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THE ART OF FORGERY:
THE SERMONS OF ADEMAR OF CHABANNES
AND THE CULT OF ST. MARTIAL OF LIMOGES*

Michael Frassetto

In two of his minor works, *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*, Augustine presented the orthodox doctrine on lying. Inspired by his argument with Jerome over the issue of the disagreement of the apostles Peter and Paul and the question of whether one may lie in order to defeat heretics, Augustine developed a moral theology in which he declared that under virtually no circumstance was it acceptable to lie. Despite Augustine's unequivocal denunciation of lying and his towering influence over the thought of the Middle Ages, it is evident from even a superficial overview that medieval writers frequently lied. The practice of forgery—the act of creating written documents where none had existed in order to gain economic or political advantage, or to provide textual evidence for something widely regarded as having occurred—was so widespread throughout the medieval period that we now find competing claims for the title “golden age of forgery.”¹ From the time of the False Donation of

*A version of this paper was read at the 9th Conference on Medieval-Renaissance Studies at the New College of the University of South Florida, March 10-12, 1994. I would like to thank Amelia Carr for organizing the session at which this paper was presented. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided me the opportunity to attend a summer seminar on Augustine and his influence under the direction of James J. Odonnell, where I began to consider the issue of forgery.

¹Christopher Brooke, (“Approaches to Medieval Forgery,” in *Medieval Church and Society* [New York: New York Univ. Press, 1971], 103) notes that the twelfth century was a great age of forgery but also that the ninth century witnessed a great flourishing of forgery. Concerning the issue of forgery, see also Elizabeth A. R. Brown, “*Falsitas pia sive reprehensibilis*: Medieval Forgers and Their Intentions,” in *Kongressdaten und Festvorträge*, vol. 1 of *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae historica* 33 (Hannover: Hahnische Buchhandlung, 1988), 101-19; Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 318-27; Giles Constable, “Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages”, *Archiv für*

Constantine and the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals to the high water mark of the twelfth century, forgery remained a valuable and often used skill. Clearly, the practice of forgery was no deviant exercise but a commonplace activity for those with no other means to demonstrate what they perceived as truth.² And to understand the medieval mentality better we must examine the practices and purposes of the forgers themselves.

Perhaps the finest of all medieval forgers, one who truly raised forgery to the level of art, was the Limousin monk Ademar of Chabannes (c. 989-1034).³ Unfortunately, scholars have not always

Diplomatik 29 (1983): 1-41; Giles Constable, "Forged Letters in the Middle Ages," in *Fingierte Briefe*, vol. 5 of *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, 11-37; and Hugh Silvester, "Le problème des faux au Moyen Age (A propos d'un livre récent de M. Saxer)," *Le Moyen Age*, 4th ser., 15, vol. 66 (1960): 351-70.

² Despite Brown's demonstration ("Medieval Forgers," 109-15) that forgery was actively opposed and legislated against, there continued, as she also notes, to be an abundance of forged material. It is this continued practice of forgery in the face of official condemnation that must be studied on a case by case basis.

³ The bibliography on Ademar is growing but among the more important contributions are Daniel Callahan, "Ademar of Chabannes and his Insertions into Bede's *Expositio actuum apostolorum*," *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993): 385-400; Daniel Callahan, "The Problem of the 'Filioque' and the Letter from the Pilgrim Monks of the Mount of Olives to Pope Leo III and Charlemagne," *Revue bénédictine* 102 (1992): 75-134; Daniel Callahan, "Ademar de Chabannes et la Paix de Dieu," *Annales du Midi* 89 (1977): 21-43; Daniel Callahan, "The Sermons of Ademar of Chabannes and the Cult of St. Martial of Limoges," *Revue bénédictine* 86 (1976): 251-95; Leopold Delisle, "Notice sur les manuscrits originaux d'Ademar de Chabannes," *Notice et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale* 35 (1896): 241-358; John Gillingham, "Ademar of Chabannes and the history of Aquitaine in the reign of Charles the Bald," in *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, eds. Janet Nelson and M. Gibson (Oxford: B.A.R., 1981), 3-14; Richard Landes, "A Libellus from St. Martial of Limoges Written in the Time of Ademar of Chabannes (989-1034)" *Scriptorium* 37 (1983): 178-204; Richard Landes "The Making of a Medieval Historian: Ademar of Chabannes and Aquitaine at the Turn of the Millennium" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1984); H. B. Porter, "The Rites of the Dying in the Early Middle Ages, 1: St. Theodulf of Orleans," *Journal of Theological Studies*, new ser., 10 (1959): 43-62; Herbert Schneider, "Ademar von Chabannes und Pseudoisidor—der 'Mythomane' und der Erzfälscher," in *Gefälschte Rechtstecke der bestrafte Fälscher*, vol. 2 of *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, 129-50; Robert Lee Wolff, "How the News was brought from Byzantium to Angoulême; or, The Pursuit of a Hare in an Ox Cart," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1978): 139-65; and the following articles by Louis Saltet in the *Bulletin de la littérature ecclésiastique*: "Une discussion sur Saint Martial entre un Lombard et un Limousin en 1029," 26 (1925): 161-86, 279-302; "Une prétendue lettre de Jean XIX sur Saint Martial fabriqué par Ademar de Chabannes," 27 (1926): 117-39; "Les faux d'Ademar de Chabannes: Prétendues décisions sur Saint Martial au concile de Bourges du 1^{er} novembre 1031," 27 (1926): 145-60, and "Un cas de mythomanie historique bien documente: Ademar de Chabannes

