sup>44</sup> It is likely that the other relics from Marmoutier, Saint Julien, Saint Gatien and elsewhere met similar fates during this process. In any case, none of the relics shipped to Saint Martin from these sites survived.

With a hostile Catholic population willing to open the gates of Tours, Condé's garrison along with hundreds of Huguenot inhabitants fled south towards Poitou on 10 July as Catholic troops under Jacques

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<sup>40</sup> Costes, *Portrait... François de Paule*, p. 483.

<sup>41</sup> ADIL, H 680: Requête des Minimes.

<sup>42</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 68: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes. It is possible that others helped Bedouët but no evidence survives to support this assertion.

<sup>43</sup> ADIL, G 596: Inventaire du trésor de l'église de Saint-Martin, rédigé lors du pillage des Huguenots en 1562.

<sup>44</sup> BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 15, f. 295: Registres de Saint Martin; ADIL, G 593, pp. 575-76: Inventaire général des anciens fonds, revenus et droits de la fabrique de Saint-Martin et des 13 chapelles et semi-prébendes, 1744.

d'Albon, maréchal de Saint André, prepared to besiege the city. Catholic forces entered Tours unopposed on 11 July.<sup>45</sup> Catholic services quickly resumed in the churches of the region, but they took place in a profoundly changed relic landscape. The Huguenots had cremated the remains of the two most prominent Touraine saints, Saint Martin and Saint Francis of Paola, although a few relics of each saint were saved from the flames. Other churches like Saint Gatien and Saint Julien had permanently lost their most important relics, many of which had been revered for centuries. That is not to say that the region had been completely stripped bare of relics. While losses were heavy, some survived the chaotic days of early April and were preserved by the faithful.

Beyond the loss of relics, the Huguenots had also permanently altered relic shrines during the occupation. While some physical damage like overturned altars or smashed tombs could be repaired relatively quickly, the treasure traditionally displayed with relics was not easily replaceable. This treasure played a significant role in the ritual life of the city, with familiar pieces like the reliquaries of Saint Martin and Saint Brice at Saint Martin's basilica or the processional cross reliquary at Marmoutier playing regular roles in the liturgical and processional life of the community.

There was no way to know at the time, but religious war would not return to Tours in the decades that followed. A massacre by local Catholics of several hundred members of the Huguenot congregation within weeks of Saint André's forces retaking the city reduced the influence and power of the Protestant minority. Moreover, a campaign of sectarian intimidation over the following decade led some to flee and others to abjure, ensuring that the Huguenot minority would never again be powerful enough to seize the city.<sup>46</sup> Unlike towns further to the east and west along the River Loire, Tours never fell to Protestant forces in the later religious wars. That is not to say that the region as a whole was completely spared from further destruction and losses to the relic landscape. Armed bands continued to roam the countryside at times of disorder, occupying religious establishments in the vicinity of Tours, including Cormery and Marmoutier.<sup>47</sup> But the profound damage to the

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<sup>45</sup> De Thou, *Histoire*, vol. 4, pp. 220-21.

<sup>46</sup> Nicholls, 'Protestants, Catholics, and Magistrates,' 14-33.

<sup>47</sup> BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 11, no. 4693: Mandement du roi, portant injonction à ses officiers de chasser les Protestants des abbayes dont ils s'étaient emparés, 13 October 1583; BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 11, no. 4713: François,



holy relics of the region was primarily accomplished in 100 days during the spring and summer of 1562.

Sixty kilometres upriver the relic landscape of Blois and the Blésois was if anything more thoroughly disrupted than Tours by religious war. Like Tours the Huguenots looted the major relic shrines of the region and many relics particularly in Blois itself were lost or destroyed. But the churches that housed important relic shrines in Blois were more seriously damaged. The destruction occurred in two waves, the first in the late spring and early summer of 1562 and the second during the winter of 1568.

Despite the frequent royal presence in Blois, a growing Huguenot congregation emerged in the city. By the early 1560s the congregation was actively seeking a public space of its own for worship, and in early October 1561 armed Huguenots seized Saint Solenne, the largest parish church in Blois, for their services only to be forced by royal officials to return it to its Catholic congregation on 18 October.<sup>48</sup> News of the seizure of Orléans by the prince de Condé on 2 April 1562 sparked further violent confrontations between Huguenots and Catholics in Blois. These sectarian conflicts shifted decisively in favour of the Huguenots following the arrival of the sieur de Herbault and his troops. With Herbault's support the Huguenots seized arms held at the town hall and surprised the garrison in the chateau by infiltrating into the structure through the Galerie des Cerfs, a passageway built by Louis XII to provide access to the chateau gardens.<sup>49</sup> Even after the fall of the chateau, Catholic residents with support from some soldiers continued to resist from their stronghold in the church of Saint Solenne (after 1697 the cathedral of Saint Louis) that occupied a strategic site in the upper town overlooking neighbourhoods below. Bloody combat ensued with armed Catholic opposition only collapsing when the Huguenots successfully brought an old iron cannon to bear on the doors of the church.<sup>50</sup>

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'duc de Touraine' [probably duc de Montpensier] to M. de Paulmy, bailli du Maine, 6 November 1585; no.4714: François, 'duc de Touraine' [probably duc de Montpensier] to M. de Paulmy, bailli du Maine, 8 December 1585.

<sup>48</sup> BAG, MS 313: Documents sur les protestants de Blois. See especially the instructions to Chemault dated 8 October 1561 and the summary of Chemault's letter to Charles IX dated 18 October 1561.

<sup>49</sup> Théodore de Bèze, *Histoire ecclésiastique des églises réformées au royaume de France* (Paris, 1884), vol. 2, pp. 676-77.

<sup>50</sup> Bèze, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 677.

No systematic looting of relic shrines accompanied the seizure of Blois. According to the Protestant historian Théodore de Bèze, Saint Solenne was sacked following its seizure and the images and altars of the town were also singled out for destruction, but an order was given that Catholics and their property were to be protected.<sup>51</sup> Evidence indicates that the Huguenots largely adhered to this order. Aside from Saint Solenne there is no evidence of relic losses or of the looting of church treasuries.<sup>52</sup> Damage to relic shrines in the countryside around Blois was also limited to a few sites during the first religious war.<sup>53</sup>

Why the Huguenots showed such restraint in Blois is unclear. Concerted Catholic resistance to their initial takeover may have made Huguenot leaders wary of inciting further opposition by destroying popular relic shrines. Moreover, the Huguenots may have possessed only tenuous control over the city whose population remained mostly Catholic. To the west of Blois lay Amboise, which was firmly under royal control, and to the northeast Talcay where Catholic troops were massing, making Blois a Huguenot outpost. What is clear is that with the exception of Saint Solenne the relic landscape of the region remained largely intact when Catholic forces regained control of the town on 4 July.<sup>54</sup>

Blois would not be so fortunate when war again broke out in late 1567. By January 1568 Condé had amassed considerable forces around Orléans with the intention of campaigning in the region around Paris. To secure his communications with the Huguenot heartland in southwest France, he dispatched a column of mostly Gascon and Provençal soldiers

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<sup>51</sup> Bèze, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 677.

<sup>52</sup> Most relics were destroyed in 1568 rather than 1562: see Jean Bernier, *Histoire de Blois* (Paris, 1682), pp. 32-59; Noël Mars, *Histoire du royal monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois de l'ordre de Saint-Benoist* (Blois, 1869), pp. 243-44.

<sup>53</sup> One major exception was the Benedictine abbey of Pontlevoy located about 25 kilometres southwest of Blois. Admiral Gaspard II de Coligny's troops sacked the monastery and looted most of its relics and treasure in early 1563. See BAG, MS 49, p. 57; François Chazal, *Histoire manuscrite de l'abbaye de Pont-Levoy*, 1728; BnF, MS Latin 12681, ff. 237v-38; Nazaire Chantreau, *Mémoires de l'abbaye de Notre Dame de Pontlevoy*, 1702. The Poor Clares nunnery of Notre Dame de la Guiche, located eight kilometres to the northwest of Blois, also suffered some damage: see Marie-Thésèse Notter, 'Les religieuses de la Guiche: dots et dons aux XVIème et XVIIème siècles,' *Vallée de la Cisse: Bulletin de la section culturelle du syndicat d'initiatives de la vallée de la Cisse* 14 (1998), 25-26.

<sup>54</sup> The relic shrines also survived the brutal sacking of the town by Guise's Catholic forces in June 1562: see De Thou, *Histoire*, vol. 4, p. 220.

under the command of Boucard to seize towns along the Loire. Boucard captured Beaugency and then on 7 February 1568 laid siege to Blois with around 5,000 foot soldiers, 400 mounted troops, two large cannons and two culverines.<sup>55</sup> While Blois's garrison of 800 resisted the Huguenot assault, the defenses were in a poor state and Huguenot troops quickly opened two breaches in the town walls. François du Plessis, seigneur de Richelieu, who commanded the garrison, negotiated terms of surrender with Boucard on 12 February 1568. The agreement stipulated that the gates of Blois would be opened in return for assurances that the town would not be pillaged, the lives of the garrison would be spared, and Richelieu's troops would be allowed to leave with their arms and baggage.<sup>56</sup> However, despite Boucard's assurances the town was sacked by his troops who ignored the agreement worked out by their leader. Blois remained under Huguenot control for over a month until royal officers resumed their functions following the re-establishment of peace on 23 March 1568.<sup>57</sup>

Damage to the sacred landscape was extensive. Churches were not just pillaged but were also destroyed. Nearly every church was burnt, with many being left as little more than shells.<sup>58</sup> In the coming weeks attacks on the physical structure of churches continued. In particular, the Huguenots expended considerable effort in a failed attempt to topple a bell tower and collapse the walls of the abbey church of Saint Lomer, but it is unclear whether their efforts were motivated primarily by religious or military considerations because the solid Romanesque façade of the church was an integral part of the town's defenses.<sup>59</sup> On 19 March, just days before the city returned to royal control, a representative sent by Condé to oversee the town ordered upon his arrival a stop to any further efforts to destroy ecclesiastical buildings.<sup>60</sup> As we will see, the physical

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<sup>55</sup> De Thou, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 410.

<sup>56</sup> De Thou, vol. 5, p. 410; BAG, MS 398, p. 2: Documents sur la prise de Blois par les huguenots en 1568: extraits du premier registre des deliberations municipales de cette ville.

<sup>57</sup> BAG, MS 398, p. 2: Documents sur la prise de Blois.

<sup>58</sup> Bernier, *Histoire de Blois*, pp. 32-60.

<sup>59</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 242. However, it is possible that religious motivations drove the Huguenots because at other sites in the region Protestants sought to collapse churches that had no military significance: see Andrew Spicer, '(Re)building the Sacred Landscape: Orléans, 1560-1610,' *French History* 21 (2007), 247-68.

<sup>60</sup> BAG, MS 398, p. 35: Documents sur la prise de Blois.

damage to churches took decades to repair and their systematic destruction in Blois sets the experience of this town apart from that of Tours.

The looting of church treasure and furnishings was similarly thorough. With a few exceptions the contents of church treasuries were plundered.<sup>61</sup> Substantial loss of relics accompanied the looting of precious items. The Huguenots destroyed the most revered relic at the Augustinian foundation of Bourgmoyen, a thorn from the Crown of Thorns held at the Sainte Chapelle that had been given to the abbey by Saint Louis in 1269.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the richest relic collection in the city was that of the Benedictine abbey of Saint Lomer. Many relics were lost during the looting of this monastery. A portion were burnt, while others were dumped into the monastery's latrines.<sup>63</sup> Some monks were able to save individual relics but not their reliquaries. Dom Bauldry preserved the relics of two important saints for his abbey, the arm of the abbey's patron Saint Lomer and the skull of Saint Marie Ægyptienne, while the handkerchief of Saint Margaret, which had long been the subject of popular devotion by pregnant women, was also saved.<sup>64</sup>

In a letter to the prince de Condé pleading the town's inability to pay a special tax, the council noted that the countryside to a distance of more than six leagues had been pillaged during the siege and occupation.<sup>65</sup> Other evidence from the region supports this assertion. On the edge of the Blésois to the southwest of Blois, Protestant troops occupied the Benedictine abbey of Pontlevoy for three months burning the church and leaving the monastery uninhabitable.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, evidence from rural

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<sup>61</sup> A silver pyx in the shape of a pyramid was saved at the parish church of Saint Antoine des Bois (today Saint Saturnin). See BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 188: 'Au Faubourg du Vienne-lez-Blois' in 'Matériaux pour une histoire du Blésois et du Vendômois, rassemblés par monsieur Bégon'.

<sup>62</sup> Bernier, *Histoire de Blois*, p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> For reference to the burning of the relics, see BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 311: 'Suite de l'histoire et d'établissement des religieux de Saint Laumer' in 'Matériaux... Bégon'. For the throwing of some relics in the latrines, see Mars, *Histoire*, p. 242.

<sup>64</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 243 and 421; ADLC, 11.H.7, f. 3v: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 1 June 1605.

<sup>65</sup> BAG, MS 398, p. 17: Documents sur la prise de Blois.

<sup>66</sup> BnF, MS Latin 12681, f. 237v: Chantreau, Mémoires; BAG Blois, MS 49, p. 59: Chazal, Histoire; BnF, MS Français 5679, f. 129: 'Abregé de l'histoire de l'abbaye de Nôtre Dame de Pontlevoy' in 'Matériaux... Bégon'.

parish churches of the region reveals significant damage with churches and their archives burnt, bells taken and images broken.<sup>67</sup>

The most prominent relic shrines in the countryside were housed in parish churches. While damage to these sites was widespread, the relics held in them fared better than those in Blois or Tours. A closer look at the two particularly well-documented parishes along the Loire, La Chaussée-Saint-Victor about four kilometres upstream and Chaumont about eighteen kilometres downstream from Blois, provides some insight into the survival of relics in rural parishes. Both parishes possessed significant relic shrines that attracted local devotions. La Chaussée-Saint-Victor housed a number of relics including those of Saint Ursin, bishop of Bourges, and of Saint Victor, their hermit patron over whose grave the church was built. These relics were displayed in a set of four painted wooden architectural reliquaries and a gilded copper reliquary in the shape of an arm.<sup>68</sup> Saint Victor was the subject of considerable devotion and his relics played a significant role in the ritual life of the region. Each year the parish processed with his relics to the chapel of Notre Dame des Aydes in the parish church of Saint Saturnin in a suburb of Blois, attracting spectators and participants from the area.<sup>69</sup>

By the early sixteenth century, the parish of Chaumont had accumulated an impressive collection of relics including a vial of the Virgin Mary's milk, a piece of the True Cross, relics of the parish patron Saint Nicolas and those of Saint Sylvain, Saint Victor and the Holy Innocents amongst others. The piece of the True Cross was displayed in a

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<sup>67</sup> For instance, the parish churches of Saint Gervais and Saint Victor were burnt: see BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 288: Matériaux... Bégon; BnF, MS Français 5679, f. 346: Matériaux... Bégon. Chaumont lost its bells, suffered damage to its windows and clock, and may have been damaged by fire: see ADLC, G 1246: parish churchwarden account books, 1569 and 1572. Images were destroyed in the parishes of Mesland and Monteaux: see BnF, MS Français 5678, ff. 292 and 320: Matériaux... Bégon. The archives of Tours parish were burnt: see BnF, MS Français 5678, ff. 293-94: Matériaux... Bégon. The bell tower and church archives were burnt at Mulsans: see BnF, MS Français 5679, f. 331: Matériaux... Bégon.

<sup>68</sup> Louis Belton, 'Recherches sur les reliques de Saint Victor, le tombeau de Saint Victor, l'ermitage de Nôtre-Dame des Roches, etc.,' *Mémoires de la société des sciences et lettres de Loir-et-Cher* 9 (1875), 304-7. See also ADLC, G 1250: Procès verbal de la visite de l'église paroissiale et de la chapelle de La Chaussée par Jean-François de Boissy, archidiacre de Blois, 1675.

<sup>69</sup> For a description of the procession, see Remi Porcher, 'Fragments d'un journal Blésois du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle,' *Revue de Loir-et-Cher* 14 (1901), col. 107.

silver-plated cross, while the relics of the Virgin, Saint Nicolas, and the Holy Innocents were all housed in images of gilded silver.<sup>70</sup> These relics attracted a steady stream of pilgrims and the devotion of locals, as is reflected in the regular donations made to these relics from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries.<sup>71</sup>

Evidence indicates that both churches were damaged by the Huguenots in February 1568. A seventeenth-century report on La Chaussée-Saint-Victor notes that the church was burnt along with its archive during the religious wars.<sup>72</sup> At Chaumont the church account books for the period between 1569 and 1572 note significant extraordinary expenditures to whitewash the church and repair its windows, replace the cemetery cross, repair the clock on the bell tower and forge a completely new bell.<sup>73</sup> These expenditures, along with reports of Protestant attacks on the parish churches of Mesland and Monteaux just across the river from Chaumont, make it probable that its church of Saint Nicolas was visited by Huguenot forces.<sup>74</sup>

Despite the damage, neither lost its relics or reliquaries.<sup>75</sup> In both cases they were removed from the churches and hidden. At La Chaussée-Saint-Victor an explanatory note placed in the reliquary of Saint Ursin recorded that on 29 June 1582 Jacques Delaporte, 'official of Blois', returned to the church the relics that had been removed because of the troubles.<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately this document does not reveal exactly when the relics were removed or where they were kept. At Chaumont an entry in the 1569 account book indicates that the relics were taken to Blois for safe keeping when it records payment 'For the trips of the said procurers and

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<sup>70</sup> ADLC, G 1246-1247: parish churchwarden account books for Chaumont, 1467-1688. See especially the inventories at the end of the 1569 and 1592 accounts.

<sup>71</sup> ADLC, G 1245-1247: parish churchwarden account books for Chaumont, 1476-1688.

<sup>72</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 288: Matériaux... Bégon.

<sup>73</sup> ADLC, G 1246: parish churchwarden account books for Chaumont. See especially the 1569 and 1572 account books. While the parish regularly repaired its windows and clock, the amounts spent – 32 livres 10 sols on the windows and 39 livres 15 sols on the clock – are unusually large, implying significant damage.

<sup>74</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678, ff. 292 and 320: Matériaux... Bégon.

<sup>75</sup> For Chaumont, see the inventory made in 1569 of the relics and liturgical ornaments controlled by the churchwardens: ADLC, G 1246: parish churchwarden account books for Chaumont. For La Chaussée-Saint-Victor, see Belton, 'Recherches,' 301-40.

<sup>76</sup> Belton, 'Recherches,' 309.

church wardens who would have went expressly to Blois to commit the silver image that holds the relics of the Holy Innocents and Chaumont's large silver chalice.<sup>77</sup> Within months the relics had returned to the parish as recorded in an inventory of sacred and liturgical items controlled by the churchwardens at the conclusion of the 1569 account book.<sup>78</sup>

Scattered evidence from elsewhere indicates that parishes in the region regularly moved or hid valuable items when Protestant forces approached. For instance, the account book of the parish of Cangey just a few kilometres downstream from Chaumont records a disbursement in 1568 to those who took down the church's images in preparation for the expected arrival of the Huguenots.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, a *quittance* from the archives of Mer parish dated 21 April 1562 records the arrival of Mer's churchwardens in the village of Avaray with the liturgical items from their church, following the seizure by the Huguenots of their substantial *bourg* located about twenty kilometres upstream from Blois.<sup>80</sup>

Less well-documented cases elsewhere in the region offer evidence that relics were successfully preserved in other rural parishes. For instance, the parish church of Saint Gervais located just a few kilometres south of Blois was burnt to the ground by the Huguenots in February 1568. However, the relics of Saint Gervais, Saint Prothaire, Saint Christopher, Saint Ceriol and a piece of the True Cross survived the attack and continued to attract considerable individual pilgrimage traffic in the seventeenth century because of their healing properties, and large processions from the surrounding countryside during times of drought.<sup>81</sup> How the relics were saved from the Huguenots is unclear, but their survival fits the pattern of Chaumont and La Chaussée-Saint-Victor.<sup>82</sup> Physical remains at other churches hint again at the survival of important

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<sup>77</sup> ADLC, G 1246: parish churchwarden account book for Chaumont, 1569.

<sup>78</sup> ADLC, G 1246: parish churchwarden account book for Chaumont, 1569.

<sup>79</sup> ADIL, G 723: parish churchwarden account book for Cangey, 1568.

<sup>80</sup> ADLC, G 1685: Quittance et décharge des meubles et ornements de l'église, donné aux anciens marguilliers par les habitants de la paroisse, 1562.

<sup>81</sup> BnF, MS Français 5679, ff. 346-8: Matériaux... Bégon.

<sup>82</sup> We know even less about the neighbouring parish of Huisseau, although it is clear that the relics of Saint Mye, which attracted considerable pilgrimage traffic for their healing powers, survived as well: see ADLC, 3.H.101: Sentence de l'official de l'archidiacre de Blois, 1596. The nearby parish of Saint Pierre in Ouchamps was looted and burnt: see BnF, MS Français 5679, f. 300: Matériaux... Bégon.

relics in the landscape. We know little of what happened in 1568 to the parish church of Saint Bohaire located about ten kilometres northeast of Blois, but the church houses to this day a late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century reliquary holding the relics of its bishop patron who attracted processions at times of drought.<sup>83</sup> This is not to say that these rural shrines remained unchanged. Heavy damage to the churches that housed them would have significantly changed these sites. Moreover, stained glass windows, statues and other ornaments that were less easily moved or hidden were frequently damaged or destroyed.<sup>84</sup>

After 1568 Protestant troops never again seized control of the Blésois. Nonetheless, they left behind a damaged landscape. They had pillaged relic shrines throughout the region and, unlike Tours, had also burnt most of the churches that housed them. While travelling in the region in 1577, the Venetian Ambassador Hieronimo Lippomano described Blois as a ‘large and pretty town... but ravaged as well.... The destruction [is] more apparent here than elsewhere, because the town being built on a ridge, all the churches are in sight and it embraces a single illusion of their ruin.’<sup>85</sup> Within Blois itself its major relic shrines were looted and some relics lost. Many churches in the countryside were similarly in ruins, but in rural areas relics were more likely to survive.

Unlike the royal towns of Tours and Blois, Vendôme was the seat of one of the most prominent Catholic leaders of the first religious war: Antoine de Bourbon, King of Navarre and duc de Vendôme. At the opening of hostilities in 1562 Navarre joined forces with François, duc de Guise, and Jacques d’Albon, maréchal de Saint André, to form the Triumvirate that waged war against the Huguenots led by Navarre’s brother Louis de Bourbon, prince de Condé. In November of the same year Navarre died of wounds sustained at the siege of Rouen while fighting for the Catholic cause. However, in the years before the war Navarre had shown considerable sympathy towards Protestant teachings and had flirted with open conversion to the new faith, a step that his wife, Jeanne d’Albret,

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<sup>83</sup> Jules Laurand, ‘Notice archéologique sur l’église de Saint Bohaire,’ *Mémoires de la société archéologique de l’Orléanais* 1 (1851), 371-72.

<sup>84</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678: f. 427: Matériaux... Bégon.

<sup>85</sup> Alain Guerrier, ‘Le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: une capitale pour le royaume de France,’ in *Histoire de Blois et de sa région*, edited by Yves Denis (Toulouse, 1988), p. 103.



Queen of Navarre, took in 1560.<sup>86</sup> This engagement with Protestantism was reflected in Navarre's family seat at Vendôme where from 1559 he had allowed a Huguenot congregation to openly worship in a temple at the foot of his chateau.<sup>87</sup>

At the start of Condé's uprising in early April 1562 sectarian tensions were present in the town but the Catholic authorities remained in control. This situation changed dramatically in the weeks following the arrival in late April or early May of Jeanne d'Albret, Navarre's wife and a committed Protestant.<sup>88</sup> Having withdrawn from the royal court in late March, she had first joined her brother-in-law, the prince de Condé, at Meaux and then moved on to the relative safety of the fortified chateau at Vendôme. By mid-May several hundred Huguenot troops had joined Jeanne in the chateau.<sup>89</sup> On the nineteenth of the month armed Huguenots overturned the altars, broke images and defiled tombs in the collegiate church of Saint Georges, the traditional burial place of the *comtes* and *ducs* of Vendôme located within the walls of the chateau.<sup>90</sup> It is unclear what role Jeanne played in this event. She may not have ordered the sacking, but she did retain enough control to have removed to her residence much of the church's considerable treasure, including reliquaries holding the remains of Saint Georges, Saint Opportune and Saint Sebastian.<sup>91</sup> As at Saint Martin in Tours, a detailed inventory of the treasure was drawn up before all, except for a few liturgical items retained

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<sup>86</sup> Vincent Pitts, *Henri IV of France: his Age and Reign* (Baltimore, 2009), pp. 9-23.

<sup>87</sup> BAG, MS 54, pp. 59-60: Canon du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... l'église collégiale de Saint Georges de Vendôme*.

<sup>88</sup> Achille de Rochambeau (ed.), *Lettres d'Antoine de Bourbon et de Jehanne d'Albret* (Paris, 1877), p. 251.

<sup>89</sup> According to Du Bellay the force was comprised of several hundred Gascon and Swiss Protestants: BAG, MS 54, p. 68: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vendôme*. The Spanish ambassador indicates that the force was made up of 400 mounted troops: Louis de Condé, *Mémoires de Condé ou recueil pour servir à l'histoire de France* (London [The Hague?], 1743), vol. 2, p. 42: Chantonnay to Philip II, 23 May 1562.

<sup>90</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 68: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vendôme*.

<sup>91</sup> Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret et la spoliation de l'église Saint-Georges de Vendôme le 19 mai 1562: inventaire des bijoux et reliquaires spoliés par Jeanne d'Albret à la collégiale,' *BSASLV* 20 (1881), 297-328, and 21 (1882), 28-46 and 59-60.

by the canons, were melted down and the metal most likely forwarded to Condé.<sup>92</sup> Jeanne ordered the relics collected during the melting of the treasure to be thrown in the Loir River at the foot of the chateau, although a pious Catholic's chance meeting with the soldier detailed with the task led to their purchase and survival. The Huguenots did not burn the church, perhaps because its bell tower was used to call the Huguenot congregation to worship at their temple.<sup>93</sup>

Observers in Paris report that Huguenot forces also pillaged other churches in Vendôme on the same day. The usually well-informed Parisian memoirist Nicolas Brûlart, canon of Notre Dame and *maître des requêtes* in the Paris Parlement, noted that on 21 May news came from Antoine de Bourbon that 'all the churches had been pillaged [in Vendôme], including the Chateau church in which the king of Navarre's ancestors, uncles and father were interred, of which they have, in disdain of him, destroyed, broke and overturned the monuments.'<sup>94</sup> Similarly, Pierre de Paschal, the humanist and royal historiographer, reported: 'The Huguenots burnt all the other images, relics and other things in the churches of the aforementioned Vendôme.'<sup>95</sup> In his 23 May dispatch Thomas Perrenot de Chantonnay, the Spanish ambassador in France, informed his sovereign that Huguenot forces 'had destroyed the churches, and the Monastery [Trinité abbey] that holds the Sainte-Larme, and hunted the Clerics and Monks' before pillaging everything.<sup>96</sup> None of these sources were eyewitnesses to the events, nor do their accounts offer much in the way of detail; but they are plausible given the pattern of destruction elsewhere.

