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Poet, and Bishop in Brittany, Galo (†1129)**

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GEORGE T. BEECH

A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN LOIRE VALLEY MONK  
(SAUMUR), POET, AND BISHOP IN BRITTANY, GALO (†1129)

St. Pol-de-Léon is a small coastal town of about 7,000 inhabitants in the department of Finistère in the northwestern extremity of Brittany. In medieval times it was the seat of a bishopric and an imposing thirteenth-century cathedral decorates the town still today. For about twenty years in the early twelfth century, ca. 1108–28, the bishop of this diocese was a man named Galo. Historians have long been aware of this Galo: for instance in his 1756 history Charles Taillandier devoted seven lines to him and a century later the »Dictionnaire historique et géographique de la province de Bretagne« also mentioned him briefly, but he does not appear at all in the 1980 »Histoire religieuse de la Bretagne«<sup>1</sup>. Modern historians have given little attention to this bishop Galo, probably because no one has yet written even the most rudimentary sketch of his life and career – at least I know of no such work – and that in turn may be explained by the fact that none of his contemporaries appears to have singled him out as an exceptional figure of his time. Nonetheless in their systematic treatment of the bishops of Léon in their edition of 1856 the editors of »Gallia Christiana« published a list of references to him in contemporary charters as well as the text of one of them<sup>2</sup>. But this list is incomplete and it is understandable that until now no one has tried to assemble a full documentation and write a biographical notice of this man.

The nineteenth-century discovery  
of a twelfth-century poet named Galo

Starting in the later nineteenth century literary historians studying the medieval period began to notice and called attention to early twelfth-century references to a contemporary poet of their time named Galo, and to his poems. This began with Thomas Wright who in 1872 published without comment a poem of the Breton »Gualo – Gualonis Britonis Invectio in monachos« – in his edition of twelfth century English poets<sup>3</sup>. A few years later Ernst Dümmler published a poem of a Galo who is called a Breton – »Invectio Gualonis Britonis in monachos« – in the manuscript in which it had been copied<sup>4</sup>. Because the poem itself does not identify more precisely this Galo the Breton, neither of these scholars knew who he was. But then

- 1 Charles TAILLANDIER, *Catalogue historique des évêques et abbés de Bretagne*, vol. 2, Paris 1756, p. XL; *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne*, vol. 2, Rennes 1845, p. 859; *Histoire religieuse de la Bretagne*, ed. Guy DEVAÏLLY, Paris 1980.
- 2 *Gallia Christiana*, vol. 14, Paris 1856, p. 975; *Instrumenta*, p. 225.
- 3 Thomas WRIGHT, *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century*, London 1872, vol. II, p. 201–207.
- 4 Ernst DÜMMLER (ed.), *Libelli de lite*, vol. 3, Hanover 1897 (MGH Ldl, 3), p. 694–700.

in 1936 A. Wilmart found a poem attributed to Galo, Bishop of Léon, in a manuscript from Tours which A. Boutémy published in 1937<sup>5</sup>. This was the first suggestion that the poet and the bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon were one and the same person. Scholars in the later twentieth century accepted this and no one seems to have contested it. This was not a revolutionary finding and did not launch a new field of inquiry into the life and career of Galo the poet since only four or five of his poems were known at the time, and almost nothing had been written about his life as monk and bishop.

More information about this poet Galo came to light slowly in the later twentieth century with the finding of two more poems attributed to him. In his »Initia Carminum« Hans Walther listed five poems of Galo, and A. G. Riggs added to this in the 1970's and 90's<sup>6</sup>. In 1996 Diana Greenway, the editor of Henry of Huntingdon's, »History of the English People«, published in an appendix an epitaph of William Clito who died in 1128 written by *magister Galo versificator*<sup>7</sup>.

In addition to this scholars in recent times have found several contemporary references to an otherwise unidentified poet Galo who is probably the person in question here. In his 1998 edition of the poems of Baudri of Bourgueil, Jean-Yves Tilliette argued that the poet Galo to whom Baudri wrote two of his poems was the bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon. Shedding further light on this poet was Baudri's acclaiming Galo, his friend, as a poet of superior talent, and also as a logician/philosopher<sup>8</sup>. Baudri's reference to Galo as a philosopher as well as a poet draws attention to two short poems thought to be epitaphs found by Jakob Werner in a twelfth century French manuscript now in Zurich. Each one is dedicated to a Galo who contributed to the flourishing of philosophy<sup>9</sup>. And an anonymous author of the time stressed that he owed much to Galo for his ability to write poems (note 12 below).

As the result of these piece-by-piece findings of the above twentieth-century scholars, a partial picture of the poet-bishop Galo began to take shape by the year 2000, but then the culmination of this search came with an article published in 2006 by Dominique Poirel. As his contribution to a celebration of the life and accomplishments of Robert d'Arbrissel, founder of the abbey of Fontevraud, Poirel analyzed an anonymous 26-line poem on Robert's death and concluded that Galo of St. Pol was

5 *Galo Leonensis, cui sanctus spiritus ensis (...)*, André WILMART, Le florilège de Saint-Gatien. Contribution à l'étude des poèmes de Hildebert et de Marbode, in: Revue Bénédictine 58/1 (1936), p. 15, 29, 35; André BOUTÉMY, Notice sur le recueil poétique du ms Cotton Vitellius A XII du British Museum, in: Latomus 1 (1937), p. 278–313 at p. 289, 310–11.

6 Hans WALTHER, Initia Carminum ac versuum Medii Aevi posterioris Latinorum, Göttingen 1959, Nos. 6665, 7811, 13561, 14074, 17011; Arthur George RIGGS, Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (I), in: Mediaeval Studies 39 (1977), No. 32, p. 302; ID., Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (IV), ibid. 43 (1981), No. 4, p. 485–486, No. 57, p. 487; ID., A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066–1422, Cambridge 1992, No. 179, p. 342.

7 Henry of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum. The History of the English People, ed. Diana GREENWAY, Oxford 1996, Appendix 3, p. 836–838.

8 Jean-Yves TILLIETTE, Baudri de Bourgueil. Poèmes, 2 vol., Paris 1998–2002, vol. 2, No. 193, p. 113–116; notes, p. 275–279; No. 252, p. 158–159, notes, p. 324–325.

9 Jakob WERNER, Beiträge zur Kunde der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters, Aarau 1905, No. 101, p. 40–41; No. 58, p. 58.

the author<sup>10</sup>. Found in two manuscripts, the earliest and most reliable, mid-twelfth century, from northern France (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat, 5129), this poem was one of a large number which had previously been attributed to Hildebert of Lavardin, and was published as such in the *Patrologia Latina* (vol. 171, 1854) but more recent specialists on that poet have shown this to be invalid. Poirel's analysis brought out that this poem on Robert d'Arbrissel's death was one of a small group of eleven adjacent to one another in folios 101r–105v of the manuscript, all of which resemble the others closely, and differ from those preceding and following them in the manuscript. Similarities: in length – much shorter; subject matter – half are about death, the others satires; dates – events, people referred to, 1115–19; and poetic form – meter, verse, rhythm, etc. And in one of them the poet names himself – Galo. From this Poirel concluded that Galo was the author of all eleven of these poems, and that this group had somehow found its way into the manuscript containing mainly poems of Hildebert of Lavardin<sup>11</sup>. Poirel has no definite proof that this was the case yet his analysis, based on a study of the literary traits and structure of the poems, is very persuasive.

The Loire valley has long been considered one of the outstanding centers of poetic creation in western Europe in the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries due to the poems of three central poets located there, Marbode of Rennes, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Baudri of Bourgueil. The finding of the poems of Galo would seem to suggest that a new minor figure should be added to that list. Not a major poet of comparable stature to the first three, for so few of his poems are known today in comparison to the much greater numbers for all three, and no collection of them was made of them in his lifetime which has survived to the present such as happened with each of the main three. Still he was not completely unknown as a poet and the survival of a dozen or more of his poems shows that there was some recognition of him in his day. And two other contemporary poets paid testimonials to him as a poet which are particularly impressive. As noted above (p. 50) Baudri of Bourgueil praised him lavishly as a poet in two different poems, as did another anonymous author of the day<sup>12</sup>.