recognized the extent of Ademar's activities as a forger. In fact, some scholars have lauded Ademar as a scrupulous historian whose literary works are among the more reliable sources from his age.⁴ Moreover, many scholars who work on the Peace of God movement, including H. E. J. Cowdrey, Georges Duby, and Steven Sargent, have failed to acknowledge that the account of the Council of Limoges in 1031 was a document forged by Ademar.⁵ Perhaps the worst example of this can be found in a 1981 book by Michel Aubrun, who notes Ademar's propensity to forgery but then accepts all the material from Ademar's corpus uncritically.⁶ And even the most useful introduction to the sermons of Ademar does not fully emphasize their nature as a forgery, noting they were to be used as propaganda pieces for the cult of St. Martial.⁷ An examination of Ademar's activities, thus, would enable us to understand his own extensive corpus better and provide us with important insights into the practice of forgery in the Middle Ages.

A monk associated with St. Cybard of Angoulême and St. Martial of Limoges, Ademar came to master the many skills of the *scriptorium* and applied them to a variety of works. He was a voluminous writer and copyist whose works include poetry, history, hagiography, and sermons. This talented monk was involved in several of the great movements of his day. He was a leading spokesman for the Peace of God reform movement, an advocate of orthodox religious belief, a contributor to the great musical and liturgical

(988-1034)," 32 (1931): 149-65. Finally, see the new book by Richard Landes, *Relics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989-1034* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995), which arrived too late for consideration for this article but which addresses many of the issues I raise.

⁴ Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843-1180* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), 20; and R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 8-9.

⁵ H. E. J. Cowdrey, "The Peace and the Truce of God in the Eleventh Century," *Past and Present* 46 (1970): 42-67; Georges Duby, "The Laity and the Peace of God," in *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Los Angeles: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1977), 123-33 and Steven D. Sargent, "Religious Responses to Social Violence in Eleventh-Century Aquitaine," *Historical Reflections / Réflexions historiques* 12 (1985): 219-40, especially 223-4.

⁶ Michel Aubrun, *L'ancien diocèse de Limoges: des origines au milieu du XIe siècle* (Clermont-Ferrand: Institut d'études du massif Central, 1981), 74 n. 11, 204-17.

⁷ Callahan, "Sermons of Ademar," 280-92. It must be noted, however, that in his other work Callahan is much more explicit about Ademar's activities as a forger and is perhaps a bit too extreme in his judgement of the lack of reliability of Ademar's corpus.

innovations of the monastery of St. Martial, and an artist whose work reflects the emergence of the Romanesque style.⁸ Indeed, his activities as master of the *scriptorium* make him a valued witness to the numerous developments of his age.

Ademar's most important activity, however, was his role as the impresario of the cult of the apostle St. Martial. This third-century missionary, first described by Gregory of Tours, had grown to such great stature by the early eleventh century that the monks of his monastery had begun to promote the idea that Martial was an apostle like one of the twelve.⁹ This was a project that demanded someone of Ademar's talents to create the extensive liturgical and musical corpus necessary for the new apostolic cult. In the late 1020s, Ademar, with the help of his fellow monks, began his career as a forger by correcting the *vita* of Martial to identify him as an apostle.¹⁰ It is likely at this time that Ademar prepared the new chants for the liturgy of Martial, which were to be used at the official declaration of the cult in 1029. At the council meeting to establish the apostolic cult, however, Ademar was publicly defeated in a debate over the issue with

⁸ For Ademar's activities in the Peace movement and as an advocate of orthodoxy, see the works of Callahan and Landes cited above and my forthcoming article "Violence, Knightly Piety and the Peace of God in Aquitaine." For his achievements as an artist, see Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, "Les dessins d'Ademar de Chabannes," *Bulletin archéologie du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques*, nouvelle série, 3 (1968): 163-225 and for his musical works, see John A. Emerson, "Two Newly-Identified Offices for Saints Valeria and Austriclinianus by Ademar de Chabannes (MS Paris, Bibl. Nat. Latin 909, Fols. 79-85v)," *Speculum* 40 (1965): 31-46; James Grier, "Ecce sanctum quem deus elegit Marcialem apostolum: Ademar de Chabannes and the Tropes for the Feast of Saint Martial," in *Beyond the Moon: Festschrift Luther Dittmer*, eds. Bryan Gillingham and Paul Merkley (Ottawa: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1990), 28-75; and Paul Hooreman, "Saint-Martial de Limoges au temps de l'abbé Odolric, 1025-1040," *Revue belge de musicologie* 3 (1949): 5-36.

⁹ Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, Monumenta Germaniae historica: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum, vol. 1. pt. 1 (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1951), 1.30, pp. 22-3. For the growth of the cult of St. Martial and Ademar's role in it, see L. Duchesne, "St.-Martial de Limoges," *Annales du Midi* 4 (1892): 298-330.

