

Summary of research in Rome

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This project grew out of an MRes thesis focusing on the English manuscript copies of the Life of a Breton saint, Malo and will contribute towards a PhD thesis on Malo's cult and hagiography. Malo was the largely legendary patron of Alet, in northern Brittany, close to the border with Frankia. He is the subject of three ninth- or early tenth-century Lives. These are a microcosm of the interaction between Breton and Frankish influences in Brittany in the ninth century but remain relatively little studied.

Malo's cult spread to England, Paris, Flanders and Rome. While many Breton saints came to be celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England and Frankia from the tenth century, the presence of a Breton cult in Rome from the eleventh century is more unusual. My PhD thesis will explore the hagiographical material relating to Malo and the reasons for the spread of his cult. It will in part be informed by the research carried out in Rome and the Vatican City, generously funded by Medium Ævum.

The only ninth-century Life of St Malo by a named author, Bili, is preserved in six manuscripts in England, Rome and the Vatican City. With the help of the Medieval Research Centre at the University of Leicester, it was possible to examine all four manuscripts preserved in England for my MRes thesis. Thanks to the generosity and detailed advice of Medium Ævum, I was able to examine the two remaining manuscript versions of Bili's Life. These are the eleventh-century Archivio Capitolare Lateranense (ACL) A.80 and twelfth-century Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV) Vat. Lat. 1192. Both are relatively full legendaries containing extracts from or versions of various saints' Lives, arranged according to the saints' feast days. Both were known to contain the first 25 chapters of Bili's Life. The research in Rome was especially valuable, as unlike three of the English manuscript versions of the Life, those in BAV Vat. Lat. 1192 and ACL A.80 have scarcely been studied and never edited.

The visit uncovered several interpolations unique to ACL A.80 and BAV Vat. Lat. 1192. Most are brief embellishments or descriptive passages. However, there are two significant interpolations, one of which indicates that Malo's cult in Rome centred around a relic purported to be his sweat. The second is an expansion of an existing passage in which a pagan giant is resurrected and lectures the audience on Hell. In ACL A.80 and BAV Vat. Lat. 1192, the account of the baptism includes a recitation similar to the rites of baptism and the giant's anti-Jewish homily is longer. Both interpolations will be examined further as part of my PhD thesis.

It was also apparent that several chapters had been omitted from the Roman redactions – those containing more obscure passages relating to Malo's journey to a mythical island and the discovery there of a collection of miraculous stones. Malo's ordination as a priest was also omitted.

Both versions of the Life have been treated with great care. Both contain minor errors – very often identical ones – in the first folio or so. In both cases these have been carefully corrected. Later pages contain far fewer variants or errors when compared to the Anglo-Saxon copies. This gives the impression that they were copied from the same exemplar, which was damaged at the beginning or written in an unfamiliar script. This recension combined features previously thought unique to two divergent redactions, Oxford,

Bodleian Bodl. 535 and London, British Library Royal 13 A.x. This may indicate that the Roman manuscripts represent an early stage of redaction from which Bodl. 535 and Royal 13 A.x later diverged.

By the early eleventh century, there was a church in central Rome dedicated to Malo and it is logical to conclude that its foundation was connected in some way to the communities of St-Malo or the neighbouring cathedral community at Alet. Mistakes in the Breton personal names in the eleventh- and twelfth-century redactions of the Life and in the rare Latin word *dusmus* (devil) strongly suggest that the manuscripts and or their exemplar were copied in a milieu that was unfamiliar with the Life and its Breton background. This creates the initial impression that by the eleventh century, Malo's cult in Rome was eventually sustained independently of the communities of Alet and St-Malo. This is yet another line of investigation to be explored a part of my PhD.

In addition to the research outlined in the proposal, it was possible to access the Biblioteca Vallicelliana (BV) to study C26, an early twelfth-century volume believed to be from the monastery of Saint Anastasius ad Aquas Salvias, on the outskirts of Rome. BV C26 categorically states that Malo's feast day was celebrated annually by its author's community. Hitherto, Malo's cult in Rome has been linked with the canons of Lucca and the Lateran. The evidence from BV C26 provides a further line of investigation into Malo's cult in Rome and on its outskirts.

The visit to Rome was extremely valuable in opening out lines of enquiry into an area that has as yet received little attention. I would like to thank Medium Ævum for their help, and especially David Rundle without whose extensive advice and help I might never have persuaded the libraries to let me in.