While pillaging likely extended beyond Saint Georges, evidence indicates that despite Chantonnay's assertions to the contrary the

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<sup>92</sup> Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret,' *BSASLV* 20 (1881), 315-20. For the survival of a few liturgical items, see Michel Simon, *Histoire de Vendôme et ses environs* (Vendôme, 1834), vol. 1, p. 384.

<sup>93</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 68: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vendôme*.

<sup>94</sup> *Mémoires de Condé*, vol. 1, p. 86.

<sup>95</sup> Pierre de Paschal, *Journal de ce qui s'est passé en France durant l'année 1562: principalement dans Paris et à la Cour par Pierre de Paschal* (Paris, 1950), p. 61.

<sup>96</sup> *Mémoires de Condé*, vol. 2, p. 42: Chantonnay to Philip II, 23 May 1562.

Several historians have asserted that Jeanne prohibited the sacking of Trinité abbey out of deference to her brother in law Charles I, Cardinal de Bourbon, but no contemporary source confirms this.

Huguenots may have spared Trinité abbey, the Benedictine monastery that housed the most important relic shrine in the Vendômois. A mid-seventeenth century traveller who visited the abbey was told that it was the only church in Vendôme spared during the wars, and the physical survival of stained glass, church furniture, relics and tombs in the abbey provides evidence that this may have been the case.<sup>97</sup> Whether or not the abbey was sacked, it is certain that the Sainte Larme with its reliquary survived.<sup>98</sup> Several contemporary accounts credit a monk or secular priest with smuggling the most revered relic in the Vendômois out of the city.<sup>99</sup> Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon and abbot of Trinité, deposited it with the nuns of Chelles abbey near Paris. A few months later it was taken by Renée de Bourbon, his sister and abbess of Chelles, to the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in the capital when her community fled to Paris because of the deteriorating security situation.<sup>100</sup>

Jeanne d'Albret resided in Vendôme for less than two months before departing for her hereditary lands in the southwest. Following the re-establishment of peace in 1563, Jeanne as duchesse de Vendôme retained a Protestant garrison in the chateau and named the Huguenot Jacques Levasseur, seigneur de Cogners, governor.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>97</sup> Elie Brackenhoffer, *Voyage en France 1643-1644* (Nancy, 1925), pp. 189-92. In his account, Brackenhoffer also notes the survival of a number of relics and tombs. For the survival of the choir stalls, see Claude Doudeau, 'Pour une lecture de quelques miséricordes de stalles de la Trinité de Vendôme,' *Mémoires de la société des sciences et lettres de Loir et Cher* 60 (2005), 3-20. The stained glass survives today in the church.

<sup>98</sup> Fernand Bournon, 'Documents relatifs au pèlerinage de la Sainte Larme de Vendôme,' *BSASLV* 24 (1885), 131; Charles Métais, 'Manuscrits vendômois de la Bibliothèque Phillipps à Cheltenham,' *BSASLV* 31 (1892), 152-55; Paschal, *Journal*, p. 56; Claude Hatton, *Mémoires de Claude Hatton* (Paris, 1857), vol. 1, p. 278; Achille de Rochambeau, *Voyage à la Sainte-Larme de Vendôme* (Vendôme, 1874); Charles Métais, *Les processions de la Sainte-Larme à Vendôme* (Vendôme, 1886); M. Isnard, 'Les miracles de la Sainte-Larme et le bailli de Vendôme,' *BSASLV* 19 (1880), 96-165; *Histoire véritable de la Sainte Larme* (Vendôme, 1669).

<sup>99</sup> Paschal, *Journal*, p. 56; Hatton, *Mémoires*, vol. 1, p. 278; Claude de Saintes, *Discours sur le saccagement des églises catholiques par les herétiques ancien et nouveau calvinistes en l'an 1562* (Paris, 1563), f. 71.

<sup>100</sup> *Histoire véritable de la Sainte Larme*, p. 44; Jacques Bouillart, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint Germain des Prez* (Paris, 1724), p. 192.

<sup>101</sup> *Mémoires de Condé*, vol. 5, p. 310.

Vendôme remained predominantly Catholic and its inhabitants were increasingly able to assert their independence after the death of Jeanne in 1572 and the captivity at court from the same year of her now nominally Catholic son Henri de Navarre. When the Protestant garrison withdrew from the chateau in 1575, Vendôme fell firmly into the hands of local Catholics and their allies among the nobility in the region.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, the town became so secure that in 1574 Louis de la Chambre, abbot of Trinité, returned the Sainte Larme to the town, and in 1581 the abbey and town council forced the closing of the Huguenot temple.<sup>103</sup> The growing influence of Catholics in the region was further reflected in the appointment of seigneur Jacques de Maillé-Bénéhart, a partisan Catholic, as governor of Vendôme in 1584.

In late April 1589 Vendôme, under the leadership of Maillé-Bénéhart, made a clear break with their lord, Henri de Navarre, when it declared for the Catholic League. At the time, Navarre could do little about this act of defiance. However, in November of the same year Henri, now King of France, took the opportunity to summon Vendôme's town leaders to meet with him when he withdrew his army into the Vendômois after abandoning his siege of Paris. When he received no response, he moved to besiege the town on 16 November. The residents along with a garrison of 400 soldiers resisted royal forces. After several days of intense bombardment and a failed assault, Henri's cannoneers opened a breach in the chateau wall and his troops successfully entered through the gap. The defense collapsed and Henri's troops proceeded to sack the town.<sup>104</sup>

Pamphlets published immediately after the event offer very different narratives concerning the fate of the sacred sites of Vendôme. A

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<sup>102</sup> François Jules de Pétigny, *Histoire archéologique du Vendômois* (Vendôme, 1849), pp. 351-52.

<sup>103</sup> For the return of the Sainte Larme, see Métais, 'Manuscrits vendômois,' 152-55; Bournon, 'Documents,' 131. For the closing of the temple, see Henri IV, *Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV*, edited by Jules Berger de Xivrey and Joseph Gaudet (Paris, 1843), vol. 1, p. 374.

<sup>104</sup> De Thou, *Histoire*, vol. 11, pp. 65-66; Alexandre de Salies, 'Document nouveau sur le sac de Vendôme en 1589,' *BSASLV* 11 (1872), 19-53; Alexia Noulín, 'Vendôme aux mains des Ligueurs: la victoire de Mayenne sur Vendôme en avril 1589,' *BSASLV* (2012), 27-33; Jean-Claude Pasquier, 'Présence de Henri de Bourbon en Vendômois: de la tradition à la réalité,' *BSASLV* (2012), 35-40; Jean-Claude Pasquier, 'Henri IV et le "sac" de Vendôme,' *BSASLV* (1991), 71-88; Jean-Pierre Babelon, 'Henri IV à Vendôme,' *BSASLV* (2003), 67-71.

royalist pamphlet asserts that Henri ‘carefully conserved the churches, by ensuring that no one entered them.’<sup>105</sup> However, a Leaguer pamphlet published about the same time in Paris claims that the first act of Henri’s pillaging troops was to ‘sack the Churches, where they would leave no reliquary, cross, chalices or ornaments that they did not pillage...’<sup>106</sup> These propaganda pieces reflect a situation in which Henri actively courted Catholic support in his kingdom while Leaguers sought to discredit him.

Other sources indicate that there is some truth in both accounts. The seventeenth-century historian of Saint Georges, the Canon du Bellay, recounts that Henri posted a guard to protect the collegiate church from pillaging.<sup>107</sup> This seems probable because both Henri’s father and mother were interred in this church. Indirect evidence indicates that Henri also protected Trinité abbey, most likely because its abbot and his cousin, Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon-Vendôme (nephew of Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon), was an alternative candidate to the throne of France whom Henri sought to treat with care.<sup>108</sup> Thus the two most prominent churches in the city were likely protected from Henri’s pillaging troops.

However, evidence also indicates that other churches in the town were pillaged. It is certain that Henri’s troops sacked the Franciscan house where the friar Robert Chessé, the spiritual leader of the League resistance in Vendôme, was guardian.<sup>109</sup> There is also evidence that they may have attacked the parish church of Saint Martin. An inscription dated 1597 in the roof of the church commemorates the replacement of the rafters and lead for the roof, indicating that it may have been set alight in 1589.<sup>110</sup> Roof repairs were part of a wider effort to renew the church in the late 1590s, which included the commissioning of a new gold communion chalice.<sup>111</sup> At the opening of the seventeenth century, Vendôme’s relic and image landscape had changed profoundly with the survival of the relic

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<sup>105</sup> *Mémoires de la Ligue*, edited by Simon Groulart and Claude-Pierre Goujet (Amsterdam, 1758), vol. 4, pp. 79-80.

<sup>106</sup> This pamphlet is reprinted in Salies, ‘Document nouveau,’ 24-29.

<sup>107</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 68: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vendôme*.

<sup>108</sup> Pitts, *Henri IV*, pp. 158-59.

<sup>109</sup> Pétigny, *Histoire... Vendômois*, p. 359.

<sup>110</sup> Achille de Rochambeau, *Le Vendômois: épigraphie et iconographie* (Paris, 1889), vol. 1, p. 90.

<sup>111</sup> ADLC, G 2301: Titres de propriété de fabrique de Saint Martin de Vendôme.

shrine of Trinité contrasting sharply with the devastation elsewhere in town and especially at the collegiate church of Saint Georges.

Compared to the regions around Tours and Blois, we know relatively little about the damage wrought to the sacred landscape in the Vendômois. We rely heavily on physical evidence from individual churches and general accounts that remain silent on specific sites. As elsewhere, the opening months of the first war in 1562 proved damaging to the landscape of the region. In his *Histoire universelle*, the prominent historian, diplomat and jurist, Jacques-Auguste De Thou, paints a picture of armed Catholics responding to the desecration of churches:

The populace, irritated against the Protestants, who had broken images, and pushed their barbarous actions to the point of violating the tombs of the comtes and ducs of Vendôme, developed a hatred so furious, that it caused them to treat [the Huguenots] as they would treat mad dogs. The Protestants for their part were so animated, and so full of fury, that the most wise among them were obliged to bring soldiers from Man [Le Mans], to restrain them.<sup>112</sup>

The violence and destruction seems to have been most intense along the Loir River downstream from Vendôme, where local Catholic nobles under the command of the poet Pierre Ronsard squared up against significant numbers of Protestants centred on the substantial bourg of Montoire, where the Huguenots maintained a strong presence throughout the wars of religion.<sup>113</sup> Evidence survives of significant pillaging of churches in the region, including the parish church of Saint Rima and both the collegiate church and priory at Troo.<sup>114</sup> These churches are likely just representative of a wider pattern of destruction in the contested river valley.

Bands of armed Protestants and Catholics made the Vendômois a dangerous place in the years which followed, although in the long run the Catholics gained the upper hand.<sup>115</sup> Both Protestant and Catholic troops manoeuvred through the region at several other points during the religious wars. The Protestant siege of Chartres in 1568 brought military operations

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<sup>112</sup> For Ronsard, see De Thou, *Histoire*, vol. 4, pp. 221-22. For Saint Oustrille, see Rochambeau, *Vendômois*, vol. 2, p. 12.

<sup>113</sup> Rochambeau, *Vendômois*, vol. 2, pp. 12 and 34.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 213, 242 and 246.

<sup>115</sup> See, for instance, *Mémoires de Condé*, vol. 5, p. 310.

to the borders of the Vendômois, while in 1576 Henri de Navarre based his army in Montoire during peace talks with the king. Perhaps most devastating was the struggle between Leaguer and royalist forces in the Vendômois from 1589. Aside from the destructive siege of Vendôme, the region also witnessed the taking and retaking on several occasions of Montoire and Lavardin by Leaguer and royalist forces.<sup>116</sup> Unfortunately, evidence concerning the fate of religious sites and their relics during this period is fragmentary and often indirect. However, as we will see, more documentation survives concerning the rebuilding of the landscape during the seventeenth century.

By the end of the wars in 1598 the relic landscape had suffered substantial if uneven damage. Shrines remained intact at a few sites in the region, including Trinité abbey in Vendôme and several churches in the immediate vicinity of Amboise. But most shrines had suffered physical damage and looted treasures. In Blois, and many parts of the countryside, churches that housed shrines were burnt, but this was not the case in Tours or at the collegiate church of Saint Georges (Vendôme) where the churches were damaged but remained physically intact.

As we have seen, the survival of relics varied from shrine to shrine. Several sites, including the Augustinians in Blois, the cathedral of Saint Gatien in Tours and the Benedictine Abbey of Saint Julien in Tours, permanently lost their most important relics. However, several rural parishes in the Blésois saved their relics by removing them from their churches before the Huguenots arrived. Many other sites, including Saint Lomer in Blois, Marmoutier outside Tours, and the parish of Notre Dame de la Riche, in Tours saved some relics from Huguenot looters, even as others were lost.<sup>117</sup>

On a number of occasions the Huguenots failed to destroy relics in their possession. At both Marmoutier outside of Tours and the collegiate parish church of Saint Venant within the city the Huguenots left

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<sup>116</sup> Rochambeau, *Vendômois*, vol. 2, p. 35.

<sup>117</sup> ADIL, G 17: Procès-verbal de visite des reliques de saint Gatien, déposées en l'église de Notre-Dame-la-Riche, par Henri de Rosset de Fleury, archevêque de Tours, 1757; Martin Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Le paradis délicieux de la Touraine* (Paris, 1661), bk. 3, p. 15. The Benedictine abbey of Pontlevoy also saved a particularly important reliquary: see, BnF, MS Latin 12681, f. 235: Chamereau, *Mémoires*.

some relics behind when they seized their reliquaries.<sup>118</sup> At the basilica of Saint Martin in Tours and the Minim house at Plessis they attempted to burn the relics but failed to completely destroy them, allowing for the restoration of relic veneration around surviving remnants. Finally, on several occasions Catholics were able to repurchase relics. This was the case at both Saint Georges in Vendôme and Saint Lomer in Blois.<sup>119</sup>

For those relics that had been removed from their reliquaries, and especially those that communities lost possession of for a period of time, ecclesiastical officials had to reconfirm the authenticity of the relics. At Saint Martin's basilica, which lay outside the bishop's authority, the canons themselves confirmed the relics saved by Canon Saugeron before enclosing them in their new reliquary. There seems to have been some suspicion about the authenticity of the relics because the canons reopened the reliquary in July 1564, reconfirmed the relics and then sponsored a public sermon asserting that the relics were genuine and explaining to the public the circumstances surrounding their recovery.<sup>120</sup> In some cases authorities imposed restrictions on their display. For example, in the 1620s, after the monks of Saint Lomer in Blois recovered relics that the Huguenots had dumped in a latrine in 1568, the bishop's officials ruled that the relics could be exposed for veneration – but only if they were displayed in the presence of a relic whose authenticity was not in question.<sup>121</sup>

Relics damaged by the Huguenots were still considered holy. Traditions of relic division ensured that the fragments recovered of both Saint Martin and Saint Francis of Paola were sufficient to sustain relic venerations. Consensus among theologians confirmed that these relics maintained the same presence as before their burning, a consensus reinforced at both sites by acclamations of continued miracles. Thus, despite the widespread destruction of the religious wars, most major relic veneration sites maintained their presence within the landscape. In the next chapter we will examine how these shrines evolved over the next two centuries.

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<sup>118</sup> BM Tours, MS 1294, p. 52: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>119</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 421; ADLC 11.H.7, f. 3v: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 1 June 1605.

<sup>120</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 387: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>121</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 259-60.



## 2 Rebuilding the relic landscape

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Reflecting on the damage to Saint Georges de Vendôme during the religious wars, the mid-seventeenth-century historian Canon Du Bellay lamented, ‘By this impiety, all that our poor church possessed that was precious through the generosity of Geoffroy Martel, and of Agnes of Poitiers by the piety of Jean VII [de Vendôme] and other benefactors and that had been given over five hundred years was pillaged in one day....’<sup>1</sup> A half-century later at the Benedictine abbey of Marmoutier, historian Dom Edmond Martène offered a similar account for his community when he wrote, ‘Thus these heretics destroyed in a moment the work of the saints of many centuries.’<sup>2</sup> Writing over a century after the events, Du Bellay and Martène’s reflections remind us of the lasting legacy that the religious wars had on the experience of relic veneration in the region.

This chapter examines those heavily damaged sites in the landscape where relics survived and veneration continued after the religious wars. It concerns itself with the rebuilding of relic shrines, renewal of relic treasuries and the long-term impact of iconoclasm on the experience of relic devotion sites. Many spaces had to be repaired for traditional practices to continue and alterations to these spaces changed the experience of relic veneration. Moreover, as Du Bellay and Martène remind us, relics were venerated in the context of ritual items that once destroyed could not be easily replaced. Relics were nearly always experienced in the context of their reliquaries, which through time became closely associated with the relic itself. On feast days and other important moments during the liturgical year the church’s patron relics in their reliquaries were typically displayed to the faithful surrounded by votive gifts along with special liturgical and ritual items that had been accumulated over centuries. Huguenot forces had, though, looted most of the church treasuries in the region and this loss of precious objects permanently altered the display of relics and how the faithful experienced them.

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<sup>1</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 68: Canon Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... l’église collegiale de Saint Georges de Vendôme*.

<sup>2</sup> Edmond Martène, *Histoire de l’abbaye de Marmoutier* (Tours, 1875), vol. 2, p. 376.

This chapter first concerns itself with the rebuilding and refurbishment of long-established but heavily damaged shrines. Sources allow for the detailed examination of three such sites in the region: Saint Martin's basilica in Tours, Marmoutier abbey outside of Tours and the monastery of Saint Lomer in Blois. They will provide the central focus for this chapter; however, wherever possible the experience of other sites will be considered, providing a sense of whether these foundations were typical of other shrines. In the final section of the chapter attention shifts to the relatively new tomb shrine of Saint Francis of Paola at the Minim house in Plessis-lès-Tours. Renewal at this site followed a different trajectory to its more established counterparts, reflecting the needs of its growing relic devotion.

As Du Bellay and Martène noted, it took centuries to accumulate the church fabric, reliquaries and treasure destroyed or looted by the Huguenots. These items were in large part the product of pious donations and purchases made by the religious communities charged with overseeing these shrines. They thus reflected the priorities of patrons and communities over centuries. Reconstruction of these shrines followed similar patterns to earlier developments, and the rate of renewal was shaped by a number of factors. Resources of the community and the donations of patrons played important roles in the rate and extent of renewal, as did the physical state of the church that housed the shrine and the discipline of the religious community charged with its oversight. Saint Martin's basilica and the Minim house in Plessis recovered relatively early compared to other sites in the region. The Benedictine abbey of Marmoutier outside of Tours also recovered quicker than most despite a collapse of discipline, while most foundations in Blois and the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme took decades longer, only rebuilding in earnest during the first half of the seventeenth century. The amount of time needed to recover varied; but, with the exception of the Minim house at Plessis, renewal followed similar patterns reflecting both the priorities of the community that oversaw the shrine and the interests of patrons who donated to these communities.

The primary relic shrines at Saint Martin, Marmoutier and Saint Lomer were located directly behind the high altar. Ritual and liturgical practices physically linked these two spaces, which together formed the holiest precinct in these sanctuaries. For centuries, on Sundays and feast days the

canons of Saint Martin had processed to Martin's tomb shrine before proceeding to the high altar for further celebrations.<sup>3</sup> At Saint Lomer and Marmoutier the monks celebrated the first Mass of each day at their main relic shrine altar, known as the matutinal altar, before holding services later in the day at the high altar.<sup>4</sup> These rituals linked the two most sacred places within the church, where these communities celebrated and honored their holy patrons and Christ's presence through the miracle of the Mass. Physical objects in the form of relics and the consecrated Host embodied the sanctity of these two sites. At Saint Martin's basilica, the canons ritually recognized, in their liturgy, the importance of these holy objects relative to each other when on Sundays during the Octave of the Saint Sacrament the canons did not process to the tomb of Saint Martin out of respect for the Holy Host.<sup>5</sup>

These shrines were purpose built for the display of relics surrounded by precious items. By some distance Saint Martin possessed the most elaborate shrine in the region before the outbreak of religious war. One of the oldest relic devotions in the kingdom, Martin's cult had long been closely associated with the monarchy and royal donations had made his shrine one of the richest in late medieval France. It was centred on his white marble tomb dating from the fifth century surmounted by four gilded copper columns supporting a cupola or cover. Resting on a silver tray in the cupola was the magnificent mid-fifteenth-century reliquary of Saint Martin, which had been created at Charles VII's behest. The canons displayed relics of the other major patrons of the church to either side of the tomb in their own richly decorated reliquaries.<sup>6</sup> A niche above the shrine held the head reliquary of Saint Martin made out of over 22.5 kilograms of silver enhanced with gold. Its necklace alone was garnished

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<sup>3</sup> BnF, MS Latin 16806, ff. 56-61v: Papiers de Lebrun sur la liturgie de Saint Martin de Tours; Jean-Baptiste Le Brun des Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques de France* (Paris, 1718), p. 126; Martin Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Le paradis délicieux de la Touraine* (Paris, 1661), bk. 2, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Noel Mars, *Histoire du royal monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois de l'ordre de Saint-Benoist* (Blois, 1869), p. 409; Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Paradis délicieux*, bk. 2, p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> Ioannis Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana ecclesia Turonensis* (Tours, 1667), p. 199.

with 42 precious stones.<sup>7</sup> To the side a silver votive statue of Louis XI kneeled in devotion, while nearby a collection of silver lamps, the largest weighing 75 kilograms, burnt night and day.<sup>8</sup>

Saint Lomer and Marmoutier possessed similar if less opulent relic displays centred on matutinal altars rather than a tomb. At Saint Lomer the monks displayed seven gilded silver reliquaries on a large obelisk perched on top of the matutinal altar. Towards the top were the reliquaries of Saint Demetre and Saint Viventien, both martyrs; in the middle was the reliquary of the community's patron Saint Lomer, embellished with several precious stones; underneath were four smaller reliquaries holding the skulls of Saint Marie Égyptienne, Saint Lubin, Saint Bohaire and Saint Calais.<sup>9</sup> At Marmoutier the display of relics behind the altar followed a similar pattern centred on its matutinal altar.<sup>10</sup> Writing in the 1660s the Carmelite and local historian Martin Marteau de Saint-Gatien described the arrangement as:

Behind the high altar are 12 painted reliquaries, filled with the bodies of saints particularly Saint Leobard the recluse. To the right side of the aforementioned altar, in an armoire or niche, are the aforementioned Holy Ampoule, a piece of the True Cross, a finger of Saint John the Baptist, a rib of Saint Laurent, and relics of Saint Anne and of Saint Catherine virgin and martyr. To the left side is the body of Saint Corentin... whose head is encased in silver as also is that of Saint Leobard....<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> ADIL, G 596: Inventaire du trésor de l'église de Saint-Martin, rédigé lors du pillage des Huguenots en 1562; Charles Loizeau de Grandmaison, *Procès-verbal du pillage par les Huguenots des reliques et bijoux de Saint Martin en mai et juin 1562* (Tours, 1863), p. xix.

<sup>8</sup> ADIL, G 596: Inventaire du trésor de l'église de Saint-Martin... en 1562; Grandmaison, *Procès-verbal du pillage par les Huguenots*, p. xv.

<sup>9</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 409.

<sup>10</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 375.

<sup>11</sup> Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Paradis délicieux*, bk. 2, p. 33.

At both Saint Lomer and Marmoutier the monks displayed their most important patrons in places of honour, surrounded by the other major patrons of the church arrayed in separate reliquaries.<sup>12</sup>

The display and ritual use of relics at all three of these shrines was typical of the region and of late medieval relic shrines more generally. The custom of placing relics in ornate reliquaries made of precious metals and decorated with gems, and the tradition of surrounding these reliquaries with similarly valuable candelabras, oil lamps and votive gifts, stretched back into the early Middle Ages. By the fifteenth century, the amount of treasure present at a relic shrine had come to be directly associated with the importance of the saint.<sup>13</sup> By this criteria, Saint Martin was one of the most important saints in the kingdom. An inventory drawn up by Protestants as they melted down the treasure of the basilica recorded around 135 kilograms of silver and 14 kilograms of gold recovered from the treasury, not including precious stones and other valuables.<sup>14</sup> Saint Martin was by some distance the richest shrine in the region, and no inventories survive recording the treasure lost to the Huguenots by the monks of Marmoutier or Saint Lomer. However, one does survive for the treasury of the collegiate church at Saint Georges in Vendôme. This shrine was probably more typical of other major relic sanctuaries in the region than that of Saint Martin. It records that Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, melted down around 45 kilograms of silver and 4.5 kilograms of gold from the church treasury.<sup>15</sup> While only a fraction of the treasure at Saint Martin, it still constituted a significant display of wealth.

The reliquaries and treasure played important roles in the ritual and liturgical life of the communities charged with keeping vigil at a shrine, and their display and use shaped the experience of relic veneration by the faithful. Communities had developed elaborate celebrations in

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<sup>12</sup> Relics were also displayed in other parts of these churches. For instance, the Martyr's Chapel at Saint Lomer was also used to display relics. However, these relics were known as the 'petites reliques', while those displayed behind the high altar were known as the 'grandes reliques'. See Mars, *Histoire*, p. 230.