¹⁰ Callahan, "Sermons of Ademar," 258-63. It is clear from the numerous erasures in the copies of the saint's life that it underwent revision under Ademar's direction. In many places, references to Martial as a confessor were scratched out and replaced by references to him as an apostle. It should be noted, too, that the *vita* Ademar and his fellow monks were "correcting" was a relatively recent one because the previous *vita*, the *Vita Antiquior*, was purportedly destroyed in a fire at the monastery c. 952.

the Italian monk Benedict of Chiusa and forced to retire in disgrace to his monastery in Angoulême.¹¹

As a result of this humiliating defeat, Ademar began work on a series of documents that were designed to prove the truth of the apostolicity of Martial. It is this corpus that demonstrates his unparalleled abilities as a forger and reveals his value as a window into the mind of his age.¹² This corpus was designed to respond to Benedict's arguments that only the true authority of the church, the pope, and the bishop's synod, could sanction the apostolic cult.¹³ Moreover, these works represent the developing literate culture of the eleventh century. In fact, the growth in the practice of forgery illustrates the

¹¹ *Epistola de Apostolatu Sancti Martialis*, in *Patrologiae Latinae*, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64) vol. 141, col. 97, where he reveals that he has left the monastery of St. Martial: "Et si scissem quis ille est, expectarem eum Lemovicis uno anno, quousque contritum esset caput eius serpentinum virga rationis meae." In two separate passages of the *Epistola*, cols. 90 and 102 respectively, he reveals the extent of his defeat. In the first passage he explains, "ac praeter me solum et Gauzbertum vestrum, omnes a veritate aversi sunt." In the second, a discussion with a doctor, Bernard, in Angoulême he writes, "Ego [Bernardus] plus quam alii homines causa medicinae circumeo multa loca, et audio hoc reprobari ab omnibus et a nullo laudari, et maxime propter Benedictum priorem qui contradictor est, qui affirmat omnibus propter hoc nasciturum esse ab hoc usque ad quinque annos magnum scandalum in loco sancti Martialis, et venturam ibi magnam persecutionem, quia orationes de ipso sicut illi proferunt non sunt acceptabiles."

¹² It should be noted at this point that there is both internal and external evidence concerning the documents discussed below to demonstrate that they are forgeries. It is clear from the circular letter that Ademar lost the debate. He provides the full argument of his rival and reveals that he himself lost all support from the monks of Limoges during the course of the debate. The papal letter too can be demonstrated to be a forgery for two reasons. The letter does not follow the proper format of the papal writing office and it does not hold pride of place in the monastery's holdings as we would assume it would. Finally, the sermons offer a number of important clues suggesting that they were forged and not authentic. The quality of the parchment in the manuscripts is particularly low, and some of the folios contain holes and other irregularities. The folios are irregularly ruled, there are excessively numerous lines of text on each folio, and the writing is compact, all of which suggests limited access to materials. Moreover, it is quite unlikely that Ademar, following his humiliation by Benedict, would attend and participate in regional church councils. And it is equally unlikely that these same councils would accept the apostolicity of St. Martial, which Ademar's rival had forcefully disproved. For further discussion of Ademar's corpus as a collection of forgeries, see the references cited in note 3, especially the articles of Canon Saltet.

¹³ *Epistola de Apostolatu*, PL 141, col. 91. Referring to the declaration of the apostolicity, Benedict asserts, "...non esse ausos pro hac re concilium erigere, nullam auctoritatem posse monstrare, sed in abscondito."

increasing concern with written texts and written legal documents.¹⁴ Ademar composed his forgeries to establish a solid textual foundation for the apostolic cult of his patron and in so doing reveals the importance of the written word in his age.

Ademar's forgeries include a variety of documents written to demonstrate the truth of his version of events and widespread support for his patron. The first of the post-debate forgeries is a letter addressed to the temporal and spiritual leaders of Christendom describing the events of the Council of 1029 and his victory over Benedict.¹⁵ But an even more egregious forgery was to follow. Indeed, not content with fabricating a document under his own name, Ademar next forged a letter from Pope John XIX to Bishop Jordan of Limoges approving the apostolic liturgy of Martial.¹⁶ This letter was designed to respond to one of the challenges of Benedict, and is the first example of the complexity of Ademar's forgeries and his skill as a forger.¹⁷ Ademar next composed an Easter table for the cycle beginning in the next generation that contained proof of the apostolic cult and was bound with the letter of John XIX.¹⁸ As this last document shows, the forgeries were designed not merely to soothe Ademar's damaged ego but were intended to prove the truth of Martial's apostolicity to future generations unaware of Ademar's defeat.

As daring as the other forgeries may have been, they cannot compare with the complexity and artistry Ademar employed in the composition of two magnificent collections of sermons now held in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (BN) MS lat. 2469, fols. 1r-112v and Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Phillips MS lat. 1664, fols. 58v-170v.¹⁹ In these sermons, which were designed to appear as if they

¹⁴ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), 60.

¹⁵ *Epistola de Apostolatu*, PL 141, cols. 87-112.