That this little known bishop in Brittany was also a poet cannot but cast new light on his life and career. My objective as an historian will be to trace and summarize his life as a bishop. This will be followed by a description of the poems and an inquiry into the possible relationship between them and Galo's life as monk and bishop. Do the basic facts of his career, his activity as prelate, the people he knew and dealt with, his travels, etc, find any reflection in these poems? Since most of the poems are anonymous, finding such evidence could be fundamental in deciding that he was in fact the author or some or all of them.

10 Dominique POIREL, Poème sur la mort de Robert d'Arbrissel, in: *Les deux vies de Robert d'Arbrissel*, ed. Jacques DALARUN et al., Turnhout 2006, p. 579–603.

11 Ibid.

12 On Baudri's poems see n. 8: Here is the poem of the anonymous poet cited by POIREL, Poème sur la mort (as in n. 10), n. 46, p. 597, found in the Oxford MS Rawlinson G. 109: *Exposuere michi Pieridis Eliconem / Atque aditus aperit philosophia suos. / Non ars una tamen, non unus contulit auctor / ut vates fierem philosophusque simul / Carmina Galo michi, Terricus philosophia(m) / Inspirat, nostrum pectus utrumque sapit. / Lingua diserta sonat: Terrici philosophiam / Galonis redolent carmina nostra stilum.*

## Galo's family origins

As is true of many prominent people of the eleventh and twelfth-centuries almost nothing is known about Galo's origins, when and where he was born, into which family, and whether it was noble, peasant, or other. The earliest information about him comes from monastic charters from the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Florent of Saumur in the western Loire Valley where he was a monk shortly before the end of the eleventh-century. These charters also reveal that early in the twelfth century he moved from the abbey in Saumur to one of its priories far to the east in the region of Orléans where he became prior after three or four years. Then sometime shortly before 1108 he was named bishop of the diocese of St. Pol-de-Léon along the north-western coast of Brittany and held this office until his death ca. 1128–29. Fifteen charters cast some light on his activities during his episcopate but nothing is known of the circumstances or the year of his death.

Also unknown is his age at the time of his death. He could have belonged to the monastic community of Saint-Florent for a number of years before his rise to prior and then bishop ca. 1108. If he had entered Saint-Florent as a young man around twenty, then spent twenty years there before his move to the priory he would have been around 48 when he became bishop c. 1108 and 68 when he died, hence born in 1063. But this is only conjecture.

Even though explicit evidence is lacking as to the country or place of Galo's origin, his name alone points unequivocally to his having been a Breton. Studies have shown that it was one of the most common masculine Breton names. *Gallus* was the Latin name used by the Romans for Celtic inhabitants of Gaul and Britain (Cornwall and Wales) at the time of their conquest<sup>13</sup>. And a recent article about the geographic dispersion of the name Galo at the present time found that the greatest concentration is in the three departments of La Basse Bretagne – Léon, Tréguier, and Quimper. This is precisely the region where Galo served as bishop in the last part of his life<sup>14</sup>.

The only surviving evidence as to which family Gallo came from, presumably Breton, is found in the opening line of one of his poems and that is intriguing though not explicit and fully informative: *Gualo ad episcopum successorum patruī sui*<sup>15</sup> / *Galo, to the bishop who was the successor of his uncle*.

Galo addresses this poem to a bishop left unnamed who had succeeded his (Galo's) uncle, also left unnamed, in that office. In other words Galo descended from a family in which a member of the previous generation, his uncle, had been a bishop. From this it follows that Galo was most likely of noble origin but the lack of his uncle's name makes it difficult to know which family that was. The same holds true for the identity of the bishop to whom the poem was addressed. Two undated charters from

13 Albert DAUZAT, *Dictionnaire étymologique des noms de famille et prénoms de France*, Paris 1951; Joseph LOTH, *L'émigration bretonne en Armorique du V<sup>e</sup> au VII<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère*, Rennes 1833, p. 84–85, 87.

14 Jean LE DÛ, *Un nouveau regard sur l'anthroponymie bretonne. La répartition géographique du patronyme. (Le) Gall et ses dérivés: (Le) Gallou, (Le) Gallio, (Le) Gallic, Galliou in: Études sur la Bretagne et les pays celtiques. Mélanges offerts à Yves Le Gallo*, Brest 1987, p. 273–275, 277, 279.

15 MIGNE PL, vol. 171, No. 44, col. 1398.

the »Livre Blanc«, an unpublished cartulary of the abbey of St. Florent of Saumur in the Loire valley, contain hints as to their identity. In the first of these Bishop Galo (this must have taken place sometime between 1108–1128, the dates of his episcopacy (below p. 61, 66) approves a donation of land by two men in the village of St. Nicolas-des-Eaux in the diocese of Vannes in western Brittany (see map p. 54) for the founding of a priory church and a house for a monk, both to belong to the abbey of St. Florent of Saumur<sup>16</sup>. The second is a letter from Bishop Morvan of Vannes to Bishop Galo agreeing to Galo's request that this priory be given to the abbey of St. Florent<sup>17</sup>. If this priory had been located in Galo's own diocese of St. Pol-de-Léon then his desire to take this step would be understandable. He would have been wanting to expand the presence of monastic houses in land within his diocese, but here he is in effect intervening in another diocese where he had no authority. This explains why he appealed to the bishop of that diocese for approval, and Bishop Morvan granted it to him in the second document. No uncertainty surrounds a second question: why did Galo want the new priory to be given to St. Florent of Saumur? This would have been an act of gratitude to the abbey where he had begun his own monastic career, before becoming a bishop. And, since the later eleventh century the abbey of St. Florent had been engaged in creating an extensive network of priories in Brittany, so Galo would have been contributing to that development. However this new priory of St. Nicolas stood out from the other Breton houses of St. Florent in that all of these were located in eastern Brittany whereas it is the only one in a region far to the west<sup>18</sup>. Why would Galo have made this choice?

In a recent article an historian of medieval Brittany, Cyprien Henry, offered an explanation for Galo's move, and at the same time he proposed a tentative identification of the two unnamed bishops referred to by Galo in the poem mentioned above<sup>19</sup>. First of all he suggested that Morvan, the author of the second letter will have been the bishop to whom Galo addressed the poem. Morvan's letter to Galo about the founding of the priory of St. Nicolas (mentioned above) shows that the two men knew each other well. And Morvan's addressing Galo as his *dilectissimi et venerabili fratri* (»most beloved and venerable brother«) – and later in his letter as: *tu karissimi frater* (»you, dearest brother«) – suggests a close personal relationship between the two, at least from Morvan's perspective. In his poem to the unnamed bishop Galo speaks to the successor of his uncle as bishop as a close friend, and two lines (6, 7) are particularly interesting in this regard. Galo says: 6, »This father (Galo's uncle, the earlier bishop) said this to me about you« / 7, »Galo, the others have talent but you (i. e, Morvan, his later successor) have more than they do<sup>20</sup>.«