<sup>13</sup> Henk van Os, *The Way to Heaven: Relic Veneration in the Middle Ages* (Amsterdam, 2000), p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> ADIL, G 365: Procès verbal des reliquaires joyaux etc. prise en l'église de Saint Martin par ordre du Prince de Condé, en 1562.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret et la spoliation de l'église Saint-Georges de Vendôme le 19 mai 1562: inventaire des bijoux et reliquaires spoliés par Jeanne d'Albret à la collégiale,' *BSASLV* 20 (1881), 297-328.

which reliquaries and treasure played important roles, adding splendor and providing a physical indication of the relative importance of an event during the liturgical year. Especially rich vestments, chalices and other liturgical items along with the quantity and size of candelabras or chandeliers physically advertised to observers the importance of a celebration.<sup>16</sup> Reliquaries played prominent roles in feast days and other important moments when they were physically processed and exposed to the faithful. Venerable reliquaries, often centuries old, became closely associated with the relics that they held.

As we have seen, during the 1560s the Huguenots purged these sanctuaries of many features critical to traditional relic veneration, destroying relic shrines and high altars, and looting nearly all the reliquaries, liturgical items and treasure in these churches. But on top of this, in the aftermath of the attacks the communities of Marmoutier and Saint Lomer melted down some of the items which they had managed to save. On 30 July 1565 the monks of Marmoutier abbey unanimously voted to sell all treasure not required for divine service and the decoration of altars in order to rebuild the church.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Saint Lomer melted down some of the silver from their processional cross to make liturgical vessels for their high altar, replacing other items like silver candelabras with painted wood alternatives.<sup>18</sup> Although the canons of Saint Martin at Tours possessed the resources to retain their few surviving pieces of treasure, the experience of Marmoutier and Saint Lomer was more common in the region. The canons of Saint Georges in Vendôme sold off a gold chalice spared by Jeanne d'Albret to cover the needs of the community, while in 1609 Philippe Hurault de Cheverny, abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Pontlevoy in the Blésois, ordered the melting of a gold covered cross, a gold book cover, two little angels, two old chalices, a gilded box and several other small items valued at 3,730 *livres* to support rebuilding efforts.<sup>19</sup> The liturgical and devotional activities surrounding

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<sup>16</sup> Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, p. 124.

<sup>17</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 379.

<sup>18</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 418-20; ADLC, 11.H.122, ff. 2v-3: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1677-1686.

<sup>19</sup> For Saint Georges, see BAG, MS 54, p. 72: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique...* Saint Georges de Vendôme; Michel Simon, *Histoire de Vendôme et ses environs* (Vendôme, 1834), vol. 1, p. 384. For Pontlevoy, see BAG, MS 49, p. 160: François Chazal, *Histoire manuscrite de l'abbaye de Pont-Levoy*, 1728; BnF, MS

relics continued at these sites, but damaged relic devotion spaces and the loss of treasure altered how the faithful experienced these relic shrines.

All three communities moved first to restore services at their high altars. In each case the physical re-establishment of the altar was accompanied by the replacement of items needed for the ritual life of the church. These liturgical concerns were paramount as they defined both the identity of these communities and the churches as functional spaces. At Saint Martin's basilica the canons maintained their discipline and were able to draw on their substantial resources to recover relatively quickly.<sup>20</sup> By 1564 the canons completed repairs to the gates that separated the choir from the rest of the church and in the same year the canons dispatched several of their number to Paris to purchase replacement silver liturgical vessels.<sup>21</sup> By 1567 they had acquired eight copper pillars surmounted by angels to serve at the high altar.<sup>22</sup>

The naming of the active reformer Jean de La Rochefoucauld as abbot in 1563 spurred recovery at Marmoutier for the two decades of his tenure. During this period he reconstructed the high altar. He also purchased four copper columns and secured the royal chapel linens at the death of Charles IX for use at the altar. Many of La Rochefoucauld's donations remained in service into the eighteenth century, and collectively reveal a concern with renewing the liturgical life centred on the high altar.<sup>23</sup>

The church of Saint Lomer suffered greater damage than either Saint Martin or Marmoutier. Moreover, it lacked reforming leadership under Charlotte de Beaune, dame de Noirmoutier, who became abbot of the monastery in the aftermath of its sacking.<sup>24</sup> The nave roof that was burnt in 1568 was only repaired in the opening decade of the seventeenth century, while the facade and several chapels remained part of Blois's

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Latin 12681, f. 124v: Nazaire Chantreau, *Mémoires de l'abbaye de Nôtre Dame de Pontlevoy*, 1702.

<sup>20</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, pp. 392-97: Raoul Monsnier and Michel Vincent, *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini ecclesiae historia*.

<sup>21</sup> For the high altar, see ADIL, G 593, p. 592: Inventaire général des anciens fonds, revenus et droits de la fabrique de Saint-Martin et des 13 chapelles et semi-prébendes, 1744. For the silver liturgical vessels see BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 387: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>22</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 593: Inventaire général... Saint Martin.

<sup>23</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, pp. 379 and 391.

<sup>24</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 247.

defensive works until the 1640s.<sup>25</sup> For a considerable period the monks held divine services in the vestry.<sup>26</sup> It is unclear when they reestablished the high altar. The earliest reference to a new high altar was made in a 1607 account of the ceremony through which abbot Guillaume Fouquet de la Varenne took possession of the abbey.<sup>27</sup> In 1613, choir stalls were installed near the high altar, indicating that the choir was still in the process of renewal even if the high altar was in use by 1607.<sup>28</sup> While Saint Lomer recovered more slowly than its counterparts, the high altar was an early priority for the monks as they renewed their church.

Saint Martin, Marmoutier and Saint Lomer also all rebuilt their main relic shrines in the same position behind the high altar. The replication of the same basic layout likely reflects both long-standing custom and the liturgical needs of these communities. Relic shrines served functional roles in the ritual life of the church. Moving the shrine would require modifying ceremonies that were often centuries old. By the mid-seventeenth century, these shrines once again anchored relic devotion in these churches.

It took time to fully renew the fabric of these shrines. On 5 July 1564 the canons of Saint Martin placed the surviving relics of the church in a single reliquary within a new wooden cupola over the site of the now destroyed tomb of Saint Martin. This arrangement replicated the layout of the previous shrine, allowing for ceremonies associated with the relics and the gravesite to continue.<sup>29</sup> As we have seen, the space played an important role in the liturgical life of the canons and wider community. For centuries the canons had processed on high feast days and Sundays to the gravesite before proceeding to the high altar.<sup>30</sup> The shrine was also the focus of celebrations that tied the basilica into the wider landscape of the region. For instance, on 12 May, the day of the Subvention of Saint Martin, the Benedictine monks from Marmoutier processed to the basilica to pray before the tomb, in recognition of Saint Martin's role in protecting

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 251 and 270-72.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>27</sup> ADLC, 11.H.121, f. 27v: Procès-verbal de prise de possession de l'abbaye par Guillaume Fouquet, abbé de Saint Lomer, 1607.

<sup>28</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 252.

<sup>29</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 387: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>30</sup> Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, p. 126. See also, Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Paradis délicieux*, bk. 2, p. 13; BnF, MS Latin 16806, ff. 56-61v: Papiers de Lebrun sur la liturgie de Saint Martin de Tours.



Tours from the Norsemen in 903, before celebrating Tierce and then Mass with the canons of Saint Martin in the choir.<sup>31</sup> Beyond the liturgical and ritual uses, the reconstruction of the relic display also reestablished a space where pilgrims could come into the direct presence of Saint Martin.

However, the reconstructed shrine lacked its central focus, the tomb of Saint Martin.<sup>32</sup> The canons began its reconstruction in 1579, completing the work in 1583.<sup>33</sup> The rebuilt tomb shrine took the same basic form as its pre-1562 predecessor. At its base was a marble tomb surmounted by four copper columns that held aloft a cover in which a single reliquary holding the relics of Saint Martin and the other surviving saints of the basilica was displayed. Two aspects of the shrine differed from its predecessor. First, the tomb was constructed of black marble contrasting with the white marble of the original. Second, the new shrine lacked the opulence of its predecessor, with the late medieval display of reliquaries to either side of the tomb replaced by a simple altar.

The canons may have chosen black marble because it contrasted with the piece of pure white marble from the original that they inset into the new tomb. Donated by Saint Eufron in the fifth century, the original marble was remarkable for its purity and after centuries of close proximity to Martin was considered a relic in and of itself, with chips from the tomb used to consecrate altars. Since at least the twelfth century, on Sundays and feast days the priest-celebrant had kissed the tomb as part of a procession that concluded with Mass at the high altar.<sup>34</sup> The shard of marble from the old tomb allowed for this tradition to continue. Dom Thierry Ruinart, who visited the basilica in 1699, noted that on high feast days the canons began Mass at the altar in Saint Martin's shrine where confession was said and, after the words 'We pray to Thee, O Lord, by the merits of thy saints, whose relics we have here,' the celebrant kissed the piece of white marble before proceeding to the high altar to complete

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<sup>31</sup> Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, pp. 131-32. The tomb was integrated into other ceremonies as well: see Marettes, *Voyage liturgiques*, pp. 120-35.

<sup>32</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 396: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>33</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, pp. 399-400: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*; ADIL, G 593, p. 595: Inventaire général... Saint Martin.

<sup>34</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 344: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*; Nicolas Gervaise, *La vie de Saint Martin* (Tours, 1699), p. 35. See also, Casimir Chevalier, 'Le tombeau de Saint Martin à Tours,' *BSAT* 5 (1880-1882), 23-24 and 43-46.

Mass.<sup>35</sup> The canons further reinforced the ongoing physical presence of the old tomb in the liturgical life of the basilica when they consecrated another substantial fragment of its marble and placed it on the high altar creating a permanent physical link between these two sites that reflected the ritual links on feast days and Sundays.<sup>36</sup>

In terms of the lost opulence, the new shrine replaced the display of other relics around those of Saint Martin with a simple altar perched above and behind the tomb. No permanent altar had existed in the shrine before. Its installation both met demand from pilgrims for votive masses said in the presence of the tomb and facilitated the celebrations at the tomb on high feast days and Sundays.<sup>37</sup> No effort was made to replicate the opulence or grandeur of the past. Instead the altar was notable for its marked simplicity. As one early eighteenth century visitor described it, 'Above the tomb there is Saint Martin's altar accessed by mounting a twelve step staircase with copper railings. This small altar is very simple, without images, not unlike Saint Martin's tomb, only a facing before and above the altar, a cross on the altar, two candelabra to either side and nothing below: all of this is of a great regularity.'<sup>38</sup>

Despite the loss of nearly all their patron's relics, by the 1580s the devotion to Saint Martin centred on the tomb shrine behind the high altar of the basilica continued to function much as before the events of 1562. The few surviving relics of Saint Martin were placed in the same physical position within a structurally similar shrine centred on his rebuilt tomb. There was no effort to disguise or downplay the damage suffered by the shrine or the loss of their patron's relics. Indeed a plaque, which hung on a pillar near his tomb, described the shrine before the attack: 'The names of the bodies of the saints, which were buried here, Saint Martin, Saint Brice, Saint Epain, Saint Perpetuus, Saint Gregory of Tours, Saint Eustoche, Saint Eufron. In their midst was the body and tomb of the most

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<sup>35</sup> Thierry Ruinart (ed.), *Sancti Georgii Florentii Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis opera omnia* (Paris, 1699), col. 1391.

<sup>36</sup> ADIL, G 17: Procès-verbal de Jacques Dufrementel, chanoine de Saint-Martin, vicaire général et official du diocèse de Tours, commis par l'archevêque pour procéder à la vérification et translation des reliques des saints, conservées en l'église de Saint Martin et dans la coupole de l'autel principal, qui doit être dérangé par suite des réparations de l'église, 1789. Gervaise, *Vie de Saint Martin*, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Ruinart, *Sancti Gregorii*, col. 1391.

<sup>38</sup> Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, pp. 122-23.

holy Martin, whose venerable relics exist in this reliquary.<sup>39</sup> Further Latin verses engraved on the tomb chronicled the destruction and rebuilding of the shrine and, as we will see in Chapter 4, celebrated the cremation of his remains as martyrdom.<sup>40</sup>

The canons situated the new shrine in the same space as its predecessor and created the same physical structure as its focus in the form of a tomb surmounted by a cupola displaying his relics. However, they did refashion the space to better suit the requirements of the canons. The shrine had possessed no permanent altar in the past. Replacing lost relics and reliquaries with an altar prominently positioned above the tomb shrine made the space more useful for the liturgical life of the church and served the devotional needs of pilgrims. Thus, the canons took the opportunity created by the destruction to refashion the ritual space to better suit their needs.

Far less is known about the process of reconstruction at the shrines at Saint Lomer and Marmoutier, but like Saint Martin both communities ultimately rebuilt their shrines in their traditional spaces behind the high altar. In 1619, the capitulary acts of Saint Lomer offer the first reference to the renewed shrine in an admonishment ordering the sacristan to lock up the church treasure more carefully. The reference confirms that at that date the monks regularly displayed their relics behind the high altar.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, at Marmoutier a description of the choir refurbishment in the 1620s and Marteau's detailed description of the relic shrine in the 1660s indicate that the monks had reconstructed their relic shrine behind the high altar with a few alterations to accommodate a new set of marble columns installed in the choir.<sup>42</sup> An inscription marking the place where the armoire holding the Holy Ampoule stood before the refurbishment provides an indication that the monks were reluctant to disturb the placement of relics in the shrine.<sup>43</sup> The replication of pre-religious war positioning of these shrines facilitated the continuation of

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<sup>39</sup> Ruinart, *Sancti Gregorii*, col. 1391.

<sup>40</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 381: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>41</sup> ADLC, 11.H.9: ff. 81v-82: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 20 October 1619.

<sup>42</sup> Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Paradis délicieux*, bk. 2, p. 33; *Rerum memorabilium liber*, p. 96, as reproduced by Casimir Chevalier in the appendix of Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 593.

<sup>43</sup> *Rerum memorabilium liber*, p. 96, as reproduced by Casimir Chevalier in the appendix of Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 593.

traditional liturgical and ritual celebrations in these churches that anchored relic veneration in the site and community.

Looting during the religious wars left most relic and image shrines stripped of their treasures that had taken centuries to accumulate primarily through votive donations. Many of the items destroyed were centuries old, and through ritual use and long association had become integral to the experience of relic veneration.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps more than any other facet, the loss of reliquaries, treasure and liturgical items had the most lasting impact on the experience of relic veneration in these shrines.

The display of relics followed similar patterns at the three shrines, with the long-term trend towards more elaborate shrines modelled on pre-religious war traditions. But these displays never achieved the size or grandeur of their predecessors. The time frame for recovery varied by site but in every case was slow in comparison to repairs made to the physical fabric of the shrine and high altar. What items were replaced, and when, was dependent on the resources of each community and the generosity of donors. The sequence of purchases and donations provides insight into the liturgical needs of the community and the role of donors in relic veneration.

All three sites lost nearly all of their reliquaries during the religious wars, and faced similar challenges in displaying their relics in the immediate aftermath. In the summer of 1563, the canons of Saint Martin placed in a single reliquary their patron's surviving primary and secondary relics, the remaining fragments of Saint Brice and Saint Gregory, a tooth of Saint Catherine and some other unidentified shards of bone.<sup>45</sup> This new reliquary contrasted sharply with the display of seven large reliquaries at Saint Martin's shrine before the religious wars. The concentration of surviving relics in a single reliquary offered a very different aesthetic experience, but one that was functionally similar, serving the immediate liturgical needs of the community by allowing for the display of the relics and the participation of the patrons in ceremonies. Saint Martin was not unique in the region. At the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme nearly all the relics that survived the religious wars were kept together in a sack within an armoire near the high altar of the church into the eighteenth century.<sup>46</sup> We know far less about how the surviving relics

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<sup>44</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 409-11.

<sup>45</sup> ADIL, G 593, pp. 575-76: Inventaire général... Saint Martin.

<sup>46</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 69: Du Bellay, Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vendôme.

at Saint Lomer or Marmoutier were enclosed and displayed in the immediate aftermath of the wars. They would have had to have been enclosed in a sealed container once their authenticity was confirmed by episcopal officials. These most likely took the form of painted or gilded wooden boxes like the twelve displayed in the relic shrine at Marmoutier in the 1660s.<sup>47</sup>

We know more about the display of relics during the seventeenth century, as all three sites acquired new reliquaries, mostly through pious bequests. There is evidence that communities viewed reliquaries as a priority to be funded from their own resources. For instance on 1 January 1605 the monks of Saint Lomer agreed to give one of their brethren, Dom Jehan Daleur, an annual pension for overseeing devotions associated with the relic of the True Cross and the handkerchief of Saint Margaret, so that in the future the donations given to these two relics could be used to repair the cross reliquary and for other needs of the church.<sup>48</sup>

However, communities acquired most reliquaries through gifts, which speaks to how the faithful continued to sustain and shape the relic landscape. In the past these gifts had frequently come from powerful patrons, but at both Saint Lomer and Marmoutier members of the monastic community paid for new reliquaries. Between the mid-1620s and the mid-1640s, Dom Louis Chevrier donated to Saint Lomer two head reliquaries to hold the relics of Saint Marie Égyptienne and Saint Lubin, along with two small image reliquaries of silver and ebony to hold the relics of Saint Antoine and Saint Fiacre.<sup>49</sup> Similarly at Marmoutier, Dom Bertrand Viette, the prior of the Sept-Dormants Chapel, commissioned at his own expense new reliquaries for Saint Corentin in 1646, Saint Leobard in 1649 and Saint Clair in 1654.<sup>50</sup> In each case Viette replaced a wooden reliquary box with a silver reliquary. Solemn ceremonies attended by both reformed and unreformed members of the community and the public accompanied the translations. Viette's reliquaries were part of a larger renewal initiative from the mid-1640s in which the sacristan and prior of Marmoutier

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<sup>47</sup> Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Paradis délicieux*, bk. 2, p. 33.

<sup>48</sup> ADLC, 11.H.7, f. 3v: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 1 January 1605.

<sup>49</sup> ADLC, 11.H.3, ff. 5v and 7: Livre des choses memorables qui se sont passes dans le monastère Saint Lomer.

<sup>50</sup> *Rerum memorabilium liber*, pp. 89, 104 and 109 as reproduced by Casimir Chevalier in the appendix of Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, pp. 590, 594 and 597. Dom Bertrand Viette was an unreformed monk at Marmoutier who sympathized with his reformed brethren.

renounced benefices in order to refurbish the Virgin and Repos de Saint Martin chapels in the church.<sup>51</sup>

At Saint Martin the relics of the church remained undisturbed in their single reliquary until the 1630s when the canons commissioned a new head reliquary costing 1,890 *livres*. Upon completion the remaining pieces of Saint Martin's skull were placed in this reliquary. Surviving documents are silent on who funded this purchase; but, wherever the funding came from, this new reliquary undoubtedly evoked memories of the famous head reliquary displayed in the shrine before the religious wars.<sup>52</sup> It became the physical representation of Martin during feast days and other important ceremonies when it was displayed on the high altar of the basilica.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, at an uncertain date after 1637 the canons translated a bone from the arm of Saint Martin to a pyramid shaped column of gilded silver with angels at its base and a rock crystal globe at its top.<sup>54</sup>

The acquisition of new precious reliquaries only began in the 1620s at the three shrines and was for the most part the result of pious donations made by members of these communities. The reliquaries provided new and more impressive foci for relic devotions and may have been in part inspired by Catholic Reformation efforts to ensure that relics were displayed in suitable reliquaries. However, even the substantial reliquary head acquired by the canons of Saint Martin was a pale reflection of the earlier reliquary that it replaced. None of the institutions were able to purchase reliquaries of similar grandeur to those that were lost in 1562.

The acquisition of other precious items used in relic devotions followed a similar pattern to the replacement of reliquaries. Those purchased in the immediate aftermath of the religious wars reflected the liturgical needs of the community. As we have seen, replacement of items associated with services at the high altar was the highest priority of these communities, each of which replaced their liturgical vessels shortly after recovering their churches. Processional crosses, so central to the ritual life of communities, were also replaced quickly. At Saint Martin in Tours, for instance, one of the first items replaced was the community's processional

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<sup>51</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 508.

<sup>52</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 574: Inventaire général... Saint Martin.

<sup>53</sup> Gervaise, *Vie de Saint Martin*, p. 351.

<sup>54</sup> ADIL, G 17: Procès-verbal de Jacques Dufrementel, 1789.

cross.<sup>55</sup> Despite their disarray the Benedictine monks of Saint Lomer found the wherewithal to repurchase a cross used in important rituals after its seizure in 1568.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile Abbot Jean de La Rochefoucauld donated a processional cross to the monks of Marmoutier as part of his wider efforts to revive the monastery after its sacking in 1562.<sup>57</sup> Other items used to set apart high feast days and other important liturgical events like candelabras and special linens took longer to fully replace. In the short term wooden, tin or copper items were used, but through time communities acquired replacements made of more precious metals.

Surviving evidence indicates that these items were typically bought by the community from its own resources or given to the community by its abbot or dean.<sup>58</sup> However, the lay faithful also on occasion donated items that enhanced services. For example in 1651, the sister of the cellarer Thomas Le Roi gave to Marmoutier a number of items including liturgical garments in silver thread, a vermeil cantoral baton, a three branch silver chandelier to place before the Saint Sacrament on high feast days, and silver lamps for the relic altar behind the high altar and Saint Martin's chapel.<sup>59</sup> The faithful were more active in the renewal of treasure displayed at relic shrines. Over time votive gifts from the faithful, which included oil lamps and votive offerings made of precious metals, accumulated in these relic shrines.<sup>60</sup> These gifts remind us of how reliant relic shrines were on donations from the faithful for the treasure that surrounded the relics.

Saint Lomer is the only site where inventories survive allowing us to trace the accumulation of treasure over the course of the seventeenth century. The inventories paint a picture of a community slowly

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<sup>55</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 385: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

<sup>56</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 418.

<sup>57</sup> La Rochefoucauld donated the cross sometime between 1563 and 1583: see Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, pp. 391 and 587-88.

<sup>58</sup> ADIL, G 593, pp. 575-76: Inventaire général... Saint Martin; Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, pp. 379 and 391; ADLC, 11.H.122, ff. 3r-v: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1677-1686.

<sup>59</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 521.

<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, the votive gift of silver lamps to the Saint Martin shrine by Isabelle d'Escoubleau, wife of Martin Coëffier de Ruzé, marquis d'Effiat (and son of the former *surintendant des finances* Antoine, maréchal d'Effiat): BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 426: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

accumulating and upgrading its ritual items. Noel Mars reports that the monastery possessed a small number of silver items at mid-century:

- Six chalices
- A pyx
- A pyx 'soleil'
- A large cross for processions – but without precious stones and with some silver removed
- A thurible
- Two pairs of vases to hold the wine at communion, one set very respectable in cizelle.<sup>61</sup>

These items were augmented from the 1660s with a number of other silver items:

- 1664 a processional cross
- 1669 a new pyx
- by 1677 a plate
- by 1677 a cantoral baton of gilded silver
- by 1677 a communion cup
- by 1677 a lamp with chainlets
- by 1677 two chandeliers for the acolytes
- by 1677 two whale bone staffs with silver plaques
- by 1677 a vessel to hold holy oil
- c. 1677 a thurible
- 1678 a holy water font with aspergillum
- 1681 two flambeaux
- 1681 a pyx for Christmas
- 1681 two 'buvelles'
- 1681 a cross
- 1681 two small chandeliers.<sup>62</sup>

The source of funding for most of these items is unclear, but the community purchased with its own funds the holy water font and aspergillum, which cost 475 *livres*, and abbot de Mérielle donated the silver

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<sup>61</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 420.

<sup>62</sup> ADLC, 11.H.122, ff. 2v-3: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1677-1686.



cross and two silver chandeliers in 1681.<sup>63</sup> Saint Lomer's acquisition of new items stalled in the decade after 1685, but between 1650 and 1685 the monks of Saint Lomer acquired a number of ritual items that allowed them to celebrate important days in the liturgical calendar with greater grandeur, as they had in the past.<sup>64</sup> However, most of these items were only purchased over a century after the sacking of their monastery, reminding us of the long-term implications of the religious wars on the experience of relic veneration in their abbey.

Saint Lomer suffered greater physical damage than Saint Martin or Marmoutier and alienated more of its endowment than the other two institutions in the decades that followed its sacking in 1568. Saint Martin most successfully weathered the storm and had the greatest resources with which to fund its recovery. Unfortunately no inventories survive from Saint Martin, but we do know that the canons were purchasing important liturgical items in Paris in the 1560s and Marettes' detailed description of liturgical life in the basilica in the early eighteenth century records a full array of liturgical items for use in the elaborate ritual life of the church, including seven, five or three candelabras surrounding the high altar depending on the importance of the celebration.<sup>65</sup>

But while the canons replaced liturgical items central to the ritual life of the church many other items associated with the shrine were never replaced. Iconic votive items like the kneeling statue of Louis XI were lost forever, and no similar donations took their place. Moreover the array of precious reliquaries holding the relics of Saint Brice, Saint Gregory of Tours and the other patrons of the church that were once displayed to either side of Martin's tomb shrine were replaced by a largely unadorned altar.<sup>66</sup> The shrine lost forever the opulence that had defined it during the late Middle Ages. Thus, even at the basilica of Saint Martin, the

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<sup>63</sup> ADLC, 11.H.122, ff. 3r-v: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1677-1686. For the cost of the holy water font, see ADLC, 11.H.123, f. 4: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1696.

<sup>64</sup> ADLC, 11.H.122, f. 37: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1677-1686; ADLC, 11.H.121, f. 10v: Registre du depositaire de Saint Lomer avec inventaires de la vaisselle d'argent et des objets precieux conservees au tresor de l'abbaye.

<sup>65</sup> ADIL, G 593, pp. 592-93: Inventaire général... Saint Martin; Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, p. 124.

<sup>66</sup> Marettes, *Voyages liturgiques*, pp. 121-22.

eighteenth-century relic veneration experience was a pale reflection of its late medieval predecessor – at least in terms of treasure.

The resources and discipline of religious communities, along with the level of physical damage suffered by churches where sanctuaries were located, affected the timing of relic shrine renewal. By the 1580s both the canons of Saint Martin and the monks of Marmoutier had made substantial progress in rebuilding relic veneration sites in their churches. The monks of Saint Lomer took considerably longer, with sustained campaigns of repair only beginning in the seventeenth century. But despite variations in timing and resources, all three followed similar patterns of renewal. Restoring the high altar was an immediate focus in the aftermath of the attacks. Relic shrines were rebuilt in the same physical space behind the high altar and continued to fulfill their roles in the liturgical life of these communities. Nonetheless, the experience of relic veneration was affected in the long run by the loss of reliquaries and other precious items that were only replaced slowly, and it never reached the same levels of opulence that had been a feature of the shrines before the religious wars.