¹⁶ *Epistola Joannis XIX ad Jordanum Lemovicensem episcopum, caeterosque Galliarum episcopos de S. Martialis apostolatu*, in Migne, PL 141, cols. 1149-50 and the new edition in Landes, "A Libellus from St. Martial of Limoges," 200-1.

¹⁷ Saltet, "Un cas de mythomanie," 158-61.

¹⁸ Landes, "A Libellus from St. Martial of Limoges," 186-99. Easter tables were designed to calculate the date of Easter for cycles of 532 years and were divided into 28 smaller cycles of 19 years. They often contained computistical data and brief notes on the major events of each particular year.

¹⁹ A useful introduction to the sermons may be found in the articles by Daniel Callahan and Leopold Delisle cited above. I am assisting Prof. Callahan in the prepara-

were delivered at church councils, Ademar weaves together the various themes of the apostolic *vita* and cult of Martial with a general defense of orthodox teaching and the writings of earlier church fathers. He includes information on excommunication and canon law, patristic and Carolingian theological treatises, a copy of the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals, and a conciliar procès-verbal in the codices to attract the attention of readers of later generations who would also learn of the apostle Martial. Although found in simple brown ink notebooks written during Ademar's years of disgrace, the sermons bore the mark of official church sanction and provided the literary authority needed to convince later generations of Martial's apostolicity.²⁰

The arrangement of the sermons reveals Ademar's ability to compose a forgery that would appear to be an authentic and accepted document to those of a later era. The Paris manuscript in particular is the type of sermon collection that any of Ademar's contemporaries would have compiled, the exact impression necessary to convince successive generations of the truth of Martial's apostolicity. He sought to accomplish this end by making the sermons appear as if they were written for delivery at church councils, giving them the air of authenticity sanctioned by one of the most powerful authorities in the church.²¹ He also arranged the forty-six sermons of the Paris

tion of an edition of the sermons in two volumes for publication in the *Corpus Christianorum*.

²⁰ That Ademar was not wholly unsuccessful in his plan is demonstrated by the acceptance of the apostolic cult from the twelfth to the nineteenth century and papal recognition in 1854. Moreover, closer to his own day, the acts of the Council of Bourges found in BN lat. 2469 were copied into the great Bible of St. Martial in 1062. See Landes, "A Libellus from St. Martial of Limoges," 197-9.

²¹ Delisle notes, "Manuscripts originaux d'Adémar...spécialement composées par des fêtes religieuses qui amenaient de fidèles dans les églises de Limoges" (283). Ademar's strategy can be detected in the incipits to the sermons of BN lat. 2469. Although not explicitly mentioning a council, the incipits suggest delivery at events attended by the clergy. Among the incipits are the following: "In dedicatione ecclesiae, Sancti Petri Lemovicæ. Domus Domini anniversaria celebrata, karissimi, qua illius dedicationis sacramentum hodierna die gaudemus recolere" (fol. 25v); "Sermo in translatione prima sancti Martialis, quod est VI idus octobris. Cum in hac die, dilectissimi, beatus Martialis, ille Domini ab ipsa adolescentia discipulus et postmodum apostolus unus ex LXXta duobus, venerabilem corporis sui translationem primam sive inventionem desiderabilem mortalibus habuerit" (fols. 64r-64v); "Hodiernam in beati Martialis honore diem sollempnitatis necesse est, dilectissimi, Deo nostro exhibere" (fol. 85v); and "Ecclesia, dilectissimi, sponsa Christi est, et sponsus Ecclesiae idem Dominus est Ihesus Christus, in cuius honore haec basilica propria specialitate olim a pluribus episcopis,

collection around the ecclesiastical calendar of the Limousin, composing them to honor the most prominent local saints and to celebrate the most important religious festivals of the region.²² The sermons celebrate the feast days of Saints Valerie and Austriclinian, two figures associated with the life of Martial and, Valerie in particular, especially venerated in Aquitaine.²³ The Paris codex also contains a total of twelve sermons for the dedication of the main churches of Limoges, the basilica of St. Peter, and the cathedral of St. Stephen.²⁴ This group of sermons is followed by a total of thirteen for the celebration of the great feasts associated with Martial himself including several sermons commemorating his translations.²⁵ The last four of these are particularly important for the promotion of the power of Martial because they describe the great prodigies and miraculous cure of the firesickness brought about by the translation of the relics in 994 and attest to the generally recognized "clean power" of this saint.²⁶ Finally, Ademar concludes this collection with a series of sermons commemorating an event of his own day, the dedication of the Church of the Holy Savior in 1028.²⁷ Clearly, Ademar sought to demonstrate through these sermons that the apostolicity of Martial was a doctrine accepted from the earliest days of the church in Aquitaine until the consecration of the new church in his own day. Moreover, by structuring the collection in this way, Ademar created the impression that these sermons were actually delivered to the leaders of the Church of the Limousin on their most important holy days.

The layers of falsification in Paris, MS 2469 extend beyond the arrangement of the collection to include the subject matter of these documents. Indeed, Ademar's artistry as a forger becomes apparent when we consider the substantive material in these sermons because

sicut ipsi qui interfuistis vidistis, dedicata est per annum dominicae Incarnationis millesimum atque vicesimum VIIIum" (fol. 92v).