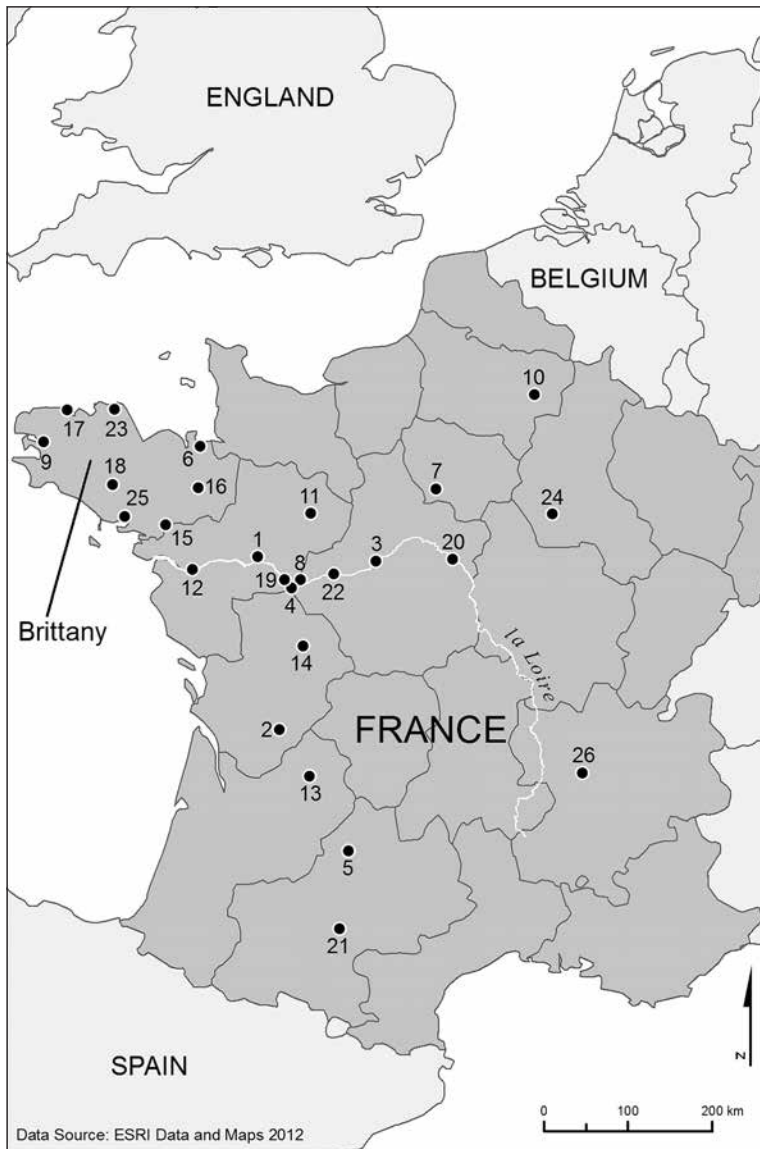
16 Angers, Arch. dép. du Maine et Loire, Saint-Florent de Saumur, Livre Blanc, No. 228. Michel Mouate of Saumur is currently preparing a printed edition of this cartulary and I am grateful to him for giving me copies of these two documents.

17 Ibid, No. 230.

18 See n. 23 below.

19 Cyprien HENRY, Aux origines de Saint-Nicolas-des-Eaux: enjeux féodaux et ecclésiastiques autour de la fondation d'un prieuré (première moitié du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle), in: Bulletin de la Société polymathique du Morbihan 140 (2014), p. 155–175.

20 *Ille pater mihi quae de te dixisse recorder: Gualo, valent alii, praevalent hic alii*, Poirel, Poème sur la mort (as in n. 10), p. 596.



France in the 12<sup>th</sup> century

- |               |                      |               |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| 1 Angers      | 10 Laon              | 19 Saumur     |
| 2 Angoulême   | 11 le Mans           | 20 St. Gondon |
| 3 Blois       | 12 Nantes            | 21 Toulouse   |
| 4 Bourgueil   | 13 Périgueux         | 22 Tours      |
| 5 Cahors      | 14 Poitiers          | 23 Tréguier   |
| 6 Dol         | 15 Redon             | 24 Troyes     |
| 7 Étampes     | 16 Rennes            | 25 Vannes     |
| 8 Fontevraud  | 17 Saint-Pol-de-Léon | 26 Vienne     |
| 9 Landévennec | 18 Saint Nicolas     |               |

Galo is here telling the bishop to whom he addresses his poem (presumably Morvan) that at an earlier time his uncle, when still alive and bishop, had emphasized to his nephew (i. e. Galo) that he esteemed the man who would succeed him in his office more highly than he did the others. By others, *alii*, Galo almost certainly means the clergy who served the bishop in his administration such as deacons, archdeacons, etc. Morvan himself had served the bishop of Vannes before succeeding him c. 1089 and that is why he is included in this comparison. Cyprien Henry found independent evidence that Morvan had been archdeacon of the bishop of Vannes, that is, a prominent member of the episcopal entourage. In effect in these lines Galo is telling Morvan that his uncle had preferred him to all the other clergy serving him, and this suggests that Galo himself shared that sentiment. So the acquaintance, the friendship, between Galo and Morvan dated back many years to before 1089 when Morvan became bishop.

If Morvan was in fact the bishop to whom Galo wrote this poem, then it follows that Galo's uncle, the unnamed bishop in his poem, was Maingui, Bishop of Vannes from c. 1062–c. 1089, the predecessor of Morvan. And Maingui was the son of Josselin, Viscount of Rennes, and the founder of one of the most prominent noble dynasties in western Brittany in the earlier eleventh century<sup>21</sup>. Galo would thus have been Josselin's grandson and this could explain his interest in having a priory founded in St. Nicolas-des-Eaux. In the village of St. Nicolas, directly across the river Blavet from the new priory being founded, was the castle of Castennec held by Viscount Alain, a grandson of Josselin, hence a cousin of Galo. Family interests could have persuaded Bishop Galo to preside over the founding of a religious counterpart to the castle nearby. Family interests could also account for his unusual move in entering into a diocese not under his authority<sup>22</sup>.

In his article C. Henry recognizes that this is an hypothesis for which there is no proof but that it is the best explanation for the otherwise strange intervention of Galo in the diocese of Vannes and for the unusual establishment of a priory of St. Florent of Saumur. If it is not correct, and if Galo was not a member of the vicomital family of Rennes, then he presumably came from some other noble Breton family which would have given him access to an episcopal office.

### Galo's life as a monk at the abbey of Saint-Florent of Saumur

A decisive moment in Galo's life came when he decided to enter the abbey of St. Florent of Saumur and commit himself to the monastic life. Whether he himself made this decision, or that it was his parents, is unknown, as are also the reasons for choosing this abbey on the Loire valley outside Brittany, and the year when this was done. If, as seems likely, Galo came from the family of the viscounts of Rennes then he and his parents, presumably living near Rennes, would have been acquainted with St. Florent because this abbey was one of two monasteries outside Brittany (Marmoutiers,

21 HENRY, *Aux origines de Saint-Nicolas-des-Eaux* (as in n. 19), p. 2, n. 8, p. 10: Hubert GUILLOTTEL, *De la vicomté de Rennes a la vicomté de Porhoet (fin du X<sup>e</sup>-milieu du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, in: *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne* 72 (1995), p. 5–23.

22 HENRY, *Aux origines de Saint-Nicolas-des-Eaux* (as in n. 19), p. 8–10.



Tours, was the other) to create new priories in that province as part of a great ecclesiastical reform movement starting in the later eleventh century. And the region of its greatest concentration was the country just north of Rennes<sup>23</sup>. A specific example of this connection between St. Florent and Rennes occurred in 1058 when Duke Conan II of Brittany persuaded the abbot of St. Florent to send one of his monks, Even, to become abbot of the abbey of St. Mélaire in Rennes in order to reform it. In 1078, at the request of Pope Gregory VII, this Even became archbishop of Dol (1078–81)<sup>24</sup>. Through this Even Galo (and/or his parents) may have decided that St. Florent was a desirable abbey in which to begin a monastic career.

A vast quantity of eleventh and twelfth century charters from the abbey of St. Florent survives today and it is conceivable that they contain information about Galo's life at the abbey, but for the most part these are unpublished. The only way to find such information would be to consult these charters available in the departmental archives of the Maine et Loire in Angers, and that would be a formidable task. One exception to this is charters relating to the abbey's priory at St. Gondon-sur-Loire which were published in the nineteenth century, and by chance Galo was active in the affairs of this house in his last years as a monk at St. Florent. This priory was located 150 miles east of Saumur in the region of Berry.