One exception to these patterns was Saint Francis of Paola's tomb shrine at the Minim mother house in Plessis-lès-Tours. The second most prominent relic devotion site in the Touraine by the 1560s, it was also one of its newest, only emerging following Francis's death in 1507.<sup>67</sup> A number of factors led to its growing importance. Royal patronage, efforts by the Minims to promote his cult and a devoted following for Saint Francis in parts of Italy where he was born all contributed to the growing number of pilgrims visiting his tomb. His reputation as a healer, protector of children and intercessionary for those seeking to conceive a child also brought numerous pilgrims to Plessis. The shrine continued to develop in the seventeenth century, ultimately surpassing in size and splendor its pre-religious war predecessor. This in part reflected the continued growth in pilgrimage traffic driven by the rapid expansion of the Minim order, ongoing patronage of powerful French and Italian patrons, strong local devotion to the saint, and the appeal of Francis's Christocentric asceticism among many seventeenth-century Catholics. While Francis was one of the last saints canonized before Trent, his role as founder of a religious order

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<sup>67</sup> For a recent summary of Saint Francis of Paola's life and canonization, see Ronald Finucane, *Contested Canonizations: the Last Medieval Saints 1482-1523* (Washington, DC, 2011), pp. 117-166.

and ascetic fit well the profile of those saints canonized in the century following the council, which may also explain the success of his cult.<sup>68</sup>

Before the religious wars, Saint Francis was interred in his tomb located in a small chapel and a number of his secondary relics were locked out of sight in the church sacristy.<sup>69</sup> In 1562 the Huguenots forced open his stone tomb without destroying it, removed his earthly remains and burnt them in a fireplace. But in the aftermath of the attack René Bedouët, a local farmer, recovered nine vertebrae, a scapula, another piece of shoulder and further fragments of bone and scraps of Francis's habit, which he returned to the Minims.<sup>70</sup> Secondary relics of the saint fared better than his physical remains. The Huguenots destroyed Francis's mantle and death shroud when they broke open the locked coffers in the sacristy.<sup>71</sup> However, a number of other relics survived, including the mat on which Francis regularly slept, the cord from his habit and two images of the saint painted by Pierre Bourdichon shortly after his death.<sup>72</sup>

In the aftermath of the attack, the Minims at Plessis undertook actions similar to those at Saint Martin, Marmoutier and Saint Lomer. They reinterred the few surviving remains of their founder in his tomb shrine and repaired damage to their choir and high altar.<sup>73</sup> In the 1580s, Saint Francis's relics were removed from his tomb and a portion was translated by Joseph Letellier, the twenty-fifth general of the Minim Order, to four other Minim houses.<sup>74</sup> A year later those relics that remained at Plessis were interred in a single reliquary donated by Jean de La Rochefoucauld, abbot of Marmoutier.<sup>75</sup> Francis's now empty tomb remained the focus of devotions and his relics were held in the treasury.

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<sup>68</sup> Peter Burke, 'How to be a Counter Reformation Saint,' in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe: 1500-1800*, edited by Caspar von Greyerz (London, 1984), pp. 45-55.

<sup>69</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 26 and 112: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>70</sup> For the role of René Bedouët, see ADIL, H 693, p. 68: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes. For the relics which survived, see ADIL, H 693, p. 68: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>71</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 71: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>72</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 81, 109: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>73</sup> *Acta sanctorum quotquot tot orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur* (Paris, 1866), vol. 10, p. 222; ADIL, H 693, pp. 4 and 107: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>74</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 76, 93-94: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>75</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 75-76: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

However, the Minims of Plessis abandoned this arrangement following a flood that damaged their church in 1628. In the aftermath they rebuilt their entire church, which was rededicated as Notre Dame de l'Annonciation. They extended the east end of their church and rebuilt the high altar and choir stalls, but these changes had little impact on the basic layout of the sanctuary.<sup>76</sup> The most important changes reflected efforts to accommodate the growing pilgrimage traffic to the shrine of Saint Francis of Paola.<sup>77</sup> At the time of his death in 1507, Saint Francis was interred in a chapel located between the nave and choir.<sup>78</sup> (See Figure 1 on next page.) While accessible to the faithful, the chapel was poorly suited to serve the needs of large numbers of pilgrims. The space was small, with room for only one person to pass between the altar and the tomb. Moreover, the chapel was walled off from the nave except for a small entryway, leaving little room for vigils in the direct presence of the tomb.<sup>79</sup>

The refurbishment created a much more functional space for pilgrimage devotion.<sup>80</sup> (See Figure 2 below, p. 64.) The Minims removed the walls of the two chapels abutting the choir, leaving Francis's tomb in an open space in the nave near the entry to a new purpose-built chapel for devotions to the saint. While the tomb no longer held Francis's body, it remained an important focus for his relic cult. It enjoyed the aura of having held the saint's remains, and the tomb itself was considered miraculous because of the ease with which workmen transported it to the church in 1507. The perceived holiness of the tomb was reflected in the careful preservation – as relics – of fragments and dust from the tomb created when the side that once abutted the wall in the old chapel was carved with decorations.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 29: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

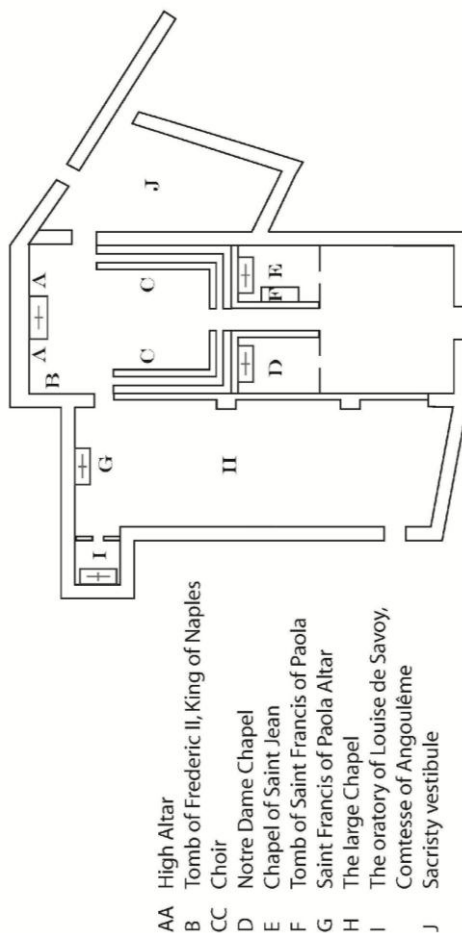
<sup>77</sup> ADIL, H 693, passim but especially pp. 28-30: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>78</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 27-28: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>79</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 9: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

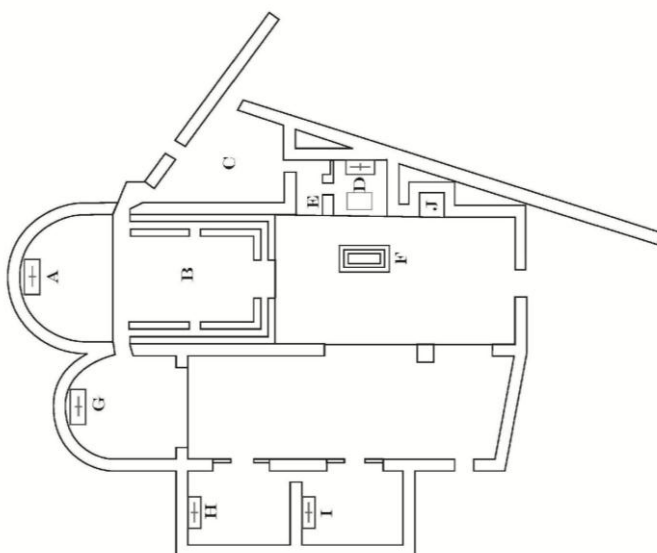
<sup>80</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 28-30: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>81</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 28 and 94-95: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.



*Figure 1: Layout of Saint Francis of Paola's tomb shrine in the church of Jesus and Mary at Plessis-lès-Tours before its refurbishment in the early 1630s.<sup>82</sup>*

<sup>82</sup> Adapted from an eighteenth-century drawing by Despagne: see ADIL, H 693, p. 26: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.



- A High Altar  
 B Choir  
 C Sacristy vestibule  
 D Tomb Chapel  
 E Relic Treasury (1631–1646)  
 F Tomb of Saint Francis of Paola  
 G Chapel of the Marriage of the Virgin Mary  
 H Chapel of Saint John the Baptist  
 I Chapel of Saint Francis of Paola  
 J Relic Treasury (after 1646)

*Figure 2: Layout of Saint Francis of Paola's tomb shrine in the church of Notre Dame de l'Annonciation at Plessis-lès-Tours after its refurbishment in the early 1630s.<sup>83</sup>*

<sup>83</sup> Adapted from an eighteenth-century drawing by Despagne: see ADIL, H 693, p. 28: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

The new chapel provided a second space for devotions with a consecrated altar for votive masses. Above the altar hung the revered painting of Saint Francis completed in the days following his death on planks that the saint was said to have slept and died upon.<sup>84</sup> The Minims also built a treasury with an iron grille that allowed for the regular display of Francis's relics for the first time. In 1631 it was situated in the nave between the tomb chapel and the vestibule of the sacristy; however, this position caused problems in the flow of pilgrims through the site, and in 1646 the Minims constructed a new treasury located along the same wall of the nave but further removed from the choir.<sup>85</sup> The treasury provided a new space for the veneration of Saint Francis's relics. As the century progressed the Minims continued to create veneration spaces in an effort to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims. For instance, Francis's cell in the lower court of the royal chateau at Plessis, in which he had lived for nine years following his arrival in France, became a site for pilgrims that, an eighteenth-century archivist noted, was 'able to divert people from the tomb of the saint.'<sup>86</sup>

Unlike other sites in the region, votive donations from the 1620s transformed this simple shrine with little treasure before the religious wars into one of the most opulent in the region. The Minims received gifts from prominent princely donors, wealthy local devotees and members of their order. By the 1770s some two dozen reliquaries were displayed in the treasury, only one of which predated the religious wars.<sup>87</sup> Several held Saint Francis's primary and secondary relics, while others held the remains of a number of saints given to the monastery. Among the most prominent donors were Henri de Bourbon, prince de Condé, and his wife Charlotte de Montmorency who donated three reliquaries in the 1620s.<sup>88</sup> However, most donations were made by less prominent figures with local connections. In 1627 Monsieur de Villandry donated a small reliquary figure of Saint Francis holding a chapel.<sup>89</sup> In the 1640s Jacques-David and

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<sup>84</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 109: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>85</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 112: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>86</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 5: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*. See also ADIL, H 684: *Permission accordée aux Minimes par l'archevêque Victor Le Bouthillier de bénir ladit chambre et d'y célébrer la messe, 1656*.

<sup>87</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 74-102: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>88</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 77-78 and 81: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>89</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 76 and 80-81: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

Madeleine Goubert donated the money to create a new reliquary for Saint Francis's mat.<sup>90</sup> Such donations continued into the later seventeenth century. In 1654, the Marquis Charles de La Vieuville, the king's *surintendant des finances*, donated 1,500 *livres* for an impressive silver bust reliquary of Saint Francis in votive thanks for the saint's role in securing his release from imprisonment at Amboise, while in 1683 Jean de Mourgues, apostolic missionary, gave a large silver image reliquary of the Virgin Mary.<sup>91</sup>

Some of the most impressive votive gifts celebrated Francis's protection of children. In 1608 Francesco Maria II della Rovere, duke of Urbino, Livia della Rovere, his wife, and the citizens of Urbino donated a large silver picture enclosed in an ebony frame in thanks for the birth of an heir to the principality. It depicted in bas relief Saint Francis of Paola watching over a child in a manger.<sup>92</sup> In thanks for his protection of their children, Henri, prince de Condé, and his wife Charlotte donated a large silver votive reliquary in 1626 weighing nearly 15 kilograms. It represented their two children, Louis de Bourbon, duc d'Enghien, and Françoise de Bourbon kneeling before a figure of Saint Francis.<sup>93</sup> Later in the century, Anne of Austria donated a painting of Louis XIV in thanks for his safe birth.<sup>94</sup>

The shrine also accumulated numerous other votive gifts from the faithful, including silver hearts and a number of impressive crosses made of precious materials including ebony, amber, silver and agate.<sup>95</sup> Some reflected personal private vows, like a small silver bas relief of Saint Francis blessing a suppliant given by Annibal Chrepius, a Mantuan noble, in thanks for Saint Francis's help.<sup>96</sup> Others celebrated the saint's contribution to the public good, like Louis XIII's gift of a silver pyx in which Cardinal Richelieu carried the Saint Sacrament into the town of La

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<sup>90</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 82: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>91</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 83: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>92</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 103: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes. For an account of the vow which led to this gift, see François Victor, *Vie admirable du glorieux père et thaumaturge Saint François de Paule, instituteur de l'ordre des Minimes, dit de IESUS-MARIA* (Paris, 1623), pp. 291-92.

<sup>93</sup> This reliquary was melted down in 1690: ADIL, H 693, pp. 77-78: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>94</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 10: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>95</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 102-5: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>96</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 103: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.



Rochelle following its fall to the royal army on 28 October 1628.<sup>97</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century the Minims had incorporated several dozen such gifts into their treasury. They were just one part of the votive experience at the shrine that included other less permanent offerings left by the faithful in the form of wax figures and other signs of thanks.

Francis's shrine developed very differently from those at Saint Martin, Marmoutier, or Saint Lomer. The Minims completely transformed its layout and gifts from the faithful created a treasury that far surpassed its pre-religious war counterpart. At one level there is nothing remarkable about the growing veneration to Saint Francis or the evolution of his burial site to meet the needs of pilgrims. The relic landscape was constantly evolving as devotions rose and declined in popularity. The cult of Saint Francis was one of the newest in the region and the rapid growth and spread of his reputation would likely have brought changes to his shrine at Plessis whether or not the Huguenots had sacked it. While a dramatic event at the time, in the long run the defiling of Saint Francis's grave and the burning of his body did nothing to suppress the growing devotion to the saint or to limit the attraction of pilgrims to his burial site. Nonetheless, the iconoclastic acts did shape the evolution and spread of his cult as the division of his relics occurred after the Huguenots cremated most of his remains. Unlike well-established shrines in the region, Saint Francis's evolved in significant ways, becoming a site more fully devoted to relic veneration.

Over the long term, relic veneration recovered in most shrines where at least fragments of patron relics survived, speaking to the stable nature of such established sites in the relic landscape. At the older well-established shrines at Saint Martin, Marmoutier and Saint Lomer, ritual traditions inspired communities to rebuild shrines in the same places that they occupied before the wars and liturgical need drove the acquisition of ritual items and reliquaries. While the pace of recovery varied, all of the communities had rebuilt altars and shrines within a half-century of their destruction. But many ritual items and reliquaries long associated with the veneration of specific saints could not be replaced, nor were the foundations able to acquire new items of similar grandeur. As the laments of Du Bellay and Martène at the opening of this chapter remind us, the precious items looted by the Huguenots had been accumulated over

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<sup>97</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 106: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

centuries mostly in the form of gifts from powerful benefactors. This donor landscape no longer existed in the seventeenth century as the regular royal presence in the region ended and the relic shrines reflected this shift. As in the past, rebuilding was shaped by the needs of communities and the interests of patrons.

Saint Francis of Paola's tomb shrine at the Minim house in Plessis was an important exception to these trends. The increasing popularity of this site resulted in the creation of a new relic shrine to better accommodate growing numbers of pilgrims. Moreover, the votive donations of both princes and less prominent figures meant that by the mid-seventeenth century this relic shrine possessed treasure that far outstripped what it possessed before the religious wars. The experience of the Minims reminds us that the relic landscape continued to evolve with new devotions emerging into the landscape in ways that in the long-run mitigated the impact of disruptions like the iconoclastic attacks of the Huguenots. The next chapter considers how relic translations also helped to renew and reinvent the landscape from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries.

### 3 Relic translations and the renewal of the landscape

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On the afternoon of 21 July 1641, Dom Samson Tassin ascended the pulpit at the Benedictine abbey of Saint Julien in Tours. The church was a bustle of activity as the faithful came to view the radius of Saint Martin, present for the first time in the city since Saint Odo had taken the relic to Cluny in the tenth century. That morning the monks had moved the relic from the high altar to the nave to better meet the needs of the faithful, whose desire to be in its presence had only increased when, the day before, a man's broken arm had been miraculously cured by holding a piece of cloth that had touched the relic's crystal encasing. In Tassin's audience were numerous local secular officials and clergy, including the monks of both Saint Julien and Marmoutier abbeys. They had gathered in preparation for ceremonies that would ultimately take the relic to its new permanent veneration site behind the high altar at Marmoutier, in the suburbs of Tours, where primary relics of Saint Martin had been displayed for centuries until April 1562 when the Huguenots had seized and destroyed them.<sup>1</sup>

Tassin chose for the subject of his sermon Psalm 111 verse 7: 'The Just shall be in everlasting remembrance', and drew the lesson for his audience that

despite the heretics' rage, who had burned the body of Saint Martin in order to destroy his memory, it will live and be honoured by all for eternity, God foreseeing the incredible malice of these unhappy ones chose Cluny to place in sufficient security the relics of the glorious Saint Martin so that they could return to the Touraine after so sad a spectacle.<sup>2</sup>

As Tassin reminds us, the relic landscape was resilient in the face of iconoclasm. Long-established practices of relic division – the splitting of a

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<sup>1</sup> M. E. Cartier, 'Lettre de dom Colombain Lefay,' *BSAT* 8 (1856), 15-21; Edmond Martène, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier* (Tours, 1875), vol. 2, pp. 486-91.

<sup>2</sup> Cartier, 'Lettre,' 21-22.

saint's remains – and translation – the movement of relics from one site to another – aided in this recovery. These traditions allowed for the replacement of relics lost in the wars and established the sacredness of even the smallest surviving fragments of relics recovered after iconoclastic acts. Moreover, as had occurred for centuries, the translation of new relics into the region and the emergence of new holy figures also enriched the relic landscape.

Current thought about relics among both churchmen and the laity influenced renewal after the religious wars. In the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the views of churchmen were increasingly defined by the decrees of Trent, which largely affirmed relic veneration under the oversight of church authorities. The translation of relics from the catacombs in Rome, relic gifts associated with the renewal of monastic foundations, and the reluctance of authorities to initiate beatification or canonization investigations for new holy figures reflected the priorities of the Church. But local lay people and the devotional needs of the faithful also played critical roles in the emergence, evolution or decline of relic devotions. This chapter surveys this rich tapestry of developments that contributed to the renewal of the region's relic landscape.

Religious war resulted in the replacement of some relics and facilitated the movement of others. The translation of Saint Martin's radius from Cluny to Marmoutier was the most dramatic example of relic replacement in the region. However, it was unique in that no other shrine replaced a venerated patron relic by securing another relic of the same patron from a different site. More commonly communities secured replacement relics of other saints for use in liturgical or ritual activities. Chief among the liturgical uses of replacement relics was the consecration of altars profaned by the Huguenots.<sup>3</sup> In terms of relics for ritual use, a number of

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<sup>3</sup> The parish of Vineuil just outside of Blois deposited a finger of Saint Thecle in their altar when it was dedicated in 1577 or 1578, most likely after repairs following Protestant looting in the region a decade earlier: see BnF, MS Français 5679, f. 352: Lettre du curé de Vineuil à Canon Bégon, in 'Matériaux pour une histoire du Blésois et du Vendômois, rassemblés par monsieur Bégon'. Similarly Simon de Maillé-Brézé, archbishop of Tours, reconsecrated the high altar of the cathedral of Saint Gatien with new relics: see ADIL, G 17: Consécration du grand autel de Saint-Gatien, dressé en l'honneur de la Vierge Marie, de saint Maurice et de ses compagnons, et renfermant des reliques des saints Arnulphe, Laurent, Gorgon, Nérée et Achillée, 1749.

religious communities actively sought pieces of the True Cross to enclose in new processional crosses made to replace those lost to the Huguenots. In the months following the destruction of the crosses at Saint Martin in Tours the canons worked through Cardinal Philibert Babou de la Bourdaisière, dean of Saint Martin and royal ambassador in Rome, to solicit a replacement piece of the True Cross from his mother Marie Gaudin, dame de la Bourdaisière.<sup>4</sup> At the Benedictine abbey of Marmoutier, Abbot Jean de La Rochefoucauld donated a large replacement silver cross containing a relic of the True Cross.<sup>5</sup> The Benedictine monks of Saint Lomer in Blois repurchased their cross reliquary holding a piece of the True Cross after its seizure in 1568.<sup>6</sup> While placing a relic of the True Cross in these ritual items was not liturgically necessary, long-standing traditions and the use of the processional crosses in important ceremonies inspired these communities to secure replacements.<sup>7</sup>

The disruption of the religious wars also facilitated relic translations to new sites in the landscape. Perhaps most notable were the translations of Saint Francis of Paola's relics to sites across Europe, which in turn shaped relic veneration at his tomb shrine in the Minim house at Plessis-lès-Tours. Following the Huguenot attack Francis's surviving remains were initially reinterred in his tomb, but soon they were removed and translated to sites across Europe.<sup>8</sup> In the early 1580s a portion were placed in a reliquary at Plessis while Joseph Letellier, the twenty-fifth general of the Minim Order, translated the remainder to four other Minim houses: Notre Dame de Toutes Graces at Nigeon (Chaillot) near Paris, Notre Dame de Lassés [de la Seds] on the edge of Aix-en-Provence,

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<sup>4</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 385; Raoul Monsnyer and Michel Vincent, *Celeberrima sancti Martini ecclesiae historia*.

<sup>5</sup> The date of this donation is uncertain but it occurred between 1563 and 1583: see Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 391. An inventory on page 29 of the now lost *Rerum memorabilium liber* indicates that the church's silver cross contained a piece of the True Cross: see Casimir Chevalier's appendix to Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 588.

<sup>6</sup> Noel Mars, *Histoire du royal monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois de l'ordre de Saint-Benoist* (Blois, 1869), p. 421. This reliquary also held a thorn from the Crown of Thorns and milk from the Virgin Mary.

<sup>7</sup> For an example of their use in important ceremonies, see ADLC, 11.H.121, ff. 26v-27: Procès-verbal de prise de possession de l'abbaye par Guillaume Fouquet, abbé de Saint Lomer, 1607.

<sup>8</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 68: Inventaire raisonné des titres du trésor des archives du couvent royal des Minimes du Plessis, c. 1771.

Nuestra Señora de la Victoria in Madrid and Saint Louis in Naples. Further translations followed. Pierre Hebert, the Minim provincial of France, gave a portion of the relics at Nigeon to the Minim church of the Annonciation in Paris, while another fragment from an unknown site, but most likely Nigeon, was transferred to the Minim house at Abbeville in Picardy.<sup>9</sup> These translations created a network of relic sites linking the Minim mother house at Plessis with prominent Minim monasteries across Europe. A final relic translation from Plessis occurred on 20 September 1620, when the Queen Mother Marie de Medici secured relics for a new silver head reliquary that she donated to the nearby parish church of Notre Dame de la Riche in Tours.<sup>10</sup> While these translations posed no significant theological or practical problems for relic veneration at Plessis, the prospect of further translations clearly caused some concern as is reflected in a bull secured from Pope Innocent X in 1647 prohibiting any further translations from the site.<sup>11</sup>

Saint Francis of Paola's relic cult evolved significantly in the aftermath of the Huguenot attack in 1562. While his now empty tomb remained the anchor for devotions at Plessis, within sixty years at least five of the remaining primary relics of the saint had been translated to other locations spurring relic veneration at new sites. By the later seventeenth century, ironically, the Huguenots were credited with spreading and strengthening devotions to Saint Francis. For instance, the lesson in the Petits Offices in his honour affirmed that after the attack 'some of the relics extracted were the cause of veneration in various places.'<sup>12</sup> The disturbance of Saint Francis's grave facilitated the physical spread of his relic cult.

These links in turn shaped devotions to Saint Francis at Plessis. In the 1620s the inhabitants of Naples named Francis a patron of their city crediting him with protecting their community from plague and other disasters. His promoters emphasized Francis's attachment to the region but also his physical presence in Naples. In his account of the celebrations surrounding his adoption as a patron, Giulio Cesare Capaccio noted:

And although his saintly body reposes in the town of Tours in France, Naples enjoys nevertheless several precious and sacred things of this Saint, like a bone

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<sup>9</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 76 and 93-94: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>10</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 76: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>11</sup> ADIL, H 1087: *Bulle de Innocent X*, 15 June 1647.

<sup>12</sup> François Giry, *La vie de Saint François de Paule* (Paris, 1699), p. 331.

from his spine, his robe or tunic of simple and thick grey cloth, that he wore against his bare chest in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi; his wool cord, his cloth mantle, by the touching of which the sick received helpful and miraculous effects.<sup>13</sup>

In 1629 the city of Naples highlighted that physical attachment by translating in an elaborate civic ceremony the relic of Saint Francis from the Minim monastery to the treasure chapel in Naples cathedral where the city displayed the relics of its other patrons.<sup>14</sup>

The Minim community at Plessis commemorated these developments in two objects: a large painting depicting Saint Francis of Paola protecting Naples and a relic of Saint Matthias.<sup>15</sup> The painting, which hung in the choir next to two others depicting important scenes in the saint's life, celebrated the strength and spread of devotions to Saint Francis after his death.<sup>16</sup> The relic of Saint Matthias was a gift from the Minim house of Saint Louis in thanks for the role of the Plessis community in securing a replacement relic of Saint Francis from Notre Dame de la Riche for the Naples monastery.<sup>17</sup> This exchange physically embodied the relationship between the two communities and held special meaning for the Minims of Plessis because the small chapel and hospice that served from 1488 as the Minims' first monastery at Plessis was dedicated to Saint Matthias.<sup>18</sup> The traditions of relic exchange created physical reminders within the church that housed his tomb shrine of the ongoing benevolence of Saint Francis and the growing devotion to the saint across Europe.

While the Minim authorities actively sanctioned the translations of Saint Francis's relics, the movement of others was the unintended consequence of disruption caused by attacks on shrines across Europe. The veneration of looted or stolen relics at new sites had a long history in the relic landscape and the disruption caused by religious war once again

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<sup>13</sup> [Giulio] Cesare Capaccio, *Les triomphes de Saint François de Paule, instituteur et fondateur de l'ordre des Minimes faits en la ville de Naples* (Paris, 1634), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., passim.