²² Delisle discusses BN lat. 2469 and provides incipits and selections from this manuscript (276-301).

²³ BN lat. 2469, fols. 1r-25v.

²⁴ Ibid., fols. 25v-64r.

²⁵ Ibid., fols. 25v-86v.

²⁶ Ibid., fols. 86v-89r. On the plague of ergotism, see Ademar, *Chronique*, ed. Jules Chavanon (Paris, 1897) 3.35, p. 158; and Richard Landes, "Between Aristocracy and Heresy: Popular Participation in the Limousin Peace of God, 994-1033," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, eds. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1992), 186-90.

²⁷ BN lat. 2469, fols. 89r-97r.

it was designed to complement and confirm the other forgeries he created previously. As Daniel Callahan has demonstrated, the primary purpose of the sermons is to confirm the *vita* of Martial, which Ademar had corrected by changing references to the saint from confessor to apostle.²⁸ Ademar now took the opportunity to manufacture the liturgical material that had been the concern of the movement prior to 1029 and was essential for the promulgation of the apostolic cult. Throughout the sermons Ademar restates the primary themes of the revised apostolic *vita*: Martial was a member of the Hebrew tribe of Benjamin and one of the seventy-two disciples who followed Christ in the flesh, witnessed the events recorded in the Gospels, traveled with Peter to Rome, went to Gaul, and converted its people to Christianity. In the sermons, thus, the power of the spoken word supplemented and confirmed the written word found in Ademar's version of his patron's *vita*.²⁹

The *vita* offered Ademar one further topic of discussion for his sermons, the miracles of Martial. Like Bernard of Angers, who recorded and authenticated the miracles of St. Foy, Ademar used his conciliar sermons as a means to provide sanction for Martial's miracles.³⁰ Ademar describes his patron's numerous resurrections from the dead including that of Austriclinian, one of Martial's earliest disciples.³¹ Ademar remarks further that Martial's evangelical mission in Aquitaine was marked by numerous signs and prodigies effected by God through Martial to demonstrate the saint's divine sanction.³² Martial also worked wonders against the demons in the pagan temples and performed exorcisms during his mission.³³ Ademar supplements these miracle stories with accounts of miracles performed by Martial's relics.³⁴ Concerning the greatest of the miracles, Martial's eradication of the plague of the firesickness in Aquitaine in 994, Ademar notes:

²⁸ Daniel Callahan, "Sermons of Ademar," 266-72.

²⁹ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 109, 186; and Walter Ong, *The Presence of the Word Some Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), 61, 266-71.

³⁰ For Bernard, see Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, 64-73.

³¹ BN lat. 2469, fols. 4r, 4v, 8v, 40v. Further references to Martial's miraculous activities in the sermons of Ademar and the *vita* of Martial can be found in Callahan, "Sermons of Ademar," 285-8.

³² BN lat. 2469, 25v-26r, 39r, 39v, 51v.

³³ *Ibid.*, fols. 39v, 51v.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 66v, 67v, 68v, 70v, 88v, 90v.

Then in the middle of the night a sign appeared over the basilica of St. Peter in which the sepulcher of St. Martial lay.... And all who were languishing in the city were suddenly healed.³⁵

Ademar included the miracles of Martial in his sermons to reveal the true status of his patron and in so doing provided literary support of the apostolicity and reinforced the evidence for the apostolicity found in his other forgeries.

The sermons also contain extensive evidence to support the apostolicity of Martial drawn from outside the Limousin and from the early history of the church. He uses the great church fathers to support his argument that those among the seventy-two disciples should be listed among the apostles. Among the fathers he cites are Augustine, who taught that all the disciples who were at the Last Supper and who heard the teachings of Christ are apostles, and Ambrose, who taught that Paul and the seventy-two are called apostles.³⁶ Moreover, Ademar cites the authority of the Greek Church, a contemporary witness able to support his claims. He explains that the seventy-two disciples of Christ who converted provinces are recognized as apostles by the Greeks.³⁷ He declares further that the learned Greeks make Martial an apostle in all things.³⁸ And, in one final notice, Ademar argues:

If, I say, he [Martial] were not an apostle, then not only would he not be recognized by the learned Greeks to be an apostle in all ways but also all our ancient fathers would not have written him in as an apostle in their works, or litanies, or divine offices.³⁹

The Paris manuscript contains one further element that would guarantee its appearance of authenticity and attention by members of future generations. The last section of the codex contains the account of the proceedings of the Council of Limoges of 1031, which includes

³⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 87v: "Tum ecce ipsa media nocte apparuit signum super basilicam sancti Petri in qua beati Marcialis sepulchrum esse videtur....Omnes autem qui in urbe erant languentes repente sanifaciti sunt." All translations are mine. For the firesickness, see also fols. 86v-89v.