Although St. Gondon was totally isolated from the other priories of St. Florent, all situated in western France north and south of the Loire (as well as in England), the community of St. Florent nonetheless held it in high regard because it was the home and burial place of one of its most venerated monks from the ninth century, St. Gondon. The monks of Saumur, however, had difficulty retaining control of it due to its great distance from the mother house, and in the later eleventh century an abbey from the Berry, Vierzon, gained possession of it. Then in 1095 Abbot William of St. Florent sought to regain St. Gondon and by 1104 he succeeded, and the history of this priory can be reconstructed in some detail due to the survival of two dozen charters from those years<sup>25</sup>.

Galo became a prominent figure at St. Gondon at that time rising to the office of prior shortly before being named bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon in Brittany. The lack of dates in most of its charters makes it difficult to establish the chronological sequence of Galo's entry into, and participation in the life and activities of the priory<sup>26</sup>. Still an approximate picture shows that he was not involved at the outset. He is not listed among the many monks present at the Jan. 1095 meeting with the archbishop of Bourges when Abbot William of St. Florent launched his campaign to recover St. Gondon from the abbey of Vierzon. He is similarly absent from six consecutive charters in the cartulary, (No's XIV–XIX) which record local donations to St. Gon-

23 Jérôme BEAUMON, *Les prieurés de l'abbaye de Saint-Florent de Saumur au nord de Rennes et la seigneurie de Dol-Combouurg*, in: *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest* 13/3 (2006), p. 73–92.

24 André CHÉDEVILLE, Noël-Yves TONNERRE (ed.), *La Bretagne féodale XI<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Rennes 1987, p. 223–255 at p. 225, 243.

25 Paul MARCHEGAY (ed.), *Cartulaire du prieuré bénédictin de Saint-Gondon sur Loire, Les Roches-Baritaud 1879*, Nos. 4–29, p. 16–53.

26 The editor of these charters, P. Marchegay, proposed dates for all of them but with the question mark which he placed after them he acknowledged his uncertainty in the matter.

don. The first of these took place in Oct. 1095, that is ten months after Abbot William's meeting with the archbishop of Bourges. The other five, undated, record donations, and all named monks associated with St. Gondon, anywhere from one to five in all including a certain Fulk five times, and an Ingulf and a Gerald twice, and the last one (No. XIX, 40–41) names a Giraud as the prior. Twice the charter scribe (No. XV, 36–37; No. XIX, 40–41) spoke of the monks of St. Florent who were staying at St. Gondon<sup>27</sup>. This would seem to mean that after Abbot William's success at Bourges in Jan. 1095 several monks of St. Florent, presumably chosen and sent by him, went to St. Gondon and lived, at least temporarily in the old monastic quarters there. And that one of them was made prior, presumably named by Abbot William to direct the monastic life there. Galo had no part in this.

According to the St. Gondon charters his first contact with the priory occurred after the succession of Léger to the archbishopric of Bourges in 1099. The occasion was when Abbot William of St. Florent took him with four other monks of the abbey to a meeting with Archbishop Léger in Bourges to defend successfully his claims that St. Gondon belonged to St. Florent<sup>28</sup>. Then in April 1104 Galo and two fellow monks followed their abbot to a major church council in Troyes in Champagne which formally pronounced that St. Gondon belonged to St. Florent of Saumur<sup>29</sup>. Two other brief charters in this collection, both undated, dealing with strictly local affairs and people at St. Gondon, and not attended by distinguished prelates – archbishops, bishops, abbots – such as in the meetings at Bourges (No. IV, IX), name monk Galo as a witness to the donation being made<sup>30</sup>. These charters show that Galo was now a member of the monastic community at St. Gondon and the best explanation would appear to be that after being taken to the region for the first time in 1099 by Abbot William for the synod at Bourges under Archbishop Léger, Galo stayed and became a member of the priory, possibly at the urging of his abbot. His being the first monk named in these two charters suggest that he had become a leading member of the community.

### Galo as prior of Saint-Gondon

Within a short period of time, probably just one or two years, Galo in fact became prior of St. Gondon and five charters in the cartulary testify to his holding that office. All of these are undated but one contains information making it possible to determine that it had to have been written after May 1101. This is charter no. X in which Count Étienne of Blois begins by confirming to the monks of St. Florent their possession of the monastery of St. Gondon. In a second part of this charter the Countess Adèle, after the death of her husband in Jerusalem (May 1101) confirmed this concession »in the chateau of St. Gondon in the dwelling of the knight Narbert,

27 No. 15, p. 36–37: (...) *postulavit a monachis Sancti Florentii apud Sanctum Gundulfum morantibus (...)*; No. 19, p. 40–41: (...) *qui illis diebus in monasterii Sancti Gundulfi manebant (...)*.

28 Ibid, No. 9, p. 26–28.

29 Ibid., No. 11, p. 30–31.

30 *Actum in capite pontis monachorum , juxta castrum Sancit Gundulfi: quod audierunt monachi, Galo, Girardus, Gosfridus, Gibuinus (...)*, ibid. No. 20, p. 41–42; *Hujus rei testes sunt: Galo monachus, Girardus monachus, Willelmus presbiter (...)*, No. 22, p. 43.

to Galo the prior<sup>31</sup>. In the interval of two to three years between Count Étienne's concession (made before he went on the crusade of 1101) and Adèle's confirmation – sometime after April 1101 – Galo, who is not mentioned in the first part of the charter, obviously had become prior<sup>32</sup>. The other four charters in which Galo is named as prior record donations to St. Florent and St. Gondon made by people of the region and all four of them identify him as *Galo tunc prioris Sancti Gundulfi* »Galo, at that time prior of St. Gondon«. In other words when the scribe wrote these notices Galo was no longer prior<sup>33</sup>.

The St. Gondon charters say nothing about why Galo left the abbey at Saumur to go to St. Gondon, nor why he stayed there, nor how he became prior in such a short period of time, nor, finally, how successful he was in presiding over life at the priory. Yet given the authority of the abbot in Benedictine monasteries at this time it seems reasonable to assume that Abbot William had a decisive influence on this change in Galo's life. The recovery of the house of St. Gondon in the Berry was a major undertaking of Abbot William. For the late twelfth century author of the »*Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis*«, the most important historical work for the history of the abbey at this time, William's success was so significant that he made a specific entry about it in his brief biographical summary of Abbot William's abbatiat: »In the time of the venerable father William the abbey of St. Gondon, which had been lost due to the lack of care, and the inertia of the monks, was restored to blessed Florent<sup>34</sup>.« It seems reasonable to believe that once Abbot William perceived the success of his effort to regain St. Gondon, he decided that he would have to place this new acquisition under the direction of a capable administrator. Having observed Galo's life under his administration he could well have decided that this was a man qualified for that task. So to acquaint Galo with the new abbey he took him to the region to attend the meetings at Bourges after 1099 and then at Troyes in 1104, and then asked him to stay as a monk at St. Gondon. Then, after a short trial period, he appointed him prior. To be sure Galo's move to St. Gondon and his rise to become prior could have happened differently but given the lack of contemporary evidence there is no way of knowing this.

### The selection of Galo as bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon in Brittany

Just how Galo came to be chosen as bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon, a town and diocese far removed from St. Florent and St. Gondon, is also a complete mystery: who nominated him, when, why, and for what reasons are questions one can only speculate about. The first dated reference to him in his new office in contemporary records is an 1108 charter of Léger, Archbishop of Bourges, in which Galo, bishop of St. Pol-

31 (...) *audiente Galone priore* (...), *ibid.*, No. 10, p. 28–29.

32 That events two or three years apart were described in this text shows that it is not the literal document written, witnessed, and signed by those involved at the time of the ceremony, but a third person summary written at a later time.

33 *Ibid.*, No. 23, p. 44; No. 24, p. 47; No. 25, p. 48; No. 26, p. 49.