<sup>15</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 108: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid..

<sup>17</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 93: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>18</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 93 and 112: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

made displaced relics more common.<sup>19</sup> Protestants were an important source for stolen or looted relics. Sometimes they were instrumental in their recovery, as we have seen at Saint Georges in Vendôme where the church's relics were bought from a Protestant soldier. But Protestants were also the source of new relics looted from sites outside the region. An inquest by the Minims at Plessis concerning the provenance of a piece of the True Cross and a relic of Saint John the Baptist offers unusual insight into this sort of recovery. The relics held in a small cross reliquary were donated by the Minim friar Julien Alloyeau in 1680. To confirm Alloyeau's account of their provenance another Minim friar, Etienne Pigornet, tracked down in the Saintonge a jeweller named Cantillon who had purchased the reliquary from a Huguenot years earlier. Cantillon confirmed that the relics came from a large gold cross that he believed had been stolen by Huguenot, Dutch or English pirates. According to Cantillon, a Huguenot jeweller from La Rochelle brought it to Cantillon's shop in Angoulême, where Cantillon used a tool to force open a locked compartment. There he found Alloyeau's cross reliquary. As Cantillon recalled, an exchange ensued in which the Huguenot 'said brusquely a plague on these shameless ones! They gave me wood for gold, but Cantillon said give me the relics and I will give their weight in gold Louis, the Rochelais jeweller agreed .... Cantillon weighed it at five gold Louis, which he gave to the Huguenot jeweller.'<sup>20</sup>

Looted relics were also on occasion donated to churches following a Huguenot's conversion to the Catholic faith. This was the case in 1591 when Tanneguy du Chesneau, sieur de la Doussinière d'Ambrault and captain of the chateau at Bommiers in the Touraine, gave the Minim house in Bommiers relics still enclosed in their reliquaries that he had kept in a sack since acquiring them in 1562 during the looting of a town most likely in the border region between France and Savoy. The Minims retained the reliquary head of Saint Catherine at Bommiers, but transferred to their house at Plessis the other two reliquaries holding the relics of an impressive set of apostles and prominent saints gathered from sites across Germany and Switzerland between 1504 and 1509 by Cardinal Charles Perrault.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 75: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>21</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 87-91: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.



Looted relics could also come from Catholic sources. For instance, in 1637 André Heurst, surgeon to the king and *maréchal des logis de l'artillerie*, donated to the priory of Saint Cosme outside of Tours a reliquary holding the relics of saints Cosme and Damien. Heurst, who may have had a personal attachment to these two patron saints of surgeons, noted that he had secured them while on campaign from a looted church in the Milanese.<sup>22</sup> As in the past, disruptions caused by iconoclastic acts and war changed the relic landscape, resulting in the destruction of relics or their removal from their shrines and translation to other sites. These changes occurred within a relic landscape that continued to evolve through relic translations and the emergence of new relic veneration sites in the landscape.

As in the past, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries relic devotions regularly emerged, grew, declined and sometimes disappeared altogether from the landscape in a process shaped by local circumstance and the actions of the faithful and church authorities. Communities actively secured relics to strengthen local devotion to a specific saint, while patrons regularly donated relics to sites where no established devotion to the saint existed. Moreover, shrines of new holy figures emerged in the landscape attracting devotions. These developments shaped the post-religious war landscape by creating or fostering relic venerations and physically establishing or reinforcing relationships between relic veneration sites. Through time this evolution contributed to the renewal and strengthening of relic veneration in the region.

One common development involved communities securing relics of a saint who already enjoyed an established devotion within their sanctuary. This type of translation had played a significant role in shaping the landscape for centuries, resulting in the spread of saints' relics to increasing numbers of holy sites. While relics were not required for devotion, the desire for the physical presence of the saint drove these translations. In some cases communities used pre-existing relationships to secure relics, while others fostered new relationships. The arrival of relics provided a physical focus for an already established devotion and at the same time created or strengthened ties between sites that shared devotion to a specific saint. These relations were frequently remembered and

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<sup>22</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 576: Inventaire général des anciens fonds, revenus et droits de la fabrique de Saint-Martin et des 13 chapelles et semi-prébendes, 1744.

celebrated in the liturgical calendar on the day of translation and reflected broader patterns of gift giving and exchange between religious communities during the period.<sup>23</sup>

On several occasions parishioners solicited relics from monasteries that held rights in the parish. In 1624 the parish priest of Saint Bienheure in Vendôme, which was built on top of the grotto long associated with their patron, requested and was granted part of the saint's relics held by Trinité abbey in the same town. In their capitulary acts the monks of Trinité expressed their hope that the donation would help aid devotion to Bienheure, a desire undoubtedly strengthened by the monks' responsibility for the spiritual life of this parish where they had possessed the right to appoint the parish priest for over half a millennium.<sup>24</sup> The gift and public celebrations that accompanied its translation affirmed and reinforced the long-established relationship between these two communities and also altered the landscape by creating a material link between two sites with established devotions to Bienheure.

Similarly, in 1614 the parish priest of Saint Radégonde in the suburbs of Tours successfully solicited a relic of Saint Clair from the nearby Benedictine abbey of Marmoutier. In this case the parish priest expressed concern that none of his parishioners could tell him which Saint Clair they venerated in a chapel where pilgrims sought cures for eye disorders.<sup>25</sup> Through further research he confirmed that the Saint Clair in question was the disciple of Saint Martin whose relics were kept behind the high altar in Marmoutier. The monks who had long held rights over this parish agreed to give relics of Saint Clair to the church as a physical affirmation of the chapel dedication.<sup>26</sup> As in Vendôme, the gift of a relic created a material link between sites where Clair was venerated.

Several translations reinforced ties between relic shrines and communities where the same relics had been displayed in the past.<sup>27</sup> For

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<sup>23</sup> Natalie-Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 36-55 and 167-208.

<sup>24</sup> BnF, MS Français 19868, pp. 9-11: Actes capitulaires de Trinité Vendôme.

<sup>25</sup> For pilgrimage to the chapel, see Martin Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Le paradis délicieux de la Touraine* (Paris, 1661), bk. 2, p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, pp. 467-68 and 597.

<sup>27</sup> See also the translation of Saint Guingalois's relics to the priory at Château-du-Loir: BnF, MS Latin 12700, f. 327: Réforme de l'abbaye de la très Saint Trinité de Vendôme; Robert Charles, 'Saint Guingalois, ses reliques, son culte set son prieuré

instance, in May 1623 the monks at Marmoutier donated to Guillaume le Prestre de Lézonnet, bishop of Cornouaille, a relic of Saint Corentin, the first bishop of Cornouaille and principle patron of the diocese. Corentin's relics had rested in the cathedral at Quimper until 878 when the threat of Viking incursions resulted in their translation to a safer site.<sup>28</sup> A year later, the canons of the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme donated relics of Saint Opportune, first abbess of Almenêches, and her brother Saint Godegrand to the Norman nunnery of Almenêches from where Geoffroy III, comte de Vendôme, had seized their relics during the disorder of the opening decades of the twelfth century.<sup>29</sup>

It is unclear why communities sought long absent relics in the opening decades of the seventeenth century. The disruption to the relic landscape of the religious wars may have played a role in sparking interest in relics lost during earlier periods, or the translations may reflect renewed devotion to founder patrons. For the donors at Marmoutier and Saint Georges, these translations strengthened devotion to their saint. They could also bolster claims that a community possessed the authentic relics of a saint. This was the case at Marmoutier, which was one of three sites to claim that Saint Corentin's remains were deposited in their church. Lézonnet's solicitation and the physical display of relics from Marmoutier in the cathedral at Quimper advertised and legitimized their claim.<sup>30</sup> As with the translations of Saint Bienheure and Saint Clair, these gifts renewed and celebrated ties between sites that shared long-established devotions to the same saint.

An important sub-group of translations intended to strengthen devotions at specific sites occurred within religious orders. We have

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à Château-du-Loir,' *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine* 4 (1876), 281-82 and 5 (1877), 381-84.

<sup>28</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 472. The bishop of Saint Malo who was present at the ceremony took the opportunity to secure some relics of Corentin for his diocese as well. In 878 Corentin's relics were most likely taken to Saint Magloire in Paris from where some were translated to Corbeil and Saint-Corentin de Mantes. Sometime between 1094 and 1105 a portion of his relics was also translated to Marmoutier: see Guy-Marie Oury, 'La dévotion des anciens moines aux saintes reliques: Saint Corentin à Marmoutier,' *BSAT* 39 (1979), 102.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret et la spoliation de l'église Saint-Georges de Vendôme le 19 mai 1562: inventaire des bijoux et reliquaires spoliés par Jeanne d'Albret à la collégiale,' *BSASLV* 21 (1882), 29-30.

<sup>30</sup> For more on the dispute over where Saint Corentin's relics resided, see Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 1, pp. 199-200.

already seen Minim translations of Saint Francis of Paola's relics to other Minim sites. Similarly Benedictine communities engaged in the Saint Maur reform movement secured relics that celebrated the reformation of their communities and physically embodied their renewed devotion to their Benedictine heritage. Shortly after its reform in the 1620s, officials from the Saint Maur congregation gave the monks of Trinité abbey in Vendôme a reliquary in the shape of Saint Benoit holding relics of the saint drawn from the abbey at Fleury-sur-Loire. According to the eighteenth-century historian Michel Simon, the gift was intended to perpetuate the memory of the reform.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in 1645 the monks of Saint Lomer secured a relic of Saint Maur held at the church of Saint Lubin in Perigny, over which the abbey possessed nomination rights. The following year Dom Benoit Cocquelin purchased a silver reliquary to house it and the relic became both a material focus for a chapel in the church dedicated to Saint Maur and a physical symbol of the abbey's reformation and renewal.<sup>32</sup> In these instances relics served to physically embody an important development in the community's history in a manner not dissimilar to the role played by founder patrons for the early history of monasteries. Indeed on occasion the relics of founder patrons were used to embody renewal. At Marmoutier the translation of the radius of their founder Saint Martin from Cluny in 1641 served this purpose. According to the historian Martène, the return of the radius was intended 'to revive... the first spirit of Saint Martin' in this monastery that had embraced the Saint Maur reform in 1637.<sup>33</sup>

Some relic translations established for the first time links between sites with shared devotions. In 1642, Marie Le Camus, wife of the future royal *surintendant des finances* Michel Particelli d'Emery, secured from Jean François de Gondi, archbishop of Paris, relics of Saint Saturnin for the parish of Saint Saturnin in Tours.<sup>34</sup> While passing through Vendôme in 1651, the Benedictine monk Dom Jean Harel drew on traditions of amity and hospitality within his order to secure from the monks of Trinité relics of Saint Eutrope for the confraternity dedicated to Eutrope in the parish of

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<sup>31</sup> Michel Simon, *Histoire de Vendôme et ses environs* (Vendôme, 1834), vol. 1, pp. 379-80.

<sup>32</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 375. The chapel had been founded in 1615: see ADLC, 11.H.7, f. 23v: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 18 December 1615.

<sup>33</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 486.

<sup>34</sup> ADIL, G 1024, pp. 86-87: Inventaire des titres et papiers de l'église paroissiale de Saint-Saturnin de Tours.

Saint Gervais in Paris.<sup>35</sup> A decade later King Louis XIV, titular abbot and first canon of Saint Martin, secured from the basilica's canons a relic of their patron for Lucca cathedral, a church whose patron was also Saint Martin.<sup>36</sup> In these examples the actions of Le Camus, Harel and Louis established new ties between sites in the region and those further afield. All these examples of relic translations to sites with established devotions reflect traditions of relic exchange that through time brought relic veneration to increasing numbers of sites and at the same time established or strengthened relationships between relic sites in the landscape with shared reverence for a particular saint.

While most translations of this sort celebrated or reinforced relationships, on one occasion a relic translation physically manifested the end of an existing relationship. In 1607 the Jesuits secured permission from Pope Paul V to take possession of the priory of Moissac in Burgundy, a priory that the Benedictine abbey of Saint Lomer in Blois had controlled since 912.<sup>37</sup> The monks opposed the seizure and litigation extended into the 1620s.<sup>38</sup> Possession of the priory's relics and liturgical vessels provided one source of conflict.<sup>39</sup> While the Jesuits ultimately retained control over most of these items, in the early 1630s they returned the relics of Saint Lomer, the abbey's patron, to the monks in Blois.<sup>40</sup> The motivations for this translation are unclear but may have been an effort to mend relations between the two communities.<sup>41</sup> The translation of these relics from the priory at Moissac to Saint Lomer physically embodied the severed relationship between the two foundations.

Several of the most revered relics in the region, like the Sainte Larme at Trinité abbey in Vendôme or the thorn from the Crown of Thorns at Bourgmoyen in Blois, were originally gifts from important patrons around

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<sup>35</sup> BnF, MS Latin 12700, f. 331: Réforme... Trinité de Vendôme.

<sup>36</sup> Nicolas Gervaise, *La vie de Saint Martin* (Tours, 1699), pp. 351-53.

<sup>37</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 347-50.

<sup>38</sup> ADLC, 11.H.9, p. 140: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, June 1622.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid..

<sup>40</sup> ADLC, 11.H.125, f. 371: Inventaire de Saint Lomer.

<sup>41</sup> By 1628 the monks of Saint Lomer were sending novices to the Jesuit College in Billom to study: see ADLC, 11.H.11, p. 151: Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, April 1628.

which new devotions emerged.<sup>42</sup> This custom of donating relics to communities with no established veneration tradition associated with them continued during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries along the lines established in the Middle Ages; but was shaped by the growing supply of relics from the catacombs in Rome. The rediscovery of the catacombs in 1578 and the determination by the Church that the early Christians interred in these cemeteries were martyr saints spurred the translation of early Christian relics to sites across the Catholic world. The number of relics emanating from the catacombs grew over the course of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries.<sup>43</sup> For the papacy they provided an opportunity to align the Roman Catholic Church with the earliest Christian communities, strengthen the central position of Rome in the Catholic world, and promote pious devotion.<sup>44</sup>

As part of these wider processes, relics from Rome arrived in the region in considerable numbers. Powerful figures with personal attachments to specific institutions donated whole bodies of saints drawn from the catacombs. For instance, in 1659 François Pallu, bishop of Heliopolis, vicar apostolic in China and prebend canon of Saint Martin in Tours, gave to the basilica the body of Saint Victorine, which he had received from the pope.<sup>45</sup> A decade later Philippe de Vendôme, chevalier (and later Grand Prieur de France) of the Order of St John and great-grandson of Henri IV, donated the body of Saint Théopiste to the canons of Saint Georges who oversaw the burial site of his family. Philippe had received the relics from his father, the Cardinal-Duke Louis de Vendôme,

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<sup>42</sup> There was some debate over the provenance of the Sainte Larme, especially in the eighteenth century, but the most widespread and accepted account during the early modern period credited Geoffroy I 'Martel', comte de Vendôme, with giving it to the monastery: see Achille de Rochambeau, *Voyage à la Sainte-Larme de Vendôme* (Vendôme, 1874). For Bourgmoyen, see Jean Bernier, *Histoire de Blois* (Paris, 1682), p. 48.

<sup>43</sup> Dominique Julia, 'Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés à l'époque moderne,' in *Lieux sacrés, lieux de culte, sanctuaires: approches terminologiques, méthodologiques, historiques et monographiques*, edited by André Vauchez (Rome, 2000), p. 276; Trevor Johnson, 'Holy Fabrications: the Catacomb Saints and the Counter-Reformation in Bavaria,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 47 (1996), 274-97.

<sup>44</sup> Julia, 'Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés,' pp. 275-77.

<sup>45</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 576: Inventaire général... Saint Martin; Gervaise, *Vie de Saint Martin*, pp. 307-8. Two years later Saint Martin's basilica also received the relics of three further catacomb saints from an unknown source: see ADIL, G 17: Procès-verbal de Jacques Dufrementel, 1789.

who in turn had received them as a gift from the pope for his service as papal ambassador at the siege of Candia on the island of Crete.<sup>46</sup> In the same period, Jean-Jacques Charron, marquis de Menars, secured the body of Saint Procille from Rome for the Visitandine convent in Blois.<sup>47</sup>

Catacomb relics also flowed through humbler channels. For instance, in 1637 the Minim friar Jean Germain donated the relics of twelve catacomb saints to their church at Plessis; and in 1646 Pierre Portays, a Minim friar based in Rome, sent most of the body of Saint Pauline to the same site. While Portays secured Saint Pauline directly from the Cardinal Vicar overseeing the catacombs, Germain received his relics as a gift from Jean Riccuis, a nobleman, reminding us of the varied channels through which catacomb relics flowed.<sup>48</sup> Less prominent churches in the landscape also received relics from the catacombs. The parish church of Saint Étienne in Tours, for instance, secured the relics of the catacomb martyr saints Modeste and Fortune from Cardinal Giovanni Antonio Guadagni in 1751.<sup>49</sup>

In 1682, François Vernier, former cantor and canon of the collegiate church of Saint Georges, donated seven relics of martyrs, most likely from Rome, to ecclesiastical establishments in Vendôme. In an elaborate ceremony on 28 June, which included Mass at Saint Georges and a procession through the town modelled on Corpus Christi festivities, the relics were welcomed into Vendôme and then physically distributed to the French Congregation of the Oratory, Franciscan and Magdeleine religious communities, as well as to the chapel of Saint Areine, the parish church of Saint Martin and Saint Georges itself.<sup>50</sup> This distribution echoed others across Catholic Europe inspired by Saint Carlo Borromeo's example in Milan.<sup>51</sup> The ceremonies surrounding the translation ritually defined a new

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<sup>46</sup> Simon, *Histoire de Vendôme*, vol. 1, pp. 495 and 560.

<sup>47</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 202: Histoire du monastère de la Visitation de Blois in 'Matériaux... Bégon'. His sister Marie Charron, wife of Louis XIV's *contrôleur général des finances* Jean-Baptiste Colbert, donated a reliquary to hold a portion of the relics.

<sup>48</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 90 and 94: Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes.

<sup>49</sup> ADIL, G 1013, ff. 12v-13: Livre des droits, possessions et revenus de la curé de Saint-Étienne de Tours, 1710-1742.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Métais, 'Procès-verbal de la cérémonie de translation de plusieurs reliques de la collégiale de St-Georges dans les principales églises de Vendôme,' *BSASLV* 1 (1862), pp. 55-57.

<sup>51</sup> G. V. Signorotto, 'Cercatori di reliquie,' *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 21 (1985), pp. 383-418.

landscape, with Saint Georges as its anchor, that was in turn affirmed and sustained by the physical presence of the relics.

While the prominence of catacomb saints was a distinctive feature of relic giving during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, patrons also continued to make gifts of relics from local sources. In 1645, the monks of Trinité abbey reinforced their relationship with Augustin Potier de Blancmesnil, bishop of Beauvais, almoner to the queen and ‘friend of the community’, when they gave him the relics of saints André, Eutrope, Bienheure, Magdalaine and Corentin so that he could in turn give them to the parish where he was born in the town of Montoire twenty kilometres downstream from Vendôme.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, on 24 May 1651 two Minims secured a relic of Saint Romain from the abbey du Pré in Le Mans for the parish of Saint Nicolas at Fréteval in the Vendômois.<sup>53</sup>

In other parts of Europe new relics, especially from Rome, frequently became the focus of significant new local devotions, with indulgences, accounts of miracles and annual feasts helping some to supplant older relic veneration at established relic shrines.<sup>54</sup> In our region new relics were treated with reverence; however, no evidence survives of these relics supplanting pre-existing devotions at existing relic cult sites. Moreover, relics without pre-existing followings rarely supplanted established relics in the ritual life of communities. The one exception was the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme where, despite the fortuitous recovery of their relics, all except those of Saint Opportune were supplanted in the ritual if not devotional life of the church by relics that arrived after 1562. (See Table 1 on next page.)

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<sup>52</sup> BnF, MS Latin 12700, f. 328v: Réforme... Trinité de Vendôme.

<sup>53</sup> BAG Blois, MS 599: Procès verbal de réception d’une relique de Saint Romain à Saint Nicolas de Fréteval, 24 May 1650.

<sup>54</sup> Julia, ‘Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés,’ p. 276; Johnson, ‘Holy Fabrications,’ 274-97. Marc Forster describes a similar lack of popular devotion to these new relics in southwest Germany: see *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 75-76.



*Table 1: Relics housed in their own reliquaries at the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme in 1562, 1682 and 1790.*

<b>Relics 1562<sup>55</sup></b>	<b>Relics 1682<sup>56</sup></b>	<b>Relics 1790<sup>57</sup></b>
True Cross	Saint Opportune	Saint Opportune
Saint Georges	Saint Godegrand	Saint Godegrand
Saint Opportune	Saint Merat [Merald]	Saint Merald
Saint Godegrand	Saint Agille [Agil]	Saint Agis [Agil]
Saint Sebastian	Saint Joudry	Saint Joudry
Saint John the Baptist	Saint Théophile [Théopiste]	Saint Théopiste
Saint Étienne	Saint Candide	Saint Candide
Saint Blaise		
Saint Laurent		
Saint Ursule (probably)		
Saint Denis		
Saint Philippe		

Before the sacking of Saint Georges, the most prominent relics in the church were those of Saint Georges, patron of Vendôme; Saint Sebastian, which the town kept a yearly vow to; and Saint Opportune, who was venerated in her own chapel and whose life story was told in the church's stained glass windows.<sup>58</sup> Only Saint Opportune maintained her prominence in the community after the wars, as her relics along with those of her brother Saint Godegrand continued to be displayed in a separate reliquary. The canons kept the rest of the pre-1562 relics in a sack within an armoire near the high altar.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret,' *BSASLV*, 20 (1881), 297-328.

<sup>56</sup> Métais, 'Procès-verbal,' 55-57.

<sup>57</sup> Charles Métais, 'Les derniers jours de la collégiale de Saint-Georges: inventaire des titres et objets précieux dresse en 1790,' *BSASLV* 25 (1885), 204-5.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret,' *BSASLV* 21 (1882), 28-46 and 59-60.

<sup>59</sup> Simon, *Histoire de Vendôme*, vol. 1, p. 385. It is unclear why saints Opportune and Godegrand were the only relics displayed separately. It is possible that one of the two reliquaries in which they were held survived the sacking of 1562. Item seven in the inventory made by Jeanne de Navarre of treasure to be melted down clearly records the small reliquary of Saint Opportune, but absent from the inventory was the large reliquary created in 1288. However, no record of its

The relic translation ceremony of 1682 reveals that the relics held in the *armoie* were no longer processed during extraordinary celebrations. The *procès verbal* of the event reports that ‘in the middle were the banner and cross of the chapter [of Saint Georges] that were followed by the bodies of the old saints of the church specifically Saint Merat [Merald], Agille [Agil], Joudry, Opportune, Godegrau [Godegrand] and Théophile [Théopiste] in this order.’<sup>60</sup> Saint Candide was also present but among the new relics being welcomed to Vendôme through the procession. The relics held in the *armoie* near the high altar played no part in the ceremony. Instead, Opportune and Godegrand, along with new relics like Saint Théopiste donated by Philippe de Vendôme a decade earlier, were processed as the ‘old saints of the church’. Despite their absence from this important ceremony, devotion to pre-wars of religion saints whose relics survived continued. Saint Georges remained the patron of the town and into the eighteenth century the faithful of Vendôme continued to fulfill a yearly vow to Saint Sebastian.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, their relics remained undifferentiated in the sack. This state of affairs stretched to the Revolution when the final inventory of the church treasury lists the relics taken on procession in 1682 as the relics of the church, but makes no mention of the others.<sup>62</sup> While unique in the region, the case of Saint Georges reflects the importance of local context in the evolution of the relic landscape.

Devotions at the tombs of new holy figures also shaped the landscape. These are best understood as the latest manifestations of a long established tradition. The early Christian relic landscape of the region had been populated primarily by local holy figures, especially bishops, abbots, abbesses, hermits and ascetics.<sup>63</sup> The new holy figures that attracted

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survival exists and it is possible that the canons or other pious devotees commissioned a new reliquary for these saints after 1562.

<sup>60</sup> Métais, ‘Procès-verbal,’ 56. The scribe who created the *procès-verbal* possessed an eccentric orthography. I have included standard spellings of saints names in square brackets.

<sup>61</sup> Métais, ‘Jeanne d’Albret,’ *BSASLV* 21 (1882), 28-46.

<sup>62</sup> Métais, ‘Procès-verbal,’ 55-57; Métais, ‘Les derniers jours,’ 204-5.

<sup>63</sup> André Vauchez, *La sainteté en occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age d’après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome, 1981), pp. 14-24.

devotions after the religious wars continued these long established patterns of veneration.

The best documented of the new holy figures was Marguerite de Roussellé, daughter of a well-established local noble family who resided in the village of Saché along the Indre River around twenty-five kilometres to the southwest of Tours. Born in 1608, Roussellé sought in the mid-1620s to enter into the recently established Carmelite convent in Tours. Her family refused to sanction her wish, and so she lived an austere life of prayer and mortification on the family estate at Saché until her death in January 1628.<sup>64</sup> By the early 1630s, her tomb in the local parish church had become a pilgrimage shrine where miracles regularly occurred.<sup>65</sup> For instance, a parish priest was cured of ‘an illness of the spirit’ that he had suffered from since childhood in the eighth day of a vigil at her tomb, while a silk worker from Tours cured his son of ‘extreme languor’ by placing him directly on the monument.<sup>66</sup> Beyond her tomb, there was also considerable interest in acquiring secondary relics associated with Roussellé.<sup>67</sup>

Her reputation spread beyond the parish. Jacques de Mondion, the local parish priest, tirelessly advertised the virtues of Roussellé by recording her saintly life, documenting the miracles that occurred after her death, and ensuring that her story circulated widely. Mondion corresponded regularly with the Carmelites of Tours who took an interest in Roussellé following her failed effort to enter their community. He circulated a manuscript extolling her virtues; and in 1630 published two books in Angers about her life.<sup>68</sup> His efforts helped devotion to Roussellé spread. In Poitiers, Estienne Allard, parish priest of Saint Porchère who claimed to have been cured of a fever by Roussellé, reported discovering the merits of the holy woman through a manuscript given to him by a

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<sup>64</sup> Louis-Augustin Bossebœuf, *La Bienheureuse Marguerite de Roussellé, Carmélite de cœur dans le monde* (Tours, 1928), pp. 72-121.