³⁶ BN lat. 2469, fols. 6v-7r.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 27r.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 30r.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 11v: "Si, inquam, apostolus non esset, non eum periti Grecorum testificarentur omnimodis apostolum esse, sed etiam tot patres nostri antiqui non eum scripsissent in suis opusculis apostolum, sive in laetaniis, sive in divinis quibusque officiis."

the canons of the Council of Bourges of 1031.⁴⁰ In fact, as Daniel Callahan notes, the procès-verbal is the logical conclusion of the manuscript because it provides final conciliar confirmation of the apostolicity of Martial.⁴¹ There is a chronological progression in the content of the sermons, which moves forward in time from the apostolic age to Ademar's own age at the time of the millennium. Indeed, the entire collection builds to this moment when all the churchmen of Aquitaine met to approve the apostolic cult of Martial. Clearly, Ademar is at his best when forging this section of the manuscript, drawing on all his talents and weaving together all the themes of the previous sections of the codex and even the earlier forgeries. As he did in the opening sermons of the collection, Ademar cites contemporaries outside Aquitaine, including the Greeks, Franks, and Britons, who accept the apostolicity of Martial.⁴² In another section of the procès-verbal, Bishop Jordan of Limoges describes a letter he received from Pope John in which the pope "strongly supports the glory of the apostolicity and refutes all those who contradict [Martial's] being an apostle."⁴³ Moreover, in the council, Ademar himself arose to defend Martial and asserted the various arguments, definitions, and hagiographical details supporting the apostolicity of his patron saint.⁴⁴ It is not only Ademar who speaks, but also, under Ademar's falsifying pen, the various bishops, abbots, and monks of Aquitaine.⁴⁵ And all of them agree that the true status of Martial was established in the apostolic era, and then the truth was forgotten in

⁴⁰ Although the reality of these councils is open to debate, it is likely that they did take place even if not in the form recorded by Ademar. Rodulphus Glaber's discussion of Peace councils in Aquitaine in the early 1030s in his *Historiarum libri quinque*, ed. John France (reprint, Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) 4.5.14, supports the probability of the existence of councils in Bourges and Limoges in 1031.

⁴¹ Daniel Callahan, "Ademar of Chabannes, Apocalypticism and the Peace Council of Limoges of 1031," *Revue bénédictine* 101 (1991): 38. The council is found on fols. 97v-112v of the manuscript and is edited in J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum* (1901; reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck, 1960-1961) vol. 19, cols. 501-508. See the forthcoming edition by Prof. Callahan and myself.

⁴² BN lat. 2469, fols. 98r for Franks and Greeks, 100v and 101v for Britons.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, fol. 103v: "Super quo dominus Iohannes papa exemplar epistolae nobis est dignatus destinare, magnopere testificans apostolatus eius gloriam et redarguens omnes qui eum contradicunt esse apostolum."

⁴⁴ BN lat. 2469, fol. 99v: "Cui mox quidam eruditus ex ipsis Engolismensibus clericis qui tunc ab Engolisma cum episcopo Rohone ad concilium venerat obiavit respondes."

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. 98r, 99r, where Bishop Jordan and Abbot Odolric speak in defense of Martial's apostolicity.

the chaos of later periods to be rediscovered in recent days.⁴⁶ Although we now know that this is all a creation of Ademar's active imagination, monks of the monastery included canons from the Council of Limoges in their great Bible in 1062, and churchmen and scholars from the twelfth to the nineteenth century accepted the authenticity of Ademar's conciliar account.⁴⁷

The conciliar account would have attracted attention because it treated topics of importance to churchmen of Ademar's day and after. Ademar reveals his artistry as a forger in two ways in this section. First, he further develops the complex web of interconnected forgeries by using the *procès-verbal* to respond to Benedict of Chiusa's argument, appearing in the circular letter, that the issue of Martial's apostolicity can be resolved only by reference to a church council.⁴⁸ The Council of Limoges confirms the apostolicity of Martial in its own right also by including in its decrees the canons of the Council of Bourges.⁴⁹ Second, he places the alleged debate over the status of Martial in the context of a great council concerned with the Peace of God and reform—issues that would surely interest future generations.⁵⁰ The reality of the council is debated by scholars still, but it is not inconceivable that a council was held to consider many of the issues Ademar had the participants in his council discuss.⁵¹ The ecclesiastics discuss topics of clerical morality,⁵² the use of excommunication⁵³ and other religious reforms of the day.⁵⁴ Because these were matters of such importance it would have been a short step from accepting the legitimate decrees of the council to accepting its confirmation of Martial's apostolic rank. Thus, MS 2469 reveals a

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, fols. 99r, 102v.

⁴⁷ Landes ("A Libellus from St. Martial of Limoges," 198) notes the inclusion of the canons in the Bible of 1062. See also Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, "La première bible de St. Martial de Limoges," *Cahiers archéologiques* 19 (1969): 83-98.

⁴⁸ Saltet, "Un cas de mythomanie," 158-61.

⁴⁹ The canons of Bourges are found in BN lat. 2469, fols. 107v-108r and Mansi, vol. 19, cols. 501-506.

⁵⁰ On the great Peace Council of Limoges, see Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 43-51; the collection of articles in Head and Landes, *The Peace of God* and the articles of Daniel Callahan cited above.