34 *Tempore venerabilis patris Guillermi restitute est beato Florentio abbatia Sancti Gundulfi quam per incuriam et inertiam monachorum sanctus amiserat*, *Historia Sancti Florentii Salmurensis*, in: Paul MARCHEGAY, Émile MABILLE (ed.), *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou*, Paris 1869, p. 304.

de-Léon, witnessed and signed a donation by Léger of a neighboring church to the abbey of St. Florent. Léger made this donation to Gilbert prior of St. Gondon, obviously the man who had replaced Galo as prior. Galo's presence at this ceremony in Bourges, a long distance from his diocese in northeastern Brittany, would seem to suggest that even after becoming bishop at St. Pol he continued to maintain contact with the house where had been prior for several years, as well as with the abbey where he had earlier been a monk. The way in which Archbishop Léger cited Galo in this charter would seem to reinforce this conclusion: he specifically identified Galo as a monk of St. Florent as well as bishop of St. Pol: »The witnesses to this act who were present (...) Galo bishop of Léon and monk of St. Florent<sup>35</sup>.«

At some time prior to 1108, the date of this charter, Galo must have been chosen as bishop of St. Pol after having been prior of St. Gondon for a brief period of a couple of years. One contributing factor could have been his being the nephew of a bishop, hence belonging to a family of distinction. If, as proposed by Cyprien Henry (above p. 55), his uncle was Maingui, bishop of Vannes c. 1062–79, he was thus a descendant of the Viscounts of Rennes. Another factor qualifying him for such a position may have been his experience as prior of St. Gondon. Bishops had to be capable administrators of diocesan affairs and Galo's service as prior could have demonstrated his ability to do this kind of work.

Galo's education as a young man, presumably before he became a monk at St. Florent, may also have contributed to his later career as a bishop. Even though nothing is known about where and when he studied, his writing of Latin poems (below, p. 67 ff) means that he had to have studied Latin letters, and one of the most distinguished schools in his time was the cathedral school at Angers not far from Saumur where he became a monk. It is worth noting that the careers of the three most famous poets of the Loire valley of his time, all of whom he met personally during his episcopate, and perhaps earlier, may have interested him in a comparable career for himself. These were Marbode of Rennes, Baudri of Bourgueil, and Hildebert of Lavardin (Le Mans), and all three were men of approximately the same age as Galo and all three became bishops in their mature years, all three shortly before Galo himself did. Marbode at Rennes 1096, Hildebert at Le Mans in 1096, and Baudri at Dol in Brittany in 1107. Moreover prior to becoming archbishop of Dol, Baudri, like Galo, had been a monk, then abbot, at the abbey of Bourgueil just 15 kilometers from St. Florent. In no way would Galo's move from a monastery to an episcopacy in the secular church have been exceptional at this time. Bernard Guillemain's study of the backgrounds and origins of French bishops in the eleventh and twelfth centuries found that most of these men descended from noble families, and that prior to 1108, 60% of them had previously been Benedictine monks. And many of them had studied at cathedral schools at an earlier stage of life<sup>36</sup>.

35 *Hujus rei testes sunt qui interfuerunt (...) Galo Leonensi episcopus et Sancti Florentii monachus (...)*; *ibid.*, No. 28, p. 51.

36 Bernard GUILLEMAIN, *Les origines des évêques en France aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, in: *Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche della »Societas Christiana« dei secoli XI–XII*. Papato, cardinalato ed episcopato, Milan 1974, p. 374–407.

Furthermore this was the time when the papal reform movement launched by Pope Gregory VII in the later eleventh century (the Gregorian Reform) to free bishops from lay control, took effect in Brittany, a province deeply troubled by secular power over the episcopate<sup>37</sup>. Church reformers increasingly sought to have monks appointed to new episcopal vacancies because of their freedom from lay control. A key figure in implementing the reform in Brittany was Even, abbot of St. Mélaïne in Rennes, a former monk at St. Florent, thus a predecessor of Galo at that abbey (see above p. 56, note 24).

Galo's descent from a noble family in which an uncle had been a bishop would have made him an appropriate candidate for an episcopal office in the eyes of contemporaries. But how could those who were looking for a new bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon, after the death of the incumbent bishop Omaneus, have known about the prior of a monastic house, St. Gondon, so far away from their diocese (450 kilometers) in Brittany? Since the diocese of St. Pol was in the archdiocese of Dol (see map), the archbishop there would have been involved in the selection of a new bishop, and since 1107 Baudri, the former abbot of Bourgueil and celebrated Latin poet, held that office. The likelihood that Baudri played a leading role in the naming of Galo to St. Pol is strengthened by his close personal relationship with Abbot William of St. Florent. For nearly forty years, since the late 1060's or early 1070's Baudri had been a monk, then since 1089, abbot at the monastery of St. Pierre of Bourgueil, a near neighbor of St. Florent of Saumur (15 kilometers away). Baudri and William of St. Florent were thus fellow abbots at two important abbeys who came to know each other personally. Indeed they became friends and in a charter from St. Florent William speaks of his *caritativa fraternitas* (charitable brotherhood) with Baudri<sup>38</sup>.

This friendship may even have extended to Baudri's being named archbishop of Dol in 1107. For Abbot William's paternal ancestors up to his own father, Rivallon, had been lords of Dol, and William himself held that office briefly from 1064 to 1066 before deciding to dedicate his life to the abbey of St. Florent. In addition to this his ancestors gained control of the archiepiscopal seat of Dol and William's younger brother Jean held that office from 1087 to 1093<sup>39</sup>. The recent editor of Baudri's poems, Jean-Yves Tilliette, believes that Baudri may have been the author of an epitaph for Jean de Dol<sup>40</sup>. It does not seem excessive to believe that Abbot William may have had a voice in the selection of Baudri.

37 A basic discussion of this movement in the Loire valley is Jean-Hervé FOULON, *Église et réforme au Moyen Âge. Papauté, milieux réformateurs et ecclésiologie dans les Pays de la Loire au tournant des XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Brussels 2008.

38 Henri PASQUIER, *Baudri abbé de Bourgueil archévêque de Dol 1046-1130*, Paris 1979, p. 205; George T. BEECH, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry made in France? The Case for St. Florent of Saumur*, New York 2005, p. 89-90; ID., *Saint-Florent of Saumur and the origin of the Bayeux Tapestry*, in: *Francia* 33/1 (2006), p. 17-32.

39 ID., *Bayeux Tapestry* (as in n. 38), p. 23; Hubert GUILLOTTEL, *Des vicomtes d'Alet aux vicomtes de Poudouvre*, in: *Annales de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de l'arrondissement de Saint-Malo* (1988), p. 200-215; ID., *Combours: protohistoire d'une seigneurie et mise en œuvre de la réforme grégorienne*, in: *Family Trees and Roots of Politics. The Prosopography of Brittany and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries*, ed. Katherine KEATS-ROHAN, Woodbridge 1997, p. 269-298.

40 TILLIETTE, *Baudri de Bourgueil* (as in n. 8), vol. 1, no. 25, p. 174-175.

Given the relationship between Abbot William and both Baudri of Bourgueil and Galo of St. Florent, the latter's being named bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon may have come about as follows. Upon learning of the need for a new bishop of Léon in Baudri's archdiocese of Dol, Abbot William contacted Archbishop Baudri and told him that a promising candidate for that office might be the current prior of St. Gondon, Galo of St. Florent. Baudri, indebted to William for the latter's role in his being named archbishop of Dol, may have felt some obligation to accept the abbot's advice. This would not have been the first time that Abbot William was instrumental in bringing about the promotion of one of his monks at St. Florent. Through his wide range of personal contacts and influence outside his abbey William arranged for the appointment of no less than five of his monks as abbots of Benedictine monasteries in Brittany, Poitou, and the Loire region<sup>41</sup>.

This hypothesis about how Baudri may have chosen Galo is incomplete until it takes into account one other basic piece of information, namely, two poems that Baudri wrote to a poet named Galo (above p. 50), almost certainly the one in consideration here though this Galo is not identified in these poems as a monk at St. Florent or St. Gondon, nor as bishop of St. Pol. In these Baudri speaks of Galo as an especially close friend and a poet of exceptional talent as well as being a fine logician (more about this in the section on Galo as poet, below, p. 67 ff)<sup>42</sup>. These poems are not dated so there are two possible explanations. If written before 1107<sup>43</sup> then Baudri already knew and esteemed Galo as a poet, and this may have influenced him in his selecting him as the new bishop of St. Pol. If he did not write them until after 1107 then they may have been a consequence of his having developed a close friendship with the new bishop. In either case there can be little doubt that Archbishop Baudri of Dol was directly involved in the naming of Galo as bishop and thereby made a major contribution to the his career.