<sup>65</sup> Miracles began to occur almost immediately upon her death. One of several parents who claimed that Roussellé cured their children made her vow to the holy woman the month of her death: Bossebœuf, *Bienheureuse Marguerite de Roussellé*, pp. 140 and 143-45.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-42.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129 and 142.

<sup>68</sup> Jacques de Mondion, *Vertus de la bienheureuse Marguerite de Rousselley de Saché* (Angers, 1630); Jacques de Mondion, *La vie, la mort, et les miracles de Marguerite de Rousselley de Saché* (Angers, 1630).

Jesuit, providing us with some sense of the channels through which her reputation spread.<sup>69</sup> Miracle reports also indicate that she gained a following in Tours, especially among the silk workers of the city.<sup>70</sup> Memory of Roussellé persisted at least into the later seventeenth century, but her cult seems to have peaked in the early 1630s.<sup>71</sup>

Roussellé was the best documented of four holy people known to have attracted veneration in the region. The second was Eustache Avril, a Minim who was purportedly murdered by the Huguenots in 1562. His veneration, however, seems to have been confined to his own brethren.<sup>72</sup> The third, Simon de Maillé-Brézé, the Cistercian archbishop of Tours (1554-1597), was credited with working miracles at the site of his tomb in the cathedral.<sup>73</sup> The final new devotion revolved around the grave of Mother Paule Jérôme de Monthou, great niece of Saint François de Salles and first abbess of the Visitandine house in Blois.<sup>74</sup> While no record of miracles attributed to Monthou survive, following her death in 1661 a local devotion to the pious abbess developed in Blois which continued at least into the 1680s.<sup>75</sup>

Likely there were more figures that achieved at least local followings. In Blois for instance, the murder of a number of Franciscans by Huguenot forces in 1568 was remembered and associated with martyrdom over a century later thanks in part to a plaque placed on the sealed well where the Huguenots had disposed of their bodies.<sup>76</sup> Reference also survives to a holy figure in the rural Blésois parish of Chambon who the local parish priest expected would attract devotions following his death.<sup>77</sup>

The church authorities made no effort to formally beatify or canonize Roussellé, Avril, Maillé-Brézé, Monthou or any other figure to

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<sup>69</sup> Bossebœuf, *Bienheureuse Marguerite de Roussellé*, pp. 130-39.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 194-95.

<sup>72</sup> Louis Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire générale de l'ordre sacré des Minimes* (Paris, 1624), vol. 2, pp. 10-13.

<sup>73</sup> Ioannis Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana ecclesia Turonensis* (Tours, 1667), p. 203.

<sup>74</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 202: Histoire du monastère de la Visitation de Blois in 'Matériaux... Bégon'.

<sup>75</sup> Bernier, *Histoire de Blois*, p. 64.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>77</sup> BnF, MS Français 5679, f. 378v: note on the parish of Chambon by curé Blé in 'Materiaux... Bégon'.

emerge in the region during the period, despite several fitting into categories favored for sainthood during the seventeenth century.<sup>78</sup> Neither did they actively seek to suppress veneration of these figures despite renewed concerns among church authorities about unregulated local devotions. Instead church officials tacitly sanctioned private devotion without authorizing public veneration.<sup>79</sup> In terms of the relic landscape, formal canonization made little practical difference to devotions at these shrines, although the lack of official recognition and promotion may have limited their size and spread. No new devotion developed a following that could rival prominent established shrines and they remained minor sites in the landscape.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a period when beatifications and canonizations were rare but where miraculous images received formal recognition more easily. The two most prominent new sites of sustained pilgrimage devotion in the region to emerge after the religious wars centred on miraculous images of the Virgin Mary.<sup>80</sup> In contrast to new holy figures, these images received formal recognition from episcopal authorities who, following investigations, sanctioned their public display and reverence. New relic sites emerged and persisted, but never achieved official status or as large a following as new image sites. The disinterest of senior church leaders in promoting the emerging cults of holy people in the region provides an interesting contrast to cult sites elsewhere that were actively promoted by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Given the willingness of church authorities to formally recognize new miraculous images of the Virgin, the lack of interest in securing saintly status for holy figures may reflect a reluctance to initiate the complex and expensive investigations required by the papacy for beatification and canonization.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Peter Burke, 'How to be a Counter Reformation Saint,' in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe: 1500-1800*, edited by Caspar von Greyerz (London, 1984), pp. 45-55.

<sup>79</sup> Robert Norman Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c. 1215-1515* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 146-47.

<sup>80</sup> ADIL, H 1145: Histoire du monastère des religieuses chanoinesses régulières de l'ordre de Saint Augustin à Sainte-Maure: découverte de la statue de Nôtre-Dame des Vertus, culte populaire, miracles, 1635-1692; BAG, MS 366: Procès verbal concernant Nôtre Dame de bon Secours, Blois, 1633.

<sup>81</sup> Vauchez, *Sainteté en occident*.

What impact did the Catholic Reformation have on the renewing and evolving relic landscape? The concerns of churchmen imbued with Catholic Reformation ideas shaped developments; however, their impact on relic devotions was modest because the Church Fathers at Trent largely reaffirmed the legitimacy of invoking saints and the veneration of their relics, aligning official doctrine with older patterns of belief and devotion.<sup>82</sup> Trent had its greatest impact on the matter of oversight of relic devotion. The Church Fathers required bishops to exercise careful oversight to ensure ‘nothing occurs that is disorderly or arranged in an exaggerated or riotous matter, nothing profane and nothing unseemly....’<sup>83</sup> The statutes issued by the archbishops of Tours and bishops of Chartres show that diocesan officials sought to implement this decree in the region.<sup>84</sup>

Efforts at regulation were greatest for new saint cults. While church authorities frequently tolerated veneration of figures like Marguerite de Roussellé whose shrine posed no serious challenge to current beliefs about saints, they also asserted that only official recognition through formal canonization procedures, not public acclaim, conveyed formal status as a saint.<sup>85</sup> These standards applied only to new saints. Except for the most problematic cases, church authorities allowed existing cults to continue without review, but did seek through such initiatives as the Bollandists to amend the lives of older saints, removing the most problematic or improbable aspects of their lives and miracles.<sup>86</sup> Beyond regulation, church officials also promoted orthodox relic devotions, especially the translation of catacomb relics from Rome.

The decrees of Trent and the actions of the church hierarchy had some, but no dramatic, impact on relic veneration in the region. Similarly,

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<sup>82</sup> Norman Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC, 1990), pp. 775-76.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 776.

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, the decrees of Victor de Bouthillier, archbishop of Tours, in Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana*, p. 293. Note that this page reference is for the separately paginated *Turonensis ecclesiae pars altera: Concilia complectens omnia* printed at the end of this volume. For Chartres, see the reports of the visitors in Robert Sauzet, *Les visites pastorales dans le diocèse de Chartres pendant la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Rome, 1975), p. 356.

<sup>85</sup> Swanson, *Religion and devotion*, pp. 146-47; Vauchez, *Sainteté en occident*.

<sup>86</sup> R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 130-37.

the relics of formally canonized Catholic Renewal saints had little impact on the existing landscape. This is not surprising because between 1588 and 1767 the papacy only canonized around fifty saints, four of which were French and none were associated with the region.<sup>87</sup> The only site to secure relics of a Catholic Reformation saint before the mid-eighteenth century was the Minim community at Plessis, which acquired a number of Saint François de Salles's relics shortly after his canonization in 1665. While visiting Plessis on 27 September 1667, André de Chaugy, a Minim friar who served as procurer in the canonization process for Saint François de Salles, donated a set of three primary relics of François drawn from the Visitation mother house at Annecy, where his sister, Françoise-Madeleine de Chaugy, was abbess. These included a finger of Saint François de Salles in a gold reliquary, blood of the saint shed 'from cares and worries' held in a small oval reliquary, and some ashes of the saint again in an oval vessel. He also donated a secondary relic, a letter from Saint François de Salles to M. Barre, governor of the province of Bugey, which was used in the canonization process.<sup>88</sup> The primary relics were displayed in a gilded frame, and in 1687 the Minims placed in the same reliquary three secondary relics of Saint Francis of Paola that had recently arrived from Rome: earth from the furnace that Saint Francis entered into without harm in a miracle associated with the building of his first monastery; two walnut shells one of which he miraculously created to end a dispute; and a walnut vase made from the walnut tree that provided the original shell.<sup>89</sup>

Chaugy's donations were part of a wider campaign to advertise the close relationship between the newly sainted François de Salles and the Minims. At the time of his canonization, the Minims had placed a letter written by de Salles to the Minim de Billy into a reliquary in the shape of Saint Francis of Paola. In this letter written shortly before his death, de Salles recounted how after preaching during Lent in Grenoble he had retired to the Minim house in the city and taken third order vows making him a tertiary member of the Minim order.<sup>90</sup> A few years earlier the Minims had placed a letter to the Prince of Orange written in the hand of Saint Francis of Paola in the same reliquary. These two letters physically embodied the link between the Minims and the newly sainted

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<sup>87</sup> Burke, 'How to be a Counter Reformation Saint,' pp. 45-55.

<sup>88</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 99-102: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>89</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 99-101: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>90</sup> ADIL, H 693, p. 80: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

de Salles and also the spiritual influence of Francis of Paola on his saintly counterpart and namesake.<sup>91</sup>

By becoming a tertiary member of the Minim order, de Salles recognized the impact of Paola's example on his spiritual life. It is this influence that the Minims reinforced through the physical display of de Salles's primary relics in combination with secondary relics from miraculous events in Paola's life. The Minims made efforts to promote this link beyond their community in Plessis-lès-Tours. By the 1670s a chapel dedicated to the two saints also existed in the Minim house in Blois.<sup>92</sup> There is no evidence that this devotion took root among the general population, but it clearly resonated among the Minims.

For a century the Catholic Reformation relics at Plessis were unique in the region. The only other translation for which sources survive occurred sometime after 1764 when the parish church of Saint Étienne in Tours received relics of saints François de Salles and Françoise Chantal from Jean Pierre Biord, bishop of Geneva.<sup>93</sup> These two translations underline how rare relic devotion sites associated with Catholic Reformation saints were in the region, even if veneration of these saints in churches without relics was much more widespread.

Catholic Renewal had its greatest impact on the physical landscape through the foundation of numerous new religious communities, especially in the urban centres of Tours, Blois and Vendôme. (See Table 2 on next page.) These new communities profoundly shaped the religious life of the region, but their impact on the relic landscape was much less significant. Only the Visitandine nunnery in Blois became a site of local relic devotion, with both the tomb of Mother Paule Jérôme de Monthou, their founding abbess, and the two reliquaries holding the remains of Saint Procille, a catacomb martyr translated from Rome, becoming foci of veneration. These devotions seem to have been promoted by prominent local families who placed their daughters in this foundation; and especially the Charron family of Menars, which donated the relics of Saint Procille and one of the reliquaries for their display.<sup>94</sup> Although other Catholic

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<sup>91</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 80-81: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimés*.

<sup>92</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 242: Note de l'histoire des Minimés, Blois in 'Matériaux... Bégon'.

<sup>93</sup> ADIL, G 1013, f. 13v: *Livre... de la curé de Saint-Étienne de Tours, 1710-1742*.

<sup>94</sup> BnF, MS Français 5678, f. 202: *Histoire du monastère de la Visitation de Blois* in 'Matériaux... Bégon'; Bernier, *Histoire de Blois*, p. 63.



Renewal foundations in the region acquired relics during the period, none developed devotions like those at the Visitandine house.<sup>95</sup>

*Table 2: New religious foundations at Tours, Blois and Vendôme, 1600-1640.*

<b>Tours<sup>96</sup></b>	<b>Blois<sup>97</sup></b>	<b>Vendôme<sup>98</sup></b>
Capuchins (1606)	Minims (1614)	Capuchins (1606)
Carmelites (1607)	Ursulines (1622)	Oratorians (1623)
Oratorians (1616)	Jesuits (1623)	Calvarians (1625)
Recollets (1619)	Capuchins (1623) <sup>99</sup>	Ursulines (1632)
Feuillants (1619)	Carmelites (1625)	
Ursulines (1620)	Visitandines (1625)	
Minims (1620)		
Capuchin Poor Clares (1625)		
Jesuits (1632)		
Visitandines (1634)		

Few sources survive concerning the promotion of local relic cults by Catholic Renewal religious orders. In general they were supportive of relic veneration. The Jesuits, for instance, took a leading role in the distribution of relics from the catacombs to sites across the Catholic world.<sup>100</sup> Interestingly, in our region nearly all surviving evidence of Catholic Renewal religious orders promoting relic veneration involves unofficial cults. The Visitandines of Blois promoting veneration of their abbess Monthou provides the most prominent example. But the Carmelite nuns in Tours took a strong interest in the life and miracles of Roussellé and it was a Jesuit who brought a copy of the manuscript extolling her virtues to Poitiers where it had a profound impact on the parish priest of

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<sup>95</sup> Métais, 'Procès-verbal,' 56.

<sup>96</sup> Jean-Jacques Bourassé, *La Touraine: histoire et monuments* (Tours, 1855), p. 89.

<sup>97</sup> Bernier, *Histoire de Blois*, pp. 60-69.

<sup>98</sup> Jacques Loisel and Jean Vassort (eds.), *Histoire du Vendômois* (Vendôme, 2007), pp. 163-66.

<sup>99</sup> The Capuchins abandoned their first establishment in Blois during the religious wars.

<sup>100</sup> Julia, 'Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés,' pp. 275-76.

Saint Porchère (Allard).<sup>101</sup> While the evidence is too thin to draw firm conclusions, the participation of new religious orders in the promotion of unofficial devotions does contrast with their traditional close association with official cults. This contrast may be illusory though. Evidence on the ground is lacking but it is likely that Catholic Renewal religious orders in the region also actively promoted officially sanctioned relic devotions, even if only the Visitandines hosted a relic devotion site in their foundation.

The iconoclastic damage of the religious wars must be understood in terms of a relic landscape that had been evolving since its inception. The Huguenots caused significant destruction and disruption during the religious wars but through relic translations the landscape renewed. Relics displaced from other sites by religious war arrived in the region and communities successfully solicited replacement relics for liturgical and ritual uses. The needs of the faithful and the gifts of patrons ensured that new relics continued to flow into and out of the region strengthening relic devotion even as these new arrivals altered patterns of relic veneration in the landscape. Unlike other aspects of religious life, the impact of the Catholic Reformation on the relic landscape was modest. Church authorities reaffirmed relic veneration, even if they were cautious in their approach to recognizing new holy figures. Translation of relics from Rome had the greatest impact on the relic landscape, but unlike elsewhere few substantial devotions developed around them. Even as it renewed, scars from the religious wars persisted in the landscape. The next chapter explores how communities that oversaw relic shrines remembered the religious war iconoclasm.

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<sup>101</sup> Bossebœuf, *Bienheureuse Marguerite de Roussellé*, pp. 136-37.

## 4 Remembering iconoclasm

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Some have written that [Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre's] body had been taken to Béarn [and interred] near Henri her father in accordance with her will. It would be wished that this was so. But by Misfortune for our church, it is an indisputable tradition confirmed by an epitaph that her body is with that of Anthoine her husband and that thus we hold this miserable relic in place of all the holy and revered relics that we had before all held in such beautiful reliquaries. All the world finds this strange with reason, as the greatest enemy of the Roman church rests in the middle of our choir against the formal ordinance of the Council of Trent.<sup>1</sup>

Writing in the 1660s, Canon du Bellay's lament juxtaposes remembrance of relics lost during the religious wars with the physical presence in the choir of the woman that he deemed responsible for the pillaging of his church. While a particularly poignant example, Du Bellay's experience was far from unusual. A century after the religious wars the landscape remained punctuated by reminders of losses sustained by relic sanctuaries across the region.

By the second half of the seventeenth century many communities that oversaw relic shrines had developed accounts that gave meaning to the iconoclastic acts of the religious wars. They most often survive today in manuscript and published histories written by members of these communities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But these accounts appear late in the process of remembrance. The earliest were written nearly a half-century after the event and most communities did not produce histories until after 1650. Before historians recorded these traditions, communities remembered iconoclastic acts through liturgical and ritual commemorations, memorials, artistic renderings and oral traditions. The suppression of religious communities and the destruction of

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<sup>1</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 71: *Calendrier historique... l'église collegiale de Saint Georges de Vendôme*.

churches during the French Revolution have obscured most traces of these early forms of remembrance, but during the formative decades after the attacks they predominated and were frequently drawn on by later historians to interpret religious war iconoclasm.

While source survival limits our ability to survey the landscape as a whole, four prominent sites allow us to examine in some detail how the religious wars were remembered in relic devotion sites that were heavily damaged during the conflict. In the decades following the destruction of the 1560s, the communities who oversaw the two most prominent relic devotion sites of the Touraine, the tomb shrines of Saint Martin in Tours and Saint Francis of Paola in Plessis-lès-Tours, both celebrated the Huguenot attacks as God's wish to honour their patrons with the laurel of martyrdom. For the Benedictine abbeys of Saint Lomer in Blois and Marmoutier outside Tours meaning was ultimately found in the decline and later renewal of their communities.

Remembering the Wars of Religion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is a topic that until recently has received little scholarly attention.<sup>2</sup> Historians of urban culture have contributed the most to date, exploring a variety of civic efforts to remember or forget the religious wars.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars have examined how historians, memoirists, editors of historical source collections and publishers of historical

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<sup>2</sup> Philip Benedict, 'Divided Memories? Historical Calendars, Commemorative Processions and the Recollection of the Religious Wars during the Ancien Régime,' *French History* 22 (2008), 384-85.

<sup>3</sup> Benedict, 'Divided Memories?,' 381-405; Andrew Spicer, '(Re)building the Sacred Landscape: Orléans, 1560-1610,' *French History* 21 (2007), 247-68; Barbara Diefendorf, 'Waging Peace: Memory, Identity, and the Edict of Nantes,' in *Religious Differences in France: Past and Present*, edited by Kathleen Perry Long (Kirksville MO, 2006), pp. 19-49; Pascal Julien, 'Assaut, invocation tutélaire et célébrations séculaires: le 17 mai 1562 "délivrance de Toulouse",' in *Prendre une ville au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, edited by Gabriel Audisio (Aix-en-Provence, 2004), pp. 51-62; Hillary Bernstein, *Between Crown and Community: Politics and Civic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Poitiers* (Ithaca NY, 2004), pp. 164-85; André Sanfaçon, 'Traditions mariales et pouvoir ecclésiastique à Chartres sous l'Ancien Régime,' in *Les productions symboliques du pouvoir, XVI<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup>*, edited by Laurier Turgeon (Sillery [Quebec], 1990), pp. 45-64; André Sanfaçon, 'Événement, mémoire et mythe: le siège de Chartres de 1568,' in *Événement, identité et histoire*, edited by Claire Dolan (Sillery [Quebec], 1990), pp. 187-204; André Sanfaçon, 'Légendes, histoire et pouvoir à Chartres sous l'Ancien Régime,' *Revue Historique* 279 (1988), 337-57.

calendars presented the religious wars from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> Many of these studies examine the tensions between efforts by local civic communities to commemorate events associated with the religious wars and the royal policy of *oubliance*, that is the forgetting or at least the leaving behind of the past, which prohibited such public remembrances from the 1560s.<sup>5</sup> This chapter contributes to this growing body of work by exploring how religious communities that suffered iconoclastic damage during the wars remembered these events over the next two centuries. It will consider both written histories and those forms of remembrance that predated them, paying particular attention to the use of relics and relic shrines as anchors for remembrance. While the study focuses on four substantial relic shrines, the conclusion will broaden our perspective by considering within the limits of surviving evidence how other communities in the region remembered the religious wars.

By the opening decades of the seventeenth century, the communities that oversaw the two most prominent relic shrines in the Touraine found reason to celebrate the desecration of their patrons' tombs and the cremation of their remains. For both the canons of Saint Martin and the Minims of Plessis these acts were divinely sanctioned by God, who sought through the actions of heretics to grant to their patrons the laurel of martyrdom. In the eyes of both communities the survival of some relics and the miracles that continued to occur at their tombs proved that far from abandoning their patrons, God had embraced them, granting them through these post-mortem martyrdoms the most honoured position in the celestial hierarchy of saints.

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<sup>4</sup> Andrea Frisch, 'Caesarean Negotiations: Forgetting Henri IV's Past after the French Wars of Religion,' in *Forgetting Faith: Negotiating Confessional Conflict in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Isabel Karremann, Cornel Zwierlein and Inga Mai Groote (Berlin, 2012), pp. 63-79; Benedict, 'Divided Memories?', 381-405; Jacques Berchtold and Marie-Madeleine Frangonard (eds.), *La mémoire des guerres de religion: la concurrence des genres historiques (XVI-XVIII siècles)* (2 vols., Geneva, 2007); Andrea Frisch, 'French Tragedy and the Civil Wars,' *Modern Languages Quarterly* 67 (2006), 287-312; Mark Greengrass, 'Hidden Transcripts: Secret Histories and Personal Testimonies of Religious Violence in the French Wars of Religion,' in *The Massacre in History*, edited by Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (New York, 1999), pp. 69-88.

<sup>5</sup> See especially Benedict, 'Divided Memories?', 381-405; Julien, 'Assaut,' 51-62.

There is evidence that this interpretation emerged early at these two shrines but was not immediately put forward by these communities. The surviving capitulary acts for the canons of Saint Martin from the 1560s merely describe the cremation of Saint Martin's remains, offering no broader meaning to the event, even in instructions for a sermon given in July 1564 on the topic of the survival of Martin's relics.<sup>6</sup> Similarly the Minims do not describe the cremation of Saint Francis's remains as martyrdom in letters to Charles IX and the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici describing the attack on their monastery, or in documents associated with litigation against the Huguenots. Instead they frame the desecration of his remains as a physical act of destruction.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, by the end of the century both communities interpreted the iconoclastic attacks of 1562 as the means by which God granted their patron the honour of martyrdom.

These accounts emerged during a period when martyrdom had become a living feature of the faith for the first time in centuries.<sup>8</sup> The violence of the religious wars and the dangers of proselytizing across the globe led to the martyrdom of many Catholics. Heroic accounts of these deaths, and especially those of the clergy, circulated widely in the region.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the rediscovery of the catacombs in 1578 and the determination by the Church that the early Christians interred in these cemeteries were martyr saints promoted the idea of martyrdom in the context of relic veneration.<sup>10</sup> In the case of the Minims, martyrs within the order were another important context. During the opening decades of the seventeenth

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<sup>6</sup> BM Tours, MS 1295: pp. 353-87: Raoul Monsnyer and Michel Vincent, *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini ecclesiae historia*; BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 15, f. 267: Extraits des registres de Saint Martin de Tours; BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 10, no. 4320: Extraits des registres capitulaires de Saint Martin de Tours.

<sup>7</sup> ADIL, H 680: Requête des Minimes contre Marin Piballeau, sa femme et ses compagnons, 1562; Hilarian de Coste, *Le portrait en petit de Saint François de Paule, instituteur et fondateur de l'ordre des Minimes: Ou l'histoire abrégée de sa vie, de sa mort, & de ses miracles* (Paris, 1655), pp. 482-89.

<sup>8</sup> Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge MA, 1999), pp. 250-314.

<sup>9</sup> For more on missionaries from the region, see Guy-Marie Oury, 'Le mouvement de restauration catholique en Touraine, 1598-1639,' *Église et Théologie* 1 (1970), 39-59 and 171-204.

<sup>10</sup> Dominique Julia, 'Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés à l'époque moderne,' in *Lieux sacrés, lieux de culte, sanctuaires: approches terminologiques, méthodologiques, historiques et monographiques*, edited by André Vauchez (Rome, 2000), p. 276.

century the Minims commissioned frescos for their cloister in Plessis, including one that depicted the martyrdom of the Minim friar Eustache Avril at the hands of the Protestants during the sacking of their monastery in 1562.<sup>11</sup> The martyrdom accounts of saints Martin and Francis of Paola took shape in this broader context.

In the case of the canons of Saint Martin, the first surviving evidence of the martyrdom account dates from 25 years after the attack, and was centred on an iron grille setting off the site outside the door of the basilica's south transept where the Huguenots had scattered Saint Martin's ashes to the winds.<sup>12</sup> This memorial incorporated a series of prose and verse inscriptions celebrating as martyrdom the event it commemorated. A Latin prose inscription provided the fullest account at the memorial:

As well traveller do not tire to look at this wretched crime, in which Confessor Monsieur Martin faithful public professor to powerful Germanic princes lived once and was spared, worked miracles[,] received pious vows for 1200 years from all Christians with singular consent, leading many to adorn [his shrine] with magnificent gifts, of this [Martin] I say criminal men, if they can be called men, unspeakable of religious life and greed recently in this place, Alas! threw the venerable body on a funeral pyre that they built in a monstrous sacrilegious crime. They attempted to erase his most saintly name through cruel flames, but have done nothing other than give him the palm of martyrdom, [which] living he wanted, but was not able [to secure], by these new Theomachos eventually attained [it] after death. Meanwhile all think that their own brand of cruelty in burning [his corpse] much greater. How much more wicked the rage against the innocent dead than the living, 25 May 1562.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Louis Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire générale de l'ordre sacré des Minimes* (Paris, 1624), vol. 2, pp. 11-12.

<sup>12</sup> ADIL, G 593, p. 109: Inventaire général des anciens fonds, revenus et droits de la fabrique de Saint-Martin et des 13 chapelles et semi-prébendes, 1744.

<sup>13</sup> ADIL, G 593, pp. 380-81: Inventaire général... Saint Martin; ADIL, H 693, p. 20: Inventaire raisonné des titres du trésor des archives du couvent royal des Minimes du Plessis, c. 1771; BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 381: *Celeberrimae sancti*

This inscription therefore frames the iconoclastic attack on Martin's relics in a broader description of his life and miraculous shrine, defining the desecration as another glorious chapter in the saint's history.

The memorial also included several Latin verses celebrating his martyrdom of which these two verses are typical:

Impious religion driven to frenzy by the evil one  
The bones of a holy man, here burnt  
Cruel and inhuman flames of the river Phlegeton<sup>14</sup>  
Wasted, they committed so great a crime.  
In the past he was the confessor,  
Now consumed by the fire of evil men,  
He is offered the laurel of Martyrdom.