⁵¹ On the issue of the reliability of the account and the existence of the Council of Limoges, see Callahan, "Ademar of Chabannes, Apocalypticism and the Peace," 35-7; Landes, "Between Aristocracy and Heresy," 214; and Saltet, "Un cas de mythomanie," 152-3.

⁵² BN lat. 2469, fols. 107v-108r, 111v-112r.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, fols. 110r-110v.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 105r-105v.

true artist at work, an artist who could bring together many accepted norms of his day into a forgery that would be accepted as authentic by future generations.

Thus far we have seen how Ademar accomplished his art but not why he undertook the creation of such an elaborate pious forgery. Indeed, this question is of central importance for a period in which both its greatest single authority and general official opinion denounced the practice of lying in defense of the faith.⁵⁵ On the simplest and least sympathetic level, it is likely that Ademar and his colleagues were inspired by the desire to transform the monastery of St. Martial of Limoges into the greatest pilgrimage site in France. Their motivation was not unlike those monks who forged charters or discovered the remains of Arthur, a simple desire for prestige and economic gain. Indeed, Benedict of Chiusa, in his great debate with Ademar, accuses the monks of St. Martial of creating this novelty in order to enrich their community.⁵⁶ Clearly, the cult of the apostle could bring added wealth to the monastery in the form of pious donations offered by the ever increasing numbers of pilgrims who wished to visit the site of the apostle. Ademar himself indicates his concern with attracting pilgrims when he discusses the miraculous powers of his patron. Moreover, his vehement rejection of the apostolic claims made for St. Front, St. Saturninus, and others in the folios on the Council of Limoges suggest that he harbored still a desire to establish the shrine of Martial as the principle pilgrimage site in Aquitaine.⁵⁷ The financial rewards from housing the relics of such a great saint were most likely not lost on the monks of Limoges, and an interest in these rewards certainly contributed to the effort of making Martial an apostle.

The promotion of the cult of the apostle Martial was not limited to the desire for economic gain but was motivated also by concerns of power. The apostolic status of Martial could bring added power and authority to both the bishopric and monastery of Limoges. As the successor of an apostle equal to Peter, the bishop would have had no rival in France and could perhaps claim equality with the bishop of Rome. Bishop Jordan's participation in the consecration of the church and implementation of the apostolic liturgy in 1028 suggests that he was not unaware of the possibilities presented by Martial's

⁵⁵ See Brown, "Medieval Forgers," 106-19 for discussion of the official opposition to forgery.

⁵⁶ *Epistola de Apostolatu*, PL 141, col. 91.

⁵⁷ Mansi, vol. 19, cols. 514, 519.

new status. The abbot and monks of St. Martial also recognized the possibility of acquiring greater temporal and spiritual authority. The monastic community's support for the Peace of God movement and its promotion of Martial as patron of the peace reveals one means by which the abbot enhanced his authority. Indeed, the monks' manipulation of sacred relics was an attempt to control the nobility and direct popular piety.⁵⁸ Finally, the association of the peace movement and the cult of Martial was not the only means by which the institutional church exercised control over the laity. The monastic community's manipulation of the relics and cult of their patron was intended to channel the growing religious fervor of the age into accepted orthodox expressions.⁵⁹ In fact, the apostolic cult of Martial was intended to reduce the attraction of heretical apostolic piety emerging in Aquitaine and elsewhere in Western Europe by focusing religious enthusiasm on the apostle of Gaul.⁶⁰

Clearly, the monks of Limoges had an agenda that would allow them to profit economically and politically from the promotion of the apostolicity of Martial. Ademar and the monks of Limoges, however, were driven also by less materialistic and self-serving motivations. It is these concerns that demonstrate an important aspect of pious forgery and connect Ademar's corpus to the great spiritual changes going on in his age. Ademar's sermons and related forgeries provide evidence of the continued attraction of the cult of the saints and their relics. It was Ademar's awareness of the power of this saint that first attracted him to the movement to declare him an apostle. His sermons tell of the miracles and prodigies occurring at Martial's tomb or during translations of his relics as well as the great crowds of people present to witness these wondrous signs. Indeed, it was the translation of Martial's relics that cured Aquitaine of the firesickness sent as punishment for the sins of its people. It was the general belief in the curative powers of the saints, and especially of Martial, that led Ademar to create his great dossier. Inspired by the

⁵⁸ Bernard Töpfer, "The Cult of Relics and Pilgrimage in Burgundy and Aquitaine at the Time of the Monastic Reform," in *The Peace of God*, 41-57.

⁵⁹ Landes, "Between Aristocracy and Heresy," 202-18.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* For the rise of heresy, see Antoine Dondaine, "L'origine de l'hérésie médiévale," *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 5 (1951): 47-78; Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements for the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (1992), 3-32; Richard Landes, "La vie apostolique en Aquitaine en l'an mil Paix de Dieu, culte des reliques, et communautés hérétiques," *Annales: E.S.C.* 46 (1991): 573-93; R. I. Moore, *The Origins of European Dissent*, rev. ed. (New York: Blackwell, 1985), 6-45; and my forthcoming articles on Ademar and heresy.

great reverence shown Martial by the people of Aquitaine, Ademar was drawn to the movement promoting Martial's apostolicity and thus composed a series of forgeries to prove his own loyalty to the saint. Abandoned by all, he continued his practice of forgery and found solace in his love of Martial, a saint so powerful that he could save a devoted follower as easily as he could cure sickness in all of Aquitaine.