### Galo's episcopacy and his involvement in the Investiture Controversy 1112

The earliest datable reference to Galo's episcopate comes in a charter concerning the priory of St. Gondon where he had been prior between approximately 1104 and 1108. In an act issued at Bourges, Archbishop Léger donated a church near St. Gondon to that priory and lists Galo, cited both as bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon and monk of St. Florent, as one of the witnesses<sup>44</sup>. Three years later, in 1111, Jean, Bishop of Orléans, gave two more churches near St. Gondon to the abbey of Saumur, through

41 In his biography of Abbot William the twelfth century author of the »*Historia Sancti Florentii*« praises Abbot William for this accomplishment, *Historia Sancti Florenti Salmurensis* (as in n. 34), p. 304; BEECH, *Bayeux Tapestry* (as in n. 38), p. 21–22.

42 TILLIETTE, *Baudri de Bourgueil* (as in n. 8), vol. 2, the first poem, p. 112–116, commentary p. 275–279; poem 2, p. 158–159, commentary p. 324–325.

43 TILLIETTE concludes that Baudri wrote most of his poems before becoming archbishop of Dol; *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. XV.

44 MARCHEGAY, *Cartulaire de Saint-Gondon* (as in n. 25), No. 28, p. 50–51.

the hand of Bishop Galo who signed the document<sup>45</sup>. That both of these prelates called him both bishop and monk of St. Florent shows that Galo continued to maintain a close relationship with the abbey and the priory after he had become bishop of St. Pol far away to the northwest.

The next reference to Galo comes, surprisingly, from the minutes of a church council of Pope Paschal II in Rome in March of 1112<sup>46</sup>. A long list of archbishops and bishops present at this council names *Galo Leonensis* as one of only two French prelates in this group and specifically adds that he was the *legatus* (envoy, representative) of the archbishops of Bourges and Vienne<sup>47</sup>. This council came about as part of a conflict between the papacy and the German emperors over the investiture of clergy which went back to the later eleventh century. In 1111 Pope Paschal II, then a prisoner of King Henry V, reversed an earlier papal decision (Gregory VII) and granted the king authority to invest German clergy into their offices. Resistance to this among Italian clergy forced Paschal to call a council in March 1112 in which, bowing to the pressure of his opponents, the pope confessed his guilt and reaffirmed the earlier papal prohibition of lay investiture of clergy<sup>48</sup>. Two other twelfth century historians, Peter the Deacon, monk at Monte Cassino and author at the time of the chronicles of that abbey, and Orderic Vitalis, monk at St. Evroult in Normandy, asserted that Galo was one of three high ecclesiastics whose pressure on Paschal led him to call the council of March 1112<sup>49</sup>.

By a strange coincidence the bishop of Paris in 1112 was also a man named Galo who held that office from 1104 to 1116, and this inevitably raises the question as to whether this latter could have been the one present at the March 1112 council. At least one modern scholar has assumed this to have been the case<sup>50</sup> but the scribes of the Rome council of March 1112 always called him Galo, bishop of Léon, never bishop of Paris (see notes 45, 47). In contrast to this the scribe of an 1113 charter of King Louis VI, witnessed by Galo bishop of Paris, recorded this as *Signum Galonis*

45 Ibid., No. 29, p. 32.

46 Ludwig WEILAND (ed.), *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum (911–1197)*, Hannover 1893 (MGH Constitutiones, 1), p. 570–573.

47 *Perlecta vero hac carta acclamatum est ab universio concilio: Amen, Amen fiat, fiat. Archiepiscopi qui (...) interfuerunt hii sunt (...) Episcopi vero (...) Gualo Leonensis, legatus pro Bituricensi et Viennensi archiepiscopi (...)*, *ibid.*, p. 573.

48 Uta-Renate BLUMENTHAL, *Opposition to Pope Paschal II: Some Comments on the Lateran Council of 1112*, in: ead., *Papal Reform and Canon Law in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Ashgate 1998, No. 10, p. 82–98.

49 »Robert of Paris, Gualo Bishop of Léon, Pontius Abbot of Cluny, and many cardinals and bishops besides disowned the Pope and ruled that whatever he had conceded to the emperor, either in words or in writing ought to be held null and void (...)*«*, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. Marjorie CHIBNAL, vol. 5, Book 10, p. 198–199. *Praephatu namque abbas, sociatis sibi Gualo, Legionensi episcopi, et Roberto Parissensi, et aliis cardinalibus coepet omnimodis instare pontifici ut privilegium quod imperatori fecerat disrumperet, eumque anathemati vincula innodaret (...)*; Peter the Deacon, *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, ed. Georg Heinrich PERTZ, in: MGH SS, vol. 7, Hannover 1846, p. 782.

50 Peter McKEON, *The Lateran Council of 1112. The Heresy of Lay Investiture and the Excommunication of Henry V*, in: *Medievalia et Humanistica* 17 (1966), p. 3–14.

*Parisiensis episcopus*<sup>51</sup>. The Galo who attended the Rome council must have been the bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon<sup>52</sup>.

The finding that the Galo at the Rome council of March 1112 was Bishop Galo of St. Pol is both puzzling and astonishing. For how could a man with so little experience have become the personal representative of two French archbishops at a great assemblage of the Pope and Italian prelates? One of these archbishops, Guy of Vienne, already a figure of considerable prominence, was to become Pope Calixtus II seven years later in 1119. So far as is known Galo had spent all of his previous life in his abbey in northwestern France, and had been bishop for only two or three years. Archbishop Guy and his fellow archbishop, Léger of Bourges (1099–1120) would surely have chosen as their personal representative at a papal council only someone they knew well and in whom they had complete confidence. Presumably somehow Galo came to fulfill these conditions. To my knowledge no contemporary documents attest to Galo having met or been with Archbishop Guy before 1112, but in 1108 he was in the company of Archbishop Léger of Bourges. In a charter of that year issued in Bourges the two men signed Léger's donation to the priory of St. Gondon (see above p. 59)<sup>53</sup>. After this meeting Léger could conceivably have brought Galo to the attention of Guy of Vienne and through his family background, his personality, traits of character, and intelligence Galo could have made an impression on the two men who then sent him to Rome in 1112. Otherwise I can think of no alternative explanation for Galo's extraordinary rise to prominence in such a short period to time.

It would be only natural to ask whether Galo had any role in the business of this six day council (March 18–23), or whether his task was simply to present the views of the archbishops of Bourges and Vienne for whom he was the representative? In the lengthy document issued at the end of the council, the »Acta concilii contra heresim de investitura« which summarizes the findings, there are two references to Galo. The first one includes him in the group of over twenty archbishops and bishops, mainly Italian, and identifies him as *Gualo Leonensis, legatus pro Bituricensi et Viennensi archiepiscopis*. This would seem to be the scribe's way of saying that Galo's presence in the council did not stem from his own authority as a bishop in Brittany, but as the representative of the two archbishops named. The second one was in a statement in the last sentence in the text explaining that this *carta* (document) was dictated by six of the above prelates one of whom was Galo<sup>54</sup>. Thus far from being simply a

51 Gallia Christiana, vol. 7, Instrumenta, p. 48. See also *ibid*, p. 58. On Galo bishop of Paris see Lambertus M. DE RIJK, Some New Evidence on 12<sup>th</sup> century Logic. Alberic and the School of Ste. Genevieve, in: *Vivarium* 4 (1966), p. 1–57 at p. 4–8.

52 Kim LO PRETE came to the same conclusion in treating the question in her biography of Adela of Blois: Adela of Blois Countess and Lord (c. 1067–1137), Dublin 2007, p. 464–465.