Here 1200 years famous confessor Martin,  
And only recently a Martyr.  
The heretic's cruel flames burnt his body,  
Hence have spread the ashes in your passageway.  
What was wonderful within the bones,  
For pious vows, there is even greater in the ashes.<sup>15</sup>

The canons consciously converted the site into a memorial that defined the iconoclastic acts of the Huguenots as martyrdom, creating a new place of remembrance in the precinct of the basilica.<sup>16</sup>

Many places associated with Saint Martin's life had become devotional sites in their own right. For instance, the focus of veneration at the abbey of Marmoutier in the suburbs of Tours was the grotto, known as the Repos de Saint Martin, where he often withdrew during his life.<sup>17</sup> There is evidence that the memorial where the Huguenots had scattered Saint Martin's ashes may also have developed a reputation as a sacred or

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*Martini*; François de la Noue, *Chronicon generale ordinis Minorum in quo acta per S. Franciscum a Paula* (Paris, 1635), p. 263. Theomachos means one who fights against God (see New Testament of the Bible, Acts 5:39).

<sup>14</sup> One of the five rivers of the underworld in Greek mythology.

<sup>15</sup> Nicolas Gervaise, *La vie de Saint Martin* (Tours, 1699), pp. 345-46.

<sup>16</sup> The site of the foundry where his remains were cremated was within the vestry and thus not appropriate for a public memorial. See ADIL, G 596: Inventaire du trésor de l'église de Saint-Martin, rédigé lors du pillage des Huguenots en 1562.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Lelong, *L'Abbaye de Marmoutier* (Chambray-lès-Tours, 1989), p. 84.



hallowed place by the 1660s. If the account of the Carmelite Martin Marteau de Saint Gatien, who lived much of his life in Tours, is to be believed: ‘It has been said that the place where the holy relics had been burnt is so holy, that dogs deprived of reason, have never since relieved themselves there, which is their nature, although sometimes some have tried to encourage them by artifice.’<sup>18</sup> This pious tradition indicates that the site possessed a reputation as holy or hallowed.

Beyond creating this new place of remembrance, the canons also associated Martin’s martyrdom with the most revered site in his relic cult. When they completed the reconstruction of Saint Martin’s tomb five years after the establishment of the memorial at the transept door, they tied these two sites together through a Latin verse on the tomb authored by the Canon Papillon and approved by the community in their meeting on 15 May 1582:

The pious bones of Martin once rested here,  
In a grave once made of marble;  
Enclosed in this chest venerated for many years  
The wicked heretics put it to flames.  
The clergy gathered the ashes,  
They built an urn so that you will have certain faith  
from the martyrdom.  
Pray God, confessor who had the power, now made  
martyr.<sup>19</sup>

This inscription commemorated the attack on Saint Martin’s remains in verses that the reader would readily associate with similar verses on the transept memorial. These two linked spaces physically celebrated and commemorated Martin’s martyrdom in the basilica dedicated to his memory.

The memorials were part of a wider effort by the canons to commemorate and celebrate the martyrdom of their patron. The canons also integrated martyrdom into the liturgical life of the church. For instance, they incorporated reference to the events of 1562 into their patron’s litanies through the addition of the lines ‘Saint Martin, who after

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Le paradis délicieux de la Touraine* (Paris, 1661), bk. 2, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> For this inscription, see BnF, PF MS, Touraine-Anjou 15, f. 309: Registres de Saint Martin.

death, through impious heretics, was given the laurel of Martyrdom.’<sup>20</sup> Similarly, on the feast day of Saint Martin the canons chanted: ‘O blessed soul who although the sword of a persecuting tyrant has not separated from its body, has not lost for all time the palm of a martyr.’<sup>21</sup> The exact date that these changes were integrated into the liturgy is unclear, but it is certain that the canons had altered the feast day celebration by the opening decade of the seventeenth century.

Physical memorials and liturgy worked together to reinforce the memory of Saint Martin’s martyrdom in space and time. Both initiatives placed Martin’s martyrdom into the celebrations of his life and miracles alongside his other accomplishments. The first histories by members of the community to address the events of 1562 were Nicolas Gervaise’s life of Saint Martin published in 1699 and Michel Vincent’s manuscript additions to the *Celeberrimæ Sancti Martini ecclesiæ historia* in the early eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup> While both historians relied heavily on the canons’ capitulary acts as sources for the Huguenot attack in 1562, they also used the inscriptions in the basilica to interpret the events that were merely reported in the canons’ registers. By the opening decades of the seventeenth century, the martyrdom of Saint Martin was celebrated regularly as part of the ritual life of the church and had become integrated into the devotional site both through the inscription on Martin’s new tomb and through the memorial at the place where the Huguenots had spread his ashes to the winds.

The canons of Saint Martin established some of the earliest and most elaborate memorials and liturgical celebrations that commemorated religious war iconoclasm in the region. They established these commemorations at the same time that the crown was advancing through its peace-making efforts a policy of *oubliance*, which required subjects to forget the past wrongs of the religious wars, or at least not to acknowledge

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<sup>20</sup> Martin Marteau de Saint Gatien, *La vie du prélat apostolique et divin taumaturgue Saint Martin, III. Archevesque de Tours et second apostre des Gaulois* (Paris, 1660), p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> Claude Du Vivier, *Vie et miracles de Saint François de Paule instituteur de l’order des frères Minimes* (Paris, 1609), p. 645. That it was a regular part of the feast day service is confirmed in François Giry, *La vie de Saint François de Paule, fondateur de l’ordre des Minimes* (Paris, 1681), p. 209.

<sup>22</sup> Gervaise, *Vie de Saint Martin*, pp. 345-46; BM Tours, MS 1295, p. 381: *Celeberrimæ sancti Martini*.

them in public.<sup>23</sup> With the king as titular abbot of Saint Martin and with Tours one of the cities most firmly under royal control, one might have expected the crown to suppress public commemorations at the basilica. However, no evidence survives of the authorities attempting to stop or limit these commemorations. This may reflect local conditions. The crown remained in firm control of Tours and the small, politically weak Protestant community in the region did not require officials to maintain a balance between rival confessions.<sup>24</sup> Philip Benedict notes that the other cities in France where commemorations persisted were also either entirely Catholic or possessed just a small Protestant community.<sup>25</sup> However, royal officials may also have viewed the celebratory tone of the martyr narrative as less divisive compared to the remembrances of bloody street battles and sectarian victories commemorated elsewhere in France.<sup>26</sup>

By the 1620s, the Minim order had constructed a similar martyrdom account for the cremation of their founder's remains. While no document from the 1560s makes any mention of martyrdom when describing the desecration on Saint Francis's tomb and remains, by the opening of the seventeenth century the Minims and especially the brethren at Plessis sustained this interpretation within the oral traditions of the community. During the opening quarter of the seventeenth century, the martyrdom account became an established feature of Saint Francis's story in the published lives of the saint. Works by three French Minims, Claude Du Vivier (1609), François Victon (1623) and Louis Dony d'Attichy (1624), proved particularly influential in disseminating the martyrdom

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<sup>23</sup> The policy of *oubliance* and the process of royal peace-making more generally has received significant scholarly attention. Three important recent contributions to the field are Penny Roberts, *Peace and Authority during the French Religious Wars c.1560-1600* (Basingstoke, 2013); Michel de Waele, *Réconcilier les français: Henri IV et la fin des troubles de religion (1589-1598)* (Québec, 2010); Mark Greengrass, *Governing Passions: Peace and Reform in the French Kingdom, 1576-1585* (Oxford, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> David Nicholls, 'Protestants, Catholics and Magistrates in Tours, 1562-1572: the Making of a Catholic City during the Religious Wars,' *French History* 8 (1994), 14-33.

<sup>25</sup> Benedict, 'Divided Memories?', 393.

<sup>26</sup> Royal officials did act when celebrations were more divisive. For instance, in 1564 the crown attempted to ban a civic procession in Toulouse which commemorated a Catholic victory during five days of sectarian street fighting in 1562: see Julien, 'Assaut,' 51-62.

account established in the oral traditions of the Minim house at Plessis.<sup>27</sup> These histories influenced later Minim historians and by the 1630s the basic elements of Saint Francis's martyrdom account had spread beyond the order, appearing for instance in the *Martyrologium Gallicarum*, an influential compendium published by André de Saussay.<sup>28</sup>

Memorialization in the form of written histories produced a more detailed account of Saint Francis's martyrdom than the verse and prose passages displayed at physical memorials in Saint Martin's basilica. In each case a description of the event was integrated into his life story as the culmination of a long martyrdom granted to him by God. The histories offer very similar accounts of the cremation of Saint Francis's remains in April 1562.<sup>29</sup> All three contextualize the attack on his shrine in the wider destruction wrought by the religious wars, and especially the cremation of Saint Martin's remains just a few kilometres away at his basilica. They also establish the same sequence of events. All agree that after seizing the monastery the Huguenots forced open Francis's tomb and, despite finding

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<sup>27</sup> Du Vivier, *Vie... François de Paule*, 1609; François Victon, *Vie admirable du glorieux père et thaumaturge Saint François de Paule, instituteur de l'ordre des Minimes, dit de IESUS-MARIA* (Paris, 1623); François Victon, *Vita, et miracula S. P. Francisco a Paula, sui saeculi thaumaturgy, ordinis Minimorum institutoris. Ad fidem veterum, eorumque authenticorum manuscriptorum, & monumentorum primùm conciliate, & descripta* (Paris, 1627); Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire générale... Minimes* (Paris, 1624). Dony d'Attichy's history of the Minim order was organized around the lives of prominent figures. While these three authors were the most influential, two other texts appeared during the same period: Lucas de Montoya, *Cronica general de la orden de los Minimos de Santo Francisco de Paula su fundador* (Madrid, 1619); Jean Chappot, *Vie et miracles du bien-heureux saint François de Paule, père et fondateur de l'ordre des Minimes* (Nancy, 1620).

<sup>28</sup> For later histories by Minims, see La Noue, *Chronicon... Minorum*, pp. 260-63; Coste, *Portrait... François de Paule*, pp. 246-54 and 482-89; ADIL, H 695, pp. 178-83; Jacques Rosier, *Minimologium turonense in quo continentur origines, primarii fundatores, benefactorum donationes, religiosi viri, virtuti, pietate, doctrina insignes...*; André Saussay, *Martyrologium Gallicanum* (Paris, 1637), p. 186.

<sup>29</sup> Du Vivier, *Vie... François de Paule*, pp. 642-50; Victon, *Vie... François de Paule*, pp. 272-74; Victon, *Vita... Francisco a Paula*, 'Appendix de concrematis S. P. Francisci a Paula reliquiis, et violato eius glorioso sepulchro'; Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 1, pp. 133-37 and vol. 2, pp. 3-14. The authors do vary on some details. For instance, Du Vivier and Dony d'Attichy assert that Saint Francis's remains were abused on their way to the fireplace, which is absent from Victon's accounts.

his remains uncorrupted after 55 years, dragged his body to the fireplace in the monastery's guest chamber. There using the church's rood screen crucifix as fuel they burnt most of his earthly remains, but some good Catholics saved fragments of the saint's relics.<sup>30</sup> They all conclude by asserting that the Protestants failed in their effort to weaken devotions to the saint, who continued to regularly work miracles.

The histories are also closely aligned in terms of interpretative passages that give meaning to these basic events. Rather than a victory for the forces of evil or the forsaking of Saint Francis by God, the burning of his body represented God's goodwill and favour toward the saint. Already in 1609, Claude du Vivier noted that these evil men became 'the instruments for the honour and glory of our Saint.'<sup>31</sup> Dony d'Attichy expanded on this theme in 1624 when he noted: 'but this would not stop God's plans, as He is accustomed to draw light from the depths of darkness, and good from bad, so it is to draw from the malice and impiety of men to glorify his servant and friend.'<sup>32</sup>

Francis's martyrdom after his death was the final triumph for a saint who embraced martyrdom during his life. As Dony d'Attichy notes, Francis was already a martyr in two respects before the cremation of his body because of his death on 'the cross of penitence' and the austere life that he had lived, which Dony d'Attichy labels a 'long martyrdom' in line with the office of his canonization.<sup>33</sup> He then asserts that God allowed his body to be burnt to bless Francis with a third martyrdom so that he could formally gain the title 'martyr', which only came from suffering at the hands of enemies of the faith.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Du Vivier described Francis's submission to God and willing courage to become a martyr in life, before noting that God by his grace 'permitted him to return to the world of men, not to enjoy the false sweetness of life, rather to imitate Jesus Christ's crucifixion, and burn, and consume his love....'<sup>35</sup>

A mystical union with Christ was a defining theme in these histories and the use of the church's crucifix as fuel for the fire that

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<sup>30</sup> In his French edition Victon credits a single Catholic matron with saving the remains, but in his Latin edition he refers to a group of Catholics.

<sup>31</sup> Du Vivier, *Vie... François de Paule*, p. 644.

<sup>32</sup> Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 1, p. 2, and vol. 2, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 3. For the Office of Canonization reference, see Giry, *Vie de Saint François de Paule*, p. 209.

<sup>34</sup> Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 2, pp. 3 and 9.

<sup>35</sup> Du Vivier, *Vie... François de Paule*, p. 643.

consumed Saint Francis became a focal point for this element of the account. Already in 1609, Du Vivier interpreted the use of the Crucifix as symbolizing Christ accompanying Saint Francis in this trial: 'Because Jesus Christ as brave captain could never leave [his follower] alone in combat. Thus they burnt together the image of our Saviour crucified, with the true body of his valorous champion, loyal companion in his labours, and Cross, during the course of his life: who returned the same testimony after his death.'<sup>36</sup>

A variation on this theme used the physical coming together of his remains and the crucifix as a metaphor for the spiritual union of Saint Francis and Christ. Described by Dony d'Attichy as a 'true holocaust of love' he recounts that:

Because Saint Francis of Paola, as a holy burnt offering, having been burnt on the altar of the Cross, and the blaze having devoured the altar and victim, it created an admirable mix of Jesus crucified, and of Saint Francis of Paola; so well that all being reduced to ashes one was not able to discern one from the other they all being mixed up, Jesus being with Saint Francis, and Saint Francis with Jesus, pulverized together in a mass and mound of ashes, which is the state of a union of perfect conformity represented by a physical idea....<sup>37</sup>

This account of a perfect physical union of Christ and Saint Francis provides a corporal metaphor for the spiritual union with Christ that he strived for throughout his life. The events of 1562 were the culmination of his devotion to Christ.

This detailed narrative brought meaning to the iconoclastic attacks, but the earliest of these histories was published nearly a half-century after the event. Where did these historians draw their accounts from? Beyond acknowledging the burning of Saint Francis's remains no document from the 1560s confirmed any of the critical elements found in the published histories, including the removal of Saint Francis's body from his tomb, the location or manner of its burning or the recovery of

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<sup>36</sup> Du Vivier, *Vie... François de Paule*, p. 645.

<sup>37</sup> Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 2, p. 8. Victon offers a very similar interpretation: see Victon, *Vie... François de Paule*, pp. 273-74.

some of his remains.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, no document from the 1560s recounts the cremation of Saint Francis's remains as martyrdom, instead describing the desecration of his corpse as a physical act of destruction.<sup>39</sup>

For those details crucial for the interpretive aspects of the martyrdom narrative, the Minim historians drew on testimonies from members of the order collected in the opening decades of the seventeenth century. Olivier Chaillou, Minim Visitor for France in 1622, conducted a formal enquiry that sought to confirm as much as was possible about what happened at Plessis in April 1562.<sup>40</sup> The testimonies that he collected provided one source for critical elements of the martyrdom narrative. Moreover, Du Vivier, Victon, and Dony d'Attichy all actively solicited testimonies from members of the order for their histories and also asked their readers to comment on and improve their histories after they appeared in print.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Du Vivier and Victon both published updated editions in which they included changes suggested by their brethren or inspired by the work of the other historians.<sup>42</sup> Dony d'Attichy was perhaps

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<sup>38</sup> For an overview of the documents, see ADIL, H 693, pp. 69-70: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*. Many of the documents survive: see ADIL, H 680: *Requête des Minimes*; De Coste, *Portrait... François de Paule*, pp. 482-89. The only sixteenth-century written record that confirms any further element of the account established in the seventeenth-century histories was an entry dated 25 June 1583 in the burial register of the Minim church at Plessis recording the interment of René Bedouët, a local farmer who 'had retrieved from the fire and recovered a good part of the sacred bones of our blessed Father Saint Francis of Paola.' But this document is not cited in any of the histories and was probably unknown to their authors: see ADIL, H 693, p. 68: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>39</sup> ADIL, H 680: *Requête des Minimes*; De Coste, *Portrait... François de Paule*, pp. 482-89.

<sup>40</sup> *Acta sanctorum quotquot tot orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur* (Paris, 1866), vol. 10, pp. 220-23. For Chaillou's intentions, see Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 2, pp. 10-11. These sources were regularly used by later Minim historians to substantiate important elements of the martyrdom narrative: see Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 2, p. 11; La Noue, *Chronicon... Minorum*, p. 262.

<sup>41</sup> Claude du Vivier, *Vie et miracles de Saint François de Paule instituteur de l'ordre des frères Minimes* (Douay, 1622), Au Lecteur; Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 1, ff. ëiv-ëij.

<sup>42</sup> Du Vivier, *Vie... François de Paule* (1622), Au Lecteur; Victon, *Vie... François de Paule*, Au Lecteur; Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 1, Preface. For updated editions, see Claude du Vivier, *Vie... Saint François de Paule* (1622); Francisco Victon, *Vita... Francisco a Paula*.

the most solicitous when, after declaring his intention in his preface to produce an augmented second edition, requested that 'If they [his readers] know something useful about what they have read that would be able to advance my design; that they would do me the favour of sending it to me in writing and signed if it is possible; as I already have from many....'<sup>43</sup> Like Chaillou, Dony d'Attichy solicited depositions in writing through which he sought to construct a written record for those elements of the Minim's history that he could only recover from the remembrances of his colleagues.

Depositions from the Chaillou inquest and memoirs collected by Minim historians were important conduits through which the individual memories of members, often reflecting the collective memories of the community, were integrated into published histories in order to construct an account of the otherwise poorly documented cremation of Saint Francis's remains. Minim historians integrated memories into published histories both at the time of their initial composition and during the preparation of revised editions. In turn, publication strengthened and disseminated these memories previously sustained in the oral traditions of the community. Through time published histories and collective oral traditions worked together to establish and reinforce critical elements of the martyrdom account.

The surviving depositions from Chaillou's 1622 inquest provide a window into the individual memories and orally transmitted traditions within the order that sustained the accounts of Minim historians.<sup>44</sup> In describing his inquest Chaillou noted that 'it was thought righteous that if faithful eye witnesses of this savagery could be found, to ask to hear from them.'<sup>45</sup> But while he sought eye witnesses, sixty years after the event many of the testimonies collected actually offered second-hand accounts frequently based upon oral traditions within the Minim Order and especially the community at Plessis. They reflect collective or social memory, recounting a shared past within the community beyond what the witness could personally remember. Of the four surviving depositions that

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<sup>43</sup> Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... François de Paule*, vol. 1, Preface.

<sup>44</sup> The surviving depositions were reproduced by the Bollandists in their *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 10, pp. 221-23. They chose just those depositions that affirmed the authenticity of Saint Francis's surviving relics. Dony d'Attichy refers to further, now-lost depositions in his history: see Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 2, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup> *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 10, p. 221.



directly address the cremation of Saint Francis's remains, one was from an eyewitness, the Minim friar Charles Royer, then resident in Nantes who as a young man living in Tours had visited the monastery at Plessis shortly after the Protestants sacked it.<sup>46</sup> The other testimonies, all collected at the monastery in Plessis, recounted what witnesses had heard from now deceased members of the order.<sup>47</sup> All agree on several basic elements of the narrative: that the Huguenots forced open Saint Francis's tomb, that they dragged his body to the guest chamber where they burnt it and that devout Catholics in the crowd saved a portion of his remains.<sup>48</sup> But they also vary in important details, as when the Minim friar Marinus Chuppin asserted that the Huguenots burnt the remains of Frederick of Aragon, King of Naples, with those of Saint Francis.<sup>49</sup>

The depositions provide an entry into an oral tradition within the Minim order sixty years after the event in which variations in detail co-existed within a shared basic account. In the case of each second-hand testimony, the original source was emphasized and its credibility affirmed. Through the depositions, one can discern both the prominent role played by older members of the order in preserving and disseminating accounts and the culture of oral transmission that informed later generations with no direct experience of the events. They also cast light on efforts in the opening decades of the seventeenth century to secure written depositions from members of the order whose individual accounts added to the existing record.

Among the Minims, the martyrdom account initially took shape in oral traditions based on the memories of brethren who were present at Plessis during the tumultuous 1560s as retold to younger members within the community. During the opening decades of the seventeenth century Minim officials and historians documented and disseminated these traditions in written depositions and published histories. Through time they produced several accounts of the event centred on the theme of Saint Francis's martyrdom.

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<sup>46</sup> *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 10, p. 222. There was one other eyewitness account among the surviving testimonies, but that witness was present at the translation of Saint Francis's surviving relics from his tomb to a new reliquary in 1582. See *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 10, p. 223.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 10, pp. 222-23.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 221.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 10, p. 222.

Unlike the canons of Saint Martin, the Minims at Plessis did not create physical memorials of the events until Saint Francis's martyrdom was already established in printed histories. The first physical memorial commissioned by the Minims was a painting completed at some point between 1623 and 1635 that hung in the church, most likely near Saint Francis's tomb. It recounts the cremation of Saint Francis's remains in two panels, one depicting the desecration of his tomb and the other the burning of his body.<sup>50</sup> (See Figure 3 on next page.) The lower portion of the panel, now lost, incorporated a lengthy Latin inscription modelled on the one created in the 1570s for the memorial outside the transept door at Saint Martin's basilica. The account reproduces the same narrative found in the recently published histories before celebrating the event as a martyrdom granted by God.<sup>51</sup> Most likely commissioned in the aftermath of the Chaillou inquest, the painting anchored remembrance of the events of 1562 at the heart of devotions to the saint in a manner reminiscent of the memorials established at Saint Martin's basilica.

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<sup>50</sup> La Noue, *Chronicon... Minorum*, p. 263.

<sup>51</sup> Dony d'Attichy makes no mention of this painting during his visit to Plessis in 1623: see Dony d'Attichy, *Histoire... des Minimes*, vol. 2, pp. 11-12. La Noue confirms the existence of the painting in his *Chronicon* published in 1635: see La Noue, *Chronicon... Minorum*, pp. 262-63. For more on the painting, see Robert Fiot, *Jean de Bourdichon et Saint François de Paule* (Tours, 1961), pp. 83-84 and figure 12.



*Figure 3: Desecration of the tomb of Saint Francis of Paola by the Protestants, an anonymous seventeenth-century painting commissioned for the Minim church at Plessis-lès-Tours. [Peinture provenant des collections de la Société Archéologique de Touraine, France. Cote HG 870.055.0001, [www.societearcheotouraine.eu](http://www.societearcheotouraine.eu)]*

The painting was the only physical memorial commissioned by the Minims to commemorate the event. They chose not to preserve the place where Francis's remains were cremated. Instead, in 1616 the fireplace in the guest chamber was torn out and replaced by a new one in a different part of the room.<sup>52</sup> However, it is likely that places of remembrance existed within the monastery, even if they were not physically transformed into memorials. By the second half of the eighteenth century major building works at Plessis had transformed the monastery; nonetheless, the community was still aware that the chamber now known as the 'salon boisé' was the site where the Huguenots burnt Saint Francis's remains. Moreover, several Minim authors asserted that Saint Francis's relics were objects of remembrance as they continued to work miracles at sites across Europe reminding all of the iconoclasts' failure.<sup>53</sup>

In their public accounts both the canons of Saint Martin and the Minims at Plessis celebrated rather than lamented the cremation of their founder's remains. Far from the violent heretics being victorious, the attackers were the unwitting actors in God's plan to honour their patrons with the laurel of martyrdom. In this context, the events of 1562 were another chapter in each saint's glorious tradition. Indeed for Minim historians, the memory of both saints was linked together as were their martyrdoms. Writing in the 1650s, the influential Minim Hilarion de Coste noted,

One is able to say of this saintly founder of the Minims, one of the Patrons of this beautiful Province, what the Church chants for the great Saint Martin Archbishop of Tours: 'Oh happy soul who has not lost the palm of martyrdom and the crown of a martyr, although the sword of the Tyrant has not separated the head from the body where it is attached.' Because the bodies of the two very loyal servants of God were burnt at nearly the same time by the heretics.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> ADIL, H 693, pp. 6 and 68: *Inventaire raisonné... des Minimes*.

<sup>53</sup> See, for instance, Giry, *Vie de Saint François de Paule*, pp. 209-12.

<sup>54</sup> Coste, *Portrait... François de Paule*, p. 247.

The Benedictine communities at Saint Lomer in Blois and Marmoutier outside Tours understood the iconoclastic attacks on their monasteries very differently from the canons of Saint Martin or the Minims at Plessis. Both interpreted the events of the 1560s as expressions of God and their patron saints' displeasure with their failings. Similarly they viewed the return of their patron relics in the seventeenth century as embodying God's approval of renewal within these communities. The accounts took shape over half a century after the event, because the meaning of the 1560s only became clear following the reform of Saint Lomer in 1627 and Marmoutier a decade later.<sup>55</sup>

Today remembrance of the religious wars within the Benedictine communities survives most fully in written histories that were produced as part of a movement among Benedictines during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to preserve the history of their order.<sup>56</sup> They were influential at the time of their writing and remain so today because these Benedictine scholars worked from the now largely lost archives of their communities.<sup>57</sup> The accounts are particularly interesting for our purposes because in both communities – Saint Lomer and Marmoutier – the loss and recovery of relics physically embodied the events of the 1560s and renewal under the Saint Maur Congregation.

In the 1640s the Benedictine monk Noel Mars wrote the first history of Saint Lomer in Blois that addressed its sacking in 1568.<sup>58</sup> After chronicling the destruction to monastic buildings and fabric, the breaking of images and stained glass, the burning of the monastery's archives, the plundering of church treasure and the loss of many of the monastery's most important relics, Mars reveals that the monks of the abbey participated in the looting and acquiesced in the dumping of many of the church's relics into the latrines.<sup>59</sup> Rather than suppress or downplay the

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<sup>55</sup> Yves Chaussy, *Les Bénédictins de Saint-Maur* (Paris, 1989), vol. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Daniel-Odon Hurel, 'Les Mauristes, historiens de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: méthodes, justifications monographiques de la réforme et défense de la centralisation monastique,' in *Écrire son histoire: les communautés régulières face à leur passé*, edited by Nicole Bouter (Saint-Étienne, 2005), pp. 257-74.