The sermons demonstrate also the changing nature of the cult of the saints, and religious belief in general, at the time of the millennium. It was during this period that Christian belief was undergoing a transformation from the transcendental to the incarnational.⁶¹ This newly developing belief with its emphasis on Jesus and his disciples influenced the nature of the saints' cults. There was a growing interest in universal saints rather than local ones and an interest in saints of the apostolic era over later saints. As a result of the changing nature of religious belief, ecclesiastics oversaw a transformation in the *vitae* of their patron saints. The cults of the various saints needed to adjust to the new spiritual conditions of the age or be discarded for saints who could adapt. In Ademar's Aquitaine and elsewhere in the West, religious writers were revising their saint's *vitae* to accommodate the growing awareness of the apostolic era. As Ademar unintentionally reveals in his account of the Council of Limoges, several saints at the time of the millennium underwent a transformation from post-apostolic to apostolic era saints.⁶² The claims were not so exaggerated as Ademar and his colleagues made but religious communities throughout France included saints like Dionysius, Saturninus, and others in their apostolic litanies.⁶³ Indeed, in Limoges itself in the generation before Ademar's, a new life of St. Front of Perigord

⁶¹ Richard Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson's Univ. Library, 1953), 231-8.

⁶² Mansi, vol. 19, col. 514: "Interea in concilio illo, cum quidam ex clericis Petracoricae urbis cum patre monasterii Solemniacensis altercaretur, et diceret: Eodem modo sanctum Frontum possumus dicere apostolum. Ille coram omnibus sic ei respondit. Tace, inquam, frater; melius est ut sileas: quia quando nos in scholis magistrorum mel et lac bibebamus, tu solam ruminabas fabam. Scripturam de sancto Fronto novam, cujus, tu autoritate niteris, Gauzbertus noster edidit luci causa, qui sub hujus Lemovicae sedis episcopo Hildegario chorepiscopus nobis extitit." For other references to attempts by Ademar's contemporaries to make apostles out of saints, see cols. 515, 518-9, 533.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, col. 533: "Numquid usque hodie inveniuntur, quia de novitate causantur, nomina Dionysii et Saturnini scripta uspiam per litanias inter apostolorum nomina?"

was prepared declaring him an apostle.⁶⁴ Ademar's forgeries, like others of his age, were intended to accommodate his powerful patron to the new religious concerns of the age. Thus, Ademar was motivated by the pious concern of proving the continued authority of his patron, a concern that rested upon a different standard of truth.

Ademar's sermons reveal the ability of a pious monk to create a record of history as it should have happened and in fact demonstrate what Giles Constable has described as the subjective nature of truth in the Middle Ages.⁶⁵ It is clear from several passages in the account of the Council of Limoges that Ademar knew Gregory of Tours's account of Martial's arrival in Gaul in the third century.⁶⁶ Like the bishop of Tours, Ademar identifies Dionysius, Saturninus, and the other missionaries sent to Gaul during the time of the Roman emperor Decius but omits Martial. Instead, Ademar explains that these missionaries arrived in Gaul after Martial, who rightly belongs with Paul, Mark, and the others of the apostolic age.⁶⁷ For Ademar, therefore, truth is not objective but personal and concerned with how things should have happened, regardless of whether they happened or not. The growing power and popularity of Martial revealed his true status as an apostle, for no confessor could have performed the great miracles that Martial had. The numerous pilgrims coming to Limoges and the large crowd crushed in 1018 rushing in panic to the side of his tomb proved that Martial was no simple saint.⁶⁸ These events, not the history of Gregory so valuable to modern scholars, were important to Ademar because they revealed Martial's true apostolic rank. New truths, Ademar declared to Benedict of Chiusa, are better than old lies, and it is the truths revealed in the growth of Martial's popularity that led Ademar to support the apostolicity and create one of the most impressive collection of forgeries in the Middle Ages.⁶⁹

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⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, col. 514; Maurice Coens, "La 'Scriptura de Sancto Fronto Nova' attribué au chorévêque Gauzbert," *Annalecta Bollandiana* 75 (1957): 340-65.

⁶⁵ Constable, "Forgery and Plagiarism," 3-7, 22-5.

⁶⁶ BN lat. 2469, fols. 99v-100r and 101r. See also Callahan, "Ademar of Chabannes and his Insertions," 399-400 for evidence of Ademar's knowledge of Gregory of Tours.

⁶⁷ BN lat. 2469, fols. 99v-100r.

⁶⁸ *Chronique*, 3.49, p. 173; Landes, "Between Aristocracy and Heresy," 202-5.

⁶⁹ *Epistola de Apostolatu*, PL 141, col. 96: "Quod vero prosequeris, auctoritates veteres mendaces potius recipiendum quam novas veraces, grande praedudicium est, cum veritas est, et nunquam veritas respici, nec falsitas debet recipi."