53 MARCHEGAY, *Cartulaire de Saint-Gondon* (as in n. 25), No. 28, p. 50–51. On an earlier occasion, in April 1104, before becoming prior of St. Gondon, Galo attended a church council in Troyes concerning the dispute between St. Florent and Vierzon over St. Gondon. A number of distinguished prelates are mentioned in the charter – an apostolic legate, a number of archbishops, bishops, and abbots, but neither Léger nor Guy were there.

54 *Hec carta dictata est a Girardo Engolismensi, Leoni Ostiensi, Gregorio Tarracinensi, Gualone Leonensi episcopis, a Roberto cardinali tituli Sancte Eusebii, Gregorio tituli Sanctorum apostolorum, communi alorum consilio*, WEILAND, *Constitutiones* (as in n. 46), p. 573.



bystander or observer he had an active voice in the formulation of the conclusions of the council<sup>55</sup>.

His participation in the Investiture Controversy did not end in Rome in March 1112. Six months later, Sept. 1112, Archbishop Guy called for, and presided over, another council dealing with the question in his archiepiscopal city of Vienne and Galo participated in this meeting. In part this council was in response to a letter Paschal II sent to Guy after the March council in Rome, and Beate Schilling thinks that Galo may have delivered this personally to the archbishop in Vienne<sup>56</sup>. In contrast to the Rome council earlier in the year, peopled by Italian prelates, this one was attended mainly by Burgundian bishops and Galo was, curiously enough, the first in a list of participants<sup>57</sup>. This is the only reference to Galo in this council so nothing is known about whether he had an active part in what took place.

After the Vienne council the investiture controversy between the pope and the emperor continued for the next six years with Guy of Vienne involved as the papal legate<sup>58</sup>. Galo, however, appears in none of the meetings of those years which can only mean that he withdrew from the affair and presumably returned to the administration of his diocese in Brittany. Why he did this after having been deeply involved in 1112 can only be a matter of speculation. To my knowledge not a single document available today mentions him from 1113 to 1118 so nothing is known of his life during that time.

### Galo's relationship with Pope Calixtus II

The death of Paschal II in 1118 brought in a new pope, Gelasius II, but the latter died after a year in office, and this was followed by the election of Guy of Vienne as Pope Calixtus II in 1119. This event brought Galo back on to the scene. After being chosen as pope and inaugurated in Vienne in Feb. 1119 Calixtus then embarked on a long journey of over a year to visit many of the principle towns in southern and northern France<sup>59</sup>. In July he presided over a church synod in Toulouse in which Galo was one of many higher clergy present<sup>60</sup>. But all of these were southern French clergy, Galo was the only one from the north. Either he made the trip on his own to renew his relationship with Calixtus or the latter contacted him and urged him to come. In any case this suggests a close relationship between the two men.

After the end of the Toulouse synod (July 17, 1119) Calixtus resumed his French undertaking moving to the north with stops at, among other towns, Cahors, Périgueux, Angoulême, Poitiers, St. Florent of Saumur, and Angers in the Loire valley (see map). At Angers on Sept 7 he dedicated the altar of the church of Notre Dame of Ronçeray in the presence of many ecclesiastical dignitaries including our Galo of

55 Beate SCHILLING, *Guido von Vienne – Papst Calixt II.*, Hanover 1998, p. 363; Carlo SERVATIUS, *Paschalis II. (1099–1118). Studien zu seiner Person und seiner Politik*, Stuttgart 1979, p. 320–321.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 672, n. 123.

57 MANSI, vol. 21, p. 78.

58 SCHILLING, *Guido von Vienne* (as in n. 55), p. 373–389.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 407 ff, p. 687–706.

60 Ulysse ROBERT (ed.), *Bullaire du Pape Calixte II*, 2 vol., Paris 1891, vol. 2, No. 35, p. 48–51; SCHILLING, *Guido von Vienne* (as in n. 55), p. 407–409, 691.

St. Pol<sup>61</sup>. From Angers Calixtus and his entourage travelled east to Tours where they spent several days (Sept. 15–24) and once again Galo was in attendance<sup>62</sup>. The last time Galo appeared among the clergy accompanying Calixtus on this journey was on Oct. 1 when the pope stopped in Étampes/Morigny north of Orléans on the way to Paris. In a charter of that date, recording the dedication of the altar of the church of the abbey of St. Trinity of Morigny, Galo is listed as one of a group of seven prelates, King Louis VI of France, and a large number of French princes<sup>63</sup>. Shortly after Morigny Calixtus continued on to Reims where he presided over a great church council from October to November. There is no reference to Galo being present there.

After a period of eight years, from 1119 to 1127, when no contemporary documents mention him, Galo comes to light several times in the last two years of his episcopate, 1127–28, and these all located him in various places in northwestern France. Sometime in 1127 he participated in a judgement in the town of Le Mans (Maine) settling a dispute between the bishop of Sées and the monks of the abbey of Marmoutiers<sup>64</sup>. The bishop and papal legate who made this judgment, Gerard of Angoulême, had participated in the Rome council of March 1112, hence would have known Galo and may have been instrumental in having him come to this meeting, a considerable distance from the diocese of St. Pol of Leon.

A charter of Oct. 23, 1127 lists Galo as having participated in a ceremony in Redon, southern Brittany (see map) closer to, yet still quite far from his diocese in Léon. In the company of Conan, Duke of Brittany, author of the charter, and a host of ecclesiastical dignitaries, Galo was present for the consecration of the altar of the abbey church of St. Sauveur of Redon. Hubert Guillotel concluded that although a number of aspects of this charter were later falsifications, its basic content may well be authentic<sup>65</sup>.

Five months later, March 15, 1128, in Nantes, southern Brittany, Galo witnessed a charter of the same Duke Conan for the abbess of Notre Dame de Charité (Ronçeray) in Angers<sup>66</sup>. Other witnesses included clerics, notably Hildebert of Lavardin, archbishop of Tours and famous poet, and Hamelin, bishop of Rennes, who had performed the same function with Galo at the consecration of the altar of the abbey in Redon as described above. Also present as a witness was another famous poet, Peter Abelard, abbot of St. Gildas. The last two dated charters (1128) concerning Galo center around a donation by Hervé, Viscount of Léon, of land near his castle of Morlaix, southeast of Léon, to the abbey of Marmoutiers near Tours. Hervé's gift is fol-

61 *Cartularium monasterii Beatae Mariae Caritatis Andegavensis*, ed. Paul MARCHEGAY, Eugene VALLÉE, Angers 1854-1900, No. 10, p. 12–13.

62 ROBERT (ed.), *Bullaire* (as in n. 60), vol. 2, No. 64, p. 92–93; SCHILLING, *Guido von Vienne* (as in n. 55), p. 694.

63 *Chronicon Mauriniacense*, ed. Martin BOUQUET, RHF, vol. 12, p. 75; SCHILLING, *Guido von Vienne* (as in n. 55), p. 410–411, 695.

64 *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Perche ...*, ed. Abbé BARRET, Mortagne 1894, No. 24, p. 38–40.

65 Hubert GUILLOTEL (ed.), *Actes des ducs de Bretagne, 944–1148*, Rennes 2014 (*Sources médiévales de l'histoire de Bretagne*, 3), No. 123, p. 454–456.

66 *Cartularium Beatae Mariae Caritatis of Angers, abbey of La Ronçeray*, *ibid.*, No. 132, p. 458–459.

lowed by a second charter, dated March 3, 1128 in which Bishop Galo and Bishop Raoul of Tréguier, a town and diocese adjoining the diocese of Léon to the west, confirm this donation<sup>67</sup>. These two charters are the only ones surviving today concerning Galo's own diocese of St. Pol-de-Léon and the second one is the unique example of a document issued by the bishop himself. In a comment at the end of this charter Galo adds that at a council in Dol in the archdiocese of Brittany, he invested the monks of Marmoutier with his ring, his mitre, and his seal. This council, he writes, was celebrated by the venerable legate, Girard, Bishop of Angoulême<sup>68</sup>. Once again Galo came together with the same legate with whom he had worked closely in the Rome council of March 1112, and his characterizing Girard as »venerable« indicates his respect for this man.

The last three charters which mention Galo as bishop are, in contrast to those discussed above, undated, so could have been written any time between 1108 and 1128/29. Two of them concern the bishop's involvement in the founding of a priory in the diocese of Vannes in southwestern Brittany at the town of St. Nicolas-des-Eaux and were taken into account in my discussion of the likelihood that he was the nephew of of Bishop Maingui of Vannes (above p. 53, 55). These two charters are preserved in a cartulary of the abbey of St. Florent, and so was the third one which concerns the priory of St. Gondon where Galo was prior from ca. 1104 to 1108. This document tells of a donation of land to the priory having been made in the hand of Galo bishop and monk of St. Florent<sup>69</sup>.

After 1128 there are no further mentions of Galo which can only lead to the conclusion that he died in that year though nothing is known about this. A single reference comes from a late medieval necrology of the abbey of Landévennec over 60 kilometers south of Léon (see map). This reads: »V Ides of Sept. Galo bishop of Léon died and he was a monk of our society<sup>70</sup>.« That the monks of Landévennec took the trouble to include Galo in the list of those men whose deaths they celebrated annually suggests that after becoming bishop of Léon he had continued to emphasize his monastic status, but nothing further is known about this.

### The significance of Galo's episcopal career

Any attempt to summarize Galo's episcopate has to begin with the recognition that the contemporary documentation is so minimal and so fragmentary that the historian must be very cautious in generalizing. Only fifteen charters refer to him over a twenty year period and most of these picture him as a participant in, or witness to, the actions of others. Exceptions to this are the two charters about the founding of

67 Hubert GUILLOTTEL, *Les vicomtes de Léon aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, in: *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire et d'archéologie de Bretagne* 51 (1971), p. 29–51 at p. 47–50.

68 *Et in concilio Dolensi quod sub venerabilis legato Girardo Engolismensi celebratum est anno ab Incarnatione Domini MCXXVIII per annum meum de hoc ipsos monachos investivi et sigilli mei impressioni muniri feci. Similiter ego Galo Leonensis episcopus, per mitram meam eosdem monachos in ipso concilio de supradictis donis investivi et sigilli mei auctoritate roboravi*, *ibid.*

69 MARCHEGAY, *Cartulaire de Saint-Gondon* (as in n. 25), No. 27, p. 50.

70 *V Idus Septembris obiit (...) et Galo Leonensis episcopus et monachus nostrae societatis*, *Nécrologe de Landévennec*, ed. Jean-Luc DEUFFIC, Daoulas 1985, No. 82.

the priory of St. Nicolas-des-Eaux, the two about the church at Morlaix, and the minutes of the Rome council of Pope Paschal II and only one of these is Galo's own charter. Moreover these mentions of the bishop are highly episodic – one from the beginning of his episcopacy in 1108, three from Rome and Vienne, 1112, four from 1119 in the company of Pope Calixtus II, five from 1128–29, and three undated. So there is no chronological continuity between them.

One would have expected the documents of the day to have said more about Galo's administration of his diocese than his involvement elsewhere, but the survival of only two in that category means that the opposite is the case. More is known about his activity elsewhere and I am inclined to believe that this has resulted from the loss of episcopal archives from the diocese of Léon. However that may be it in no way alters the conclusion that by far the outstanding feature of Galo's episcopacy was his meteoric rise to prominence in the Investiture Controversy when he participated in Pope Paschal II's council in Rome in 1112. And the person who promoted his role in the council was unmistakably Archbishop Guy of Vienne, later Pope Calixtus II, though the circumstances under which Galo entered into the latter's intimate group of advisors are obscure. And this friendship came back to life seven years later when Galo joined Calixtus's French tour. After this episode of association with the papal entourage, silence for the next eight years. Not a single reference to him during that time until Galo reappeared in five charters from 1127–28, all of them concerning abbeys, people, lands, and events in northeastern France, Maine and mainly Brittany.

Was Galo an effective bishop during his two decades in office? The lack of evidence rules out the possibility of answering this question. Obviously Archbishop Guy of Vienne (Pope Calixtus II) had a high regard for him or he would not have chosen Galo as his representative in 1112 but there is no way of knowing how people in his own diocese looked upon him. Although bishop in a thinly populated district far distant from the centers of power and wealth in early twelfth century France, Galo did not confine himself to the administration of his diocese but travelled widely both in and out of the country. In the process he met many of the dignitaries of the day both secular – King Louis VI of France – and ecclesiastical – many archbishops, bishops, abbots from many parts of the country, and poets as well.

### Galo as poet

Reference to poets brings me to an aspect of Galo's career hitherto left untouched, his poems and what they can reveal about his life and work. I must leave a detailed literary study of these poems to medieval Latin specialists, and concentrate here on what they reveal about what interested the author, the people he knew, and his viewpoints on issues of the day. I do this in order to see whether these poems shed light on two basic questions concerning: 1, the identity of the poet Galo and, 2, the attribution of ten of the poems to him. The contemporary evidence for the poet Galo having been the same person as the Galo bishop of Léon, though almost certainly correct, is sparse and would benefit from further corroborating proof. Do any of the poems themselves furnish proof that their author was the bishop of Léon? Furthermore, though D. Poirel's contention that ten of the poems in ques-

tion were creations of Galo of Léon is to me convincing, the poet names himself in only one of them. Consequently the assumption that the bishop of Léon was indeed their author would be strengthened if any of them contain references pointing in that direction.

### Poems attributed to Galo

First, a list of the poems beginning with the eleven published in the Migne PL, vol. 171, and singled out by Dominique Poirel.

No. 1, »De Morte Roberti de Arbrissel«, 26 lines, Migne PL, vol. 171, No. 27, col. 1391–1392;

No. 2, »Epitaphium magistri Anselmi«, 11 lines, No. 30, col. 1393;

No. 3, »De Morte comitis Flandrensis«, 10 lines, No. 31, col. 1393;

No. 4, »Epitaphium cujusdam probi viri«, 12 lines, No. 32, col. 1393–1394;

No. 5, »Epitaphium Milonis in carcere jugulati«, 8 lines, No. 33, col. 1394;

No. 6, »Somnium de lamentatione Pictavensis ecclesiae«, 140 lines, No. 115, col. 1432–1434;

No. 7, »Epitaphium cujusdam simoniaci in excommunicationi defuncti«, 27 lines, No. 47, col. 1399;

No. 8, »Gualo, ad episcopum successorum patris sui«, 19 lines, No. 44, col. 1398;

No. 9, »De quodam genere hominum, scilicet fraudulenter conversantium«, 24 lines, No. 137, col. 1441–1442;

No. 10, »De brevi subsistentia hominis«, 12 lines, No. 138, col. 1442;

No. 11, »Ad Roman de descensu sui«, 38 lines, No. Indif. 1, col. 1365;

The last six of the poems under consideration here were found in different places and published individually as cited below (with the exception of No's 15 and 16 still available only in manuscript form).

No. 12, »De quo magister Galo versificator egregius sic ait«, 10 lines, Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum. The History of the English People*, ed. Diana Greenway, Oxford 1996, p. 837–839;

No. 13, »Gualonis Britonis Invectio in ordo monasticos«, 42 lines, Dümmler, *Libelli de lite* (as in n. 4), p. 699–701; Wright, *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets* (as in n. 3), p. 201–202;

No. 14, »Galo Leonensis episcopus de mundi contemptu, Heu Stolidi«, 37 lines, Boutémy, *Notice sur le recueil poétique* (as in n. 5), p. 310–311;

No. 15, »Pene Girarde Gualo scribo tibi pene Girarde«, 26 lines, unpublished, Rigg, *Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (IV)* (as in n. 6), p. 485;

No. 16, »Galo Leonensis cui sanctus spiritus ensis«, 2 lines, unpublished, Wilmart, *Le florilège de Saint-Gatien* (as in n. 5), p. 29;

No. 17, »Anonymi Versus de Abbatibus Mitris Utentibus et