<sup>57</sup> For evidence of their influence, see Chaussy, *Les Bénédictins*; Jean Bernier, *Histoire de Blois* (Paris, 1682), pp. 38-45.

<sup>58</sup> It was first published in the nineteenth century: see Noel Mars, *Histoire du royal monastère de Saint-Lomer de Blois de l'ordre de Saint-Benoist* (Blois, 1869).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243-44.

complicity of the community Mars emphasized it, noting that several monks were ultimately convicted of offenses associated with the looting.<sup>60</sup> For Mars the actions of these corrupt monks concerned with worldly gain rather than their duty to protect the patrons of the monastery symbolized the wider decline of the community over the previous half-century as it had increasingly lost its discipline: 'I am not astonished that God sent all these afflictions and calamities on the monastery of Blois. The religious were living with so little feeling for their duty, that they deserved to be visited with the rigours that I am going to chronicle.'<sup>61</sup> In Mars's history, the sacking of 1568 marked the abandonment of the institution by its patron saints, symbolized by the physical loss of their relics. Mars represented the decades that followed as a difficult period when the community continued to disintegrate. The monks, whose living quarters had been destroyed by the Protestants, lived separately in private accommodation and their disorderly behaviour grew worse, undermining their reputation in town.<sup>62</sup>

While Mars's account painted a dire picture of his community at the turn of the seventeenth century, he juxtaposed this sorry state with its renewed vigour under the leadership of the Saint Maur Congregation. For Mars the fortunes of the community started to improve from 1607 when Guillaume Fouquet, seigneur de la Varenne, became abbot and began to renew the physical fabric of the monastery and especially its church. Then from the early 1620s the community began to rebuild its domestic buildings in earnest, and in 1627 it formally embraced spiritual and

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 243-44. There is considerable indirect evidence that the monks were in fact exonerated of this crime. An eighteenth-century inventory records an accord dated 20 September 1571 between the officers of the abbey and several monks accused of having stolen precious metals and jewels from the reliquaries during the sacking of the monastery. It recognizes that only Rouvin, a former monk of Saint Lomer and now a married Huguenot, was involved: see ADLC, 11.H.125, f. 371: *Inventaire des titres de l'abbaye, 1665 (avec additions jusqu'en 1732)*. Moreover, the obituary dated 16 July 1573 for one of the accused monks, Guillaume Le Vasseur, indicates that he remained a monk in good standing following the sacking: see ADLC, 11.H.121, f. 29: *Obituaire des religieux de Saint Lomer et des prieurés en dependant, 1564-1627*.

<sup>61</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 239-42, quotation from p. 242.

<sup>62</sup> Mars's account on this point correlates well with the capitulary acts of his community. See, for instance, ADLC, 11.H.8, ff. 11-16v: *Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 1611*; ADLC, 11.H.9, ff. 6-11: *Actes capitulaires de Saint Lomer, 1617*.

disciplinary renewal within the Benedictine tradition through the Saint Maur reform movement, one in which Noel Mars himself was a dedicated participant.<sup>63</sup>

Mars sees the patron saints' approval of this reform in the miraculous recovery in 1624 of relics lost in 1568. If moral failing led to the physical and spiritual abandonment of Saint Lomer by its patron saints, its renewal heralded their return:

As if they [the saints] spoke out to reform in Saint-Lomer, it happened that Monsieur Richer, an old monk of this community, was searching latrines that were near a small garden he had, and where he had heard several old monks say that it was in this place where the holy relics had been thrown, when the town of Blois was pillaged by the Huguenots... in which... we found four heads without documentation, which rendered a very sweet smell....<sup>64</sup>

As Mars suggests at the opening of this passage, the physical and moral renewal of the monastic community provided the context for the miraculous recovery of these relics, including those of their chief patron Saint Lomer. Mars's account contextualizes the iconoclastic violence of 1568 in the broader narrative of abandonment by patrons followed by moral renewal and their return. For Mars and his community the contrast between the destruction of the monastery in the 1560s and the impressive building work reaching fruition in the early 1640s when he wrote his account must have been particularly striking, especially the completion of new domestic buildings that physically represented the return of communal monastic life. Looking back nearly eighty years after the event, Mars placed the iconoclasm of the 1560s in a much longer history that began with the community's decline decades before the wars and concluded with its reform over a half-century after the attacks.

In the opening decades of the eighteenth century, Edmond Martène, the Benedictine historian of Marmoutier abbey, wrote the first history of his community that addressed its sacking in 1562. Like Mars, his account interpreted the iconoclasm as reflecting God's wish to punish the community for its moral failings. While less explicit than Mars, his

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<sup>63</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, pp. 251-70.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

account also defines the destruction and replacement of his community's relics of Saint Martin as reflecting the loss and return of God's favour.

Martène framed his chapters on religious war and renewal with statements that sought to give meaning to the events. The opening sentence of his chapter on the sacking of Marmoutier established Martène's interpretation: 'God, to punish their sins and require them to come back to him in themselves and have recourse to him, permitted their monastery to be pillaged and nearly ruined by the Huguenots.'<sup>65</sup> He then chronicled at length the damage to the monastery, the flight of the community and the stealing of its treasures, before returning to the looting of relics to once again emphasize his theme that God expressed his displeasure with the community through the attack. After noting that the monks were able to save a number of relics because the Protestants left them scattered on the ground after breaking apart the larger reliquaries for transport into Tours, he observed that 'One would have wished that they had at the same time placed their sacrilegious hands on the reliquary of abbot Saint Martin, and that they had broken it as the others, since then we would have procured the happy conservation of these precious relics, like those of other saints, but perhaps we were not worthy enough to possess such a rich treasure.'<sup>66</sup> Like Mars, Martène laments the loss of their patron's relics as a sign of God's displeasure with his community

Martène paints a grim picture of his community in the aftermath of the wars. Discipline and communal life, which had already been in decline, collapsed, and the religious were resistant to reform into the early 1630s, with a faction of rebellious monks rebuffing the efforts of Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, to reform the monastery until 1637.<sup>67</sup> Martène recounts the efforts of some unreformed monks to disrupt the community even after the official reform, but in the end the Saint Maur Congregation prevailed in the 1640s.

Looking back from the early eighteenth century, Martène framed these developments in terms of returning to the spirit of their patrons. Thus at the opening of the chapter recounting the adoption of the Saint Maur reform, he asserted '... the religious of Marmoutier had need of reform. It was effectively absolutely necessary to return their abbey to its former glory, and to revive the first spirit of Saint Martin, of Saint Maur,

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<sup>65</sup> Edmond Martène, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier* (Tours, 1875), vol. 2, p. 373.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 376.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 472-85.



of Saint Mayeul and other saint abbots who had lived and died in the odour of sanctity.<sup>68</sup> The conclusion of this lengthy chapter returns to this theme when he offers a detailed account of the translation of the radius of Saint Martin from Cluny to Marmoutier in 1641. Martène emphasizes that Dom Bède de Fiesque, who led efforts to secure the radius from Cluny at the height of the struggle to reform the monastery, sought it in order to ‘revive the first spirit of their founder Saint Martin.’<sup>69</sup>

While less explicit than his counterpart Noel Mars, Martène’s account also linked the arrival of the relics with renewal, both by emphasizing the miracles worked by the relic in Tours and the coming together of the reformed and unreformed monks who all participated in the translation ceremonies.<sup>70</sup> Arrival of the radius spurred further revival of the Martin devotions in the monastery, including the refurbishment of both the grotto known as the Repos de Saint Martin and the Sept-Dormants chapel.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, building on the devotional fervour expressed at the translation, the monks of Marmoutier established a new annual celebration, the ‘Exception des reliques de Saint Martin’, that attracted considerable crowds, especially to the public procession of the radius with the other major relics of the monastery.<sup>72</sup> This annual event celebrated the physical return of their patron to their community and at the same time commemorated the renewal of monastic discipline at Marmoutier.

The memory of just punishment followed by renewal so prominent in these two histories reflected how these reformed communities remembered the religious wars by the eighteenth century. But this interpretation could only have taken shape following renewal of these communities over half a century after the event. Mars and Martène’s histories provide the fullest surviving accounts of these interpretations, but memories of iconoclasm and renewal were also present in the relic displays of these two communities. The four heads recovered by the monks at Saint Lomer ultimately received authentication by the bishop of Chartres as long as they were displayed with other relics whose authenticity was beyond question.<sup>73</sup> By the 1640s the head of Saint Lubin had been placed in a new silver reliquary while the remaining three were

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 472.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 485-86.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 487-88.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 485-86.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 490-91.

<sup>73</sup> Mars, *Histoire*, p. 260.

displayed in two gilded boxes with other relics of uncertain identity. They were regularly placed on the high altar and to the side of the image of Notre Dame.<sup>74</sup> Similarly Saint Martin's radius at Marmoutier was displayed in the main relic shrine behind the high altar with the other most revered relics of the community. The continued presence of Saint Martin was celebrated in a verse above the niche holding the radius:

Lamented extinguished native light; that heretics  
Burnt his relics with sacrilegious pyre.  
Now devotions to him are renewed by joyful people;  
With the return of the lost light of this RADIUS.<sup>75</sup>

It was also honoured on the feast days of Saint Martin and the new 'Exception des reliques de Saint Martin' celebration. These relics provided physical reminders of renewal, but also of the tumultuous events of the religious wars.

The four religious communities at the centre of this chapter produced the most fully developed remembrances of iconoclasm in the region for which sources have survived. Like many other communities in France where Catholics triumphed, they failed to embrace *oubliance* as envisioned by the Crown. Instead the iconoclastic acts of the religious wars became part of their social memories. The narratives of martyrdom and moral failing followed by renewal contextualized the iconoclasm of the 1560s into broader accounts of trial and triumph. The religious wars ultimately became another positive chapter in the history of these communities and their patrons. Their remembrances took many forms. At Saint Martin, physical and liturgical celebrations anchored the martyrdom interpretation in the basilica and the ritual life of the canons. These commemorative activities in turn shaped the first written histories to address the cremation of Saint Martin's remains, in which the inscriptions on memorials in the basilica were reproduced. At the Minim house in Plessis, the martyrdom narrative first took shape in the oral traditions of the community before being integrated into published histories of their founder and ultimately a painting that hung in the church. For the two Benedictine abbeys, the account of decline followed by renewal only took shape over a half-century after the event when members of the Saint Maur movement

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<sup>74</sup> ADLC, 11.H.122, f. 3: Inventaire du mobilier de l'abbaye de Saint Lomer, 1677-1686.

<sup>75</sup> Martène, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 496.

looked back on the destruction of the sixteenth century from the perspective of more recent reform of their communities. Ultimately members of the movement most fully articulated this interpretation of events in written histories.

In each case relics played a significant role in these accounts. The physical destruction of Saint Martin and Saint Francis of Paola's relics brought these holy men the laurel of martyrdom. At Saint Lomer and Marmoutier, the physical loss and ultimate recovery or replacement of patron relics embodied the abandonment and later return of patrons to these communities.

These four sites were unusual because of the extent to which sources allow us to examine how they constructed through time accounts that gave meaning to the iconoclasm of the religious wars. But remembrance also took place at other sites around the region of which we can catch glimpses in surviving sources. For some, like the Benedictine abbey of Saint Julien in Tours, the remnants of lost relics and the spaces in which they were once displayed provided places of remembrance for the community. As a seventeenth-century historian of the monastery reports in his chapter on relics: 'Of the relics and sacred things of this monastery, signs remain of them in the form of old anonymous fragments in this well destroyed and damaged monastery.'<sup>76</sup> These memories were also sustained in the liturgical life of Saint Julien, where celebrations continued for saints whose relics were no longer present.<sup>77</sup> In many places physical scars from the religious wars served as memorials for decades or even centuries, like at the parish church of Notre Dame de la Riche in Tours where its half-destroyed bell tower stood until the 1780s.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, repair of religious war damage often coincided with the creation of memorials to commemorate what was repaired. At Saint Gatien in Tours, when the cathedral chapter and Simon de Maillé-Brézé, archbishop of Tours, replaced the high altar's bronze grille in 1579, they included two inscriptions in verse. Both acknowledged the destruction wrought by the

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<sup>76</sup> BnF, MS Latin 12677, ff. 139-41: St Ivliani in vrbe Turonensi abatia.

<sup>77</sup> The abbey of Saint Julien, for instance, continued to celebrate the feast day of Saint Odo on 18 November despite the loss of his relics: Marteau de Saint Gatien, *Paradis délicieux*, bk. 4, p. 28.

<sup>78</sup> ADIL, G 999: Requête, en 1783, des fabriciers et commissaires de la paroisse à l'intendant, pour obtenir de faire disparaître un grand pilier situé en face la principale porte de leur église, seul reste de l'ancienne église brûlée par les Huguenots.

Protestants in the church and the renewal that the new grille represented.<sup>79</sup> In this case replacement of a looted item inspired the creation of a memorial but one designed to rectify rather than sanctify the site, allowing it to return to its original use.<sup>80</sup>

To conclude at the collegiate church of Saint Georges in Vendôme where this chapter began, physical reminders of religious war feature prominently in the histories of Canons du Bellay and Michel Simon.<sup>81</sup> Both emphasized the grave of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, at the heart of the choir, presenting it as the physical embodiment of the injustice suffered by the community at her hands.<sup>82</sup> Beyond establishing blame for the losses suffered by the church, the emphasis on Jeanne in these histories also placed the collegiate church's fate into a wider pattern of destruction that she oversaw in her lands in southwest France.<sup>83</sup> Jeanne's sacking of Saint Georges tied its losses into the wider heroic struggle against heresy and heretical rulers.

As elsewhere, relics also anchored memories of religious war losses at Saint Georges. Both Du Bellay and Simon recount that ever since Jeanne d'Albret melted down the treasures of the church, the canons had kept their pre-religious war relics in a simple wooden box stored in an armoire near the altar.<sup>84</sup> These relics shorn of their treasure embodied the losses of the religious wars. Du Bellay takes the relic imagery a step further when he juxtaposes relic losses with Jeanne's burial: 'thus we hold

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<sup>79</sup> Ioannis Maan, *Sancta et metropolitana ecclesia Turonensis* (Tours, 1667), p. 200.

<sup>80</sup> For more on the rectification of sites, see G r me Truc, 'Memory of Places and Places of Memory: for a Halbwachsian Socio-Ethnography of Collective Memory,' *International Social Science Journal* 62 (2011), 153. Saint Lomer also placed a memorial plaque with a similar purpose in its church following the completion of their rebuilding campaign in the 1640s: see ADLC, 11.H.3, f. 7: *Livre des choses memorables qui se sont pass s dans le monast re Saint Lomer*; Mars, *Histoire*, p. 273.

<sup>81</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 71: *Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vend me*; Michel Simon, *Histoire de Vend me et de ses environs* (Vend me, 1834), vol. 1, p. 384.

<sup>82</sup> BAG, MS 54, pp. 67-70: Du Bellay, *Calendrier Historique... Saint Georges de Vend me*; Simon, *Histoire de Vend me*, vol. 1, pp. 380-90.

<sup>83</sup> Simon, *Histoire de Vend me*, vol. 1, pp. 386-87.

<sup>84</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 71: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique... Saint Georges de Vend me*; Simon, *Histoire de Vend me*, vol. 1, pp. 384-85. While the relics of saints Opportune and Godegrand were kept in a separate reliquary, neither historian notes this in his account.

this miserable relic [Jeanne's remains] in place of all the holy and revered relics that we had before all held in such beautiful reliquaries.<sup>85</sup>

Saint Georges also reminds us that these memories took time to establish, and that they could evolve and co-exist with other remembrances. In the same period that Simon wrote his history, his fellow canons were advancing a very different account of their heroic sacrifices in support of the Bourbon family. In a letter addressed to Louis XVI and the king's brother Louis Stanislas Xavier, comte de Provence, duc d'Anjou, d'Alençon and de Vendôme (and future Louis XVIII), the canons asserted that in 1562:

The mother of Henri revealed to the canons of Vendôme the needs of her son, who had lost Antoine de Bourbon, his father, killed at the siege of Rouen; they surrendered immediately their ornaments, sacred vessels, all the riches of their church, they would give themselves to help a hero worthy of being King of France.<sup>86</sup>

The letter sought compensation for the treasure seized by the King's ancestor Jeanne de Navarre and included a copy of the detailed receipt given to the canons in 1562 recording the treasure seized from the church. Nothing came of this petition, but it shows how accounts of the destruction continued to evolve to meet the present needs of communities. Gone from this account is Jeanne the villain, replaced by the heroic sacrifice of the canons in support of the Bourbon dynasty. While undoubtedly a contrived fiction, which runs counter to the chronology of events in 1562, the changed meaning reveals the continued rethinking of what happened in light of the community's needs. In this way the experience of Saint Georges reflected developments at Saint Martin, and those of the Minims at Plessis, Saint Lomer and Marmoutier.

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<sup>85</sup> BAG, MS 54, p. 71: Du Bellay, *Calendrier historique*... Saint Georges de Vendôme.

<sup>86</sup> Charles Métais, 'Jeanne d'Albret et la spoliation de l'église Saint-Georges de Vendôme le 19 mai 1562: inventaire des bijoux et reliquaires spoliés par Jeanne d'Albret à la collégiale,' *BSASLV* 20 (1881), 300-1.

## Conclusion

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The iconoclastic cleansing of relic shrines in the region around Tours, Blois and Vendôme was one manifestation of a wider struggle between Huguenots and Catholics over two competing conceptions of the ideal Christian community, both of which encompassed the sacred and the civic.<sup>1</sup> In the period leading up to the outbreak of religious war Protestants and Catholics viewed their communities as dangerously corrupted and in need of urgent renewal. But, as Barbara Diefendorf has noted:

From here they parted ways. For Protestants, the goal was to create a newly purified and godly society; for Catholics, it was to excise the pollution of heresy and restore the sacred to its proper place in the city. These aims were mutually exclusive, and the ‘rituals of repair’ that each side employed to restore their imagined community excluded the other.<sup>2</sup>

The violence of this struggle and the impossibility of compromise contributed significantly to the length and bitterness of the religious wars.

From its beginning disputes over public spaces sparked some of the most violent and destructive manifestations of this struggle between rival conceptions of the sacred community.<sup>3</sup> This was the case in the

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<sup>1</sup> Graeme Murdock, Penny Roberts and Andrew Spicer (eds.), *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France* (Oxford, 2012); Allan Tulchin, *That Men Would Praise the Lord: the Triumph of Protestantism in Nîmes, 1530-1570* (Oxford, 2010); Philip Benedict, ‘The Dynamics of Protestant Militancy,’ in *Reformation, Revolt, and Civil War in France and the Netherlands, 1555-1585*, edited by Philip Benedict, Guido Marnef, Henk van Nierop and Marc Venard (Amsterdam, 1999), pp. 35-50; Olivier Christin, *Une révolution symbolique: l’iconoclasme huguenot et la reconstruction catholique* (Paris, 1991); Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-vers 1610* (2 vols., Seyssel, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Diefendorf, ‘Rites of Repair: Restoring Community in the French Religious Wars,’ in *Ritual and Violence*, edited by Murdock, Roberts and Spicer, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, ‘The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,’ *Past and Present* 59 (1973), 53-91; Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath*

regions around Tours, Blois and Vendôme where no places were more contentious than consecrated Catholic churches built to house relic shrines. For the Huguenots who seized control of these sites, relic veneration was nothing more than idolatry that they had to purge in order to repair the landscape. The public destruction of relics also allowed the Huguenots an opportunity to express what Olivier Christin terms ‘*théologie pratique*’, demonstrating the absence of the sacred in objects through their destruction.<sup>4</sup> Relic shrines became targets through which Protestants challenged Catholic conceptions of the sacred community.<sup>5</sup> As we have seen in the preceding chapters, from the perspective of Catholics in the region iconoclastic acts were sacrilegious attacks on their most holy objects and sites. Catholics purified and repaired their relic shrines in order to reestablish their sacred place in the community. Moreover they undertook a form of ‘*théologie pratique*’ as well, using physical repairs, relic translations and forms of remembrance to assert Catholic understandings of the sacred and the community.

This struggle between Catholics and Huguenots expressed in the physical and ritual shaping and reshaping of relic shrines has provided a revealing window into the broader struggle over the sacred in the community. In the short run Huguenot iconoclasts posed a significant challenge to Catholic conceptions of the sacred. Destroyed relics, damaged shrines and looted treasures disrupted traditions of relic veneration and altered the experience of the relic landscape. However, Catholics ultimately regained and retained control of the region. Under their oversight the relic landscape was rebuilt, renewed, reshaped and reinvented in ways that reflected their understanding of an ideal community and its relation to the sacred. Long tradition and the commitment of the faithful to an understanding of the sacred community

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*the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford, 1991); Christin, *Révolution*; Penny Roberts, ‘Contesting Sacred Space: Burial Disputes in Sixteenth Century France,’ in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, edited by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 131-48; Keith Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, DC, 2005); Amanda Eurich, ‘Sacralising Space: Reclaiming Civic Culture in Early Modern France,’ in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 259-81.

<sup>4</sup> Christin, *Révolution*, pp. 149-74.

<sup>5</sup> Diefendorf, ‘Rites of Repair,’ pp. 35-42.

that included patron relics in their shrines helped sustain veneration, even if the experience of relic devotions changed.

Over the longer term, the nature of relic veneration also served to mitigate the impact of the iconoclastic challenge during the religious wars. The relic landscape continued to evolve, renewing and reinventing devotions in the region. Communities rebuilt established sites and the tombs of new local holy figures attracted veneration. Churches across the region acquired new relics through translations to support pre-existing devotions to saints, while relics of saints without followings also flowed into the region as gifts. Through time the iconoclastic challenge to the landscape faded, becoming another chapter in a long history of trial and triumph. Memorials, liturgy, oral traditions, written histories and artistic works supported Catholic interpretations of iconoclasm that gave meaning to the events and strengthened their understanding of the sacred in the community.

The triumph of Catholics in the region did not leave the ideal community as expressed through relic shrines unchallenged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Within the Catholic Church, Rigorists and Jansenists questioned relic devotions and the conceptions of the sacred in the community that relics represented. Perhaps the most dramatic of these challenges in the region concerned the Sainte Larme in Vendôme, which became the focus for a particularly heated exchange of pamphlets concerning the relic's authenticity.<sup>6</sup> However, these debates occurred primarily among elites, while traditions of relic veneration continued in local communities.

The most profound challenge to relic veneration and the concept of community that it represented came at the end of the eighteenth century when French Revolutionaries led a sustained assault on the relic landscape as part of a wider rejection of the sacred community. Once again relics were destroyed, church treasure was seized and extensive damage was done to churches and church fabrics. Many of the major relic sites in the region were completely destroyed, including the collegiate churches of Saint Martin in Tours and Saint Georges in Vendôme, the Minim

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<sup>6</sup> Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Dissertation sur la Sainte Larme de Vendôme* (Paris, 1699); Jean Mabillon, *Lettre d'un bénédictin à Monseigneur l'évesque de Blois, touchant le discernement des anciennes reliques, au sujet d'une dissertation de Mr Thiers, contre la Sainte Larme de Vendôme* (Paris, 1700); Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Réponse à la lettre du Père Mabillon, touchant la prétendue Sainte Larme de Vendôme* (Cologne, 1700).



monastery in Plessis-lès-Tours, the abbey of Marmoutier outside Tours and the Augustinian foundation of Bourgmoyen in Blois.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to earlier Huguenot attacks, the Revolutionaries permanently disbanded the religious communities dedicated to overseeing relic shrines and disposed of the endowments that sustained them. Thus, even when churches survived like Saint Lomer in Blois or Trinité in Vendôme, the communities of monks that once presided over the elaborate liturgies associated with relic veneration did not. While Catholic worship returned to the region in the early nineteenth century, the faith and its relic shrines never recovered their former place in defining the ideal community.

The fate of relics that survived the Revolution reflected this new reality. At Trinité abbey in Vendôme the relics were burnt on the flagstones of Saint Michel chapel in 1792 but Jean Morin saved as a curiosity the Sainte Larme. Ultimately it was given in the early nineteenth century to Giovanni Battista Caprara, the Papal Cardinal Legate in France, at which point it disappeared from the historical record.<sup>8</sup> Similarly at Marmoutier, the relics of Saint Corentin survived the Revolution, but were given in 1806 by Jean de Dieu-Raymond Boisgelin, archbishop of Tours, to Pierre-Vincent Dombineau, bishop of Quimper where Corentin was the first bishop, at which point they disappeared. These relics lost their importance when they were removed from their traditional veneration sites and were separated from the communities dedicated to preserving their place in the landscape.<sup>9</sup>

Even those that survived and remained in the region were incorporated into a much altered landscape.<sup>10</sup> As Patrick Geary has emphasized while writing on relic theft in the Middle Ages, relics derive their meaning from the context in which they are displayed: ‘Although

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<sup>7</sup> With the exception of Saint Martin’s basilica which was rebuilt in the late nineteenth century, none of these churches were replaced after the Revolution.

<sup>8</sup> Achille de Rochambeau, *Voyage à la Sainte-Larme de Vendôme* (Vendôme, 1874), pp. 54-55.

<sup>9</sup> Guy-Marie Oury, ‘La dévotion des anciens moines aux saintes reliques: Saint Corentin à Marmoutier,’ *BSAT* 39 (1979), 107.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, by tradition a portion of the Radius of Saint Martin held at Marmoutier since its translation from Cluny in 1641 is believed now to be in the treasury of the parish church of Notre Dame de la Riche in Tours. See Thierry Barbeau, ‘Réforme monastique et renouveau liturgique à l’abbaye de Marmoutier à l’époque moderne: révision et composition du Propre,’ in *Dom Jean Mabillon, figure majeure de l’Europe des lettres*, edited by Jean Leclant, André Vauchez and Daniel-Odon Hurel (Paris, 2010), pp. 117-18.

symbolic objects, they are of the most arbitrary kind, passively reflecting only exactly so much meaning as they were given by a particular community.<sup>11</sup> Put another way, it was the Catholic clergy and faithful in the early modern period that made relics an important part of their ideal Christian community, and the permanent disruption of that community from the 1790s altered the role of relics in the landscape. Huguenot challenges to relic veneration in the sixteenth century could have potentially had a similar impact, but the triumph of Catholics, the survival of religious communities who oversaw relic shrines and the continued devotion of the faithful resulted in the renewal of the relic landscape and repair of the significant physical damage to its infrastructure.

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<sup>11</sup> Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990), p. 5.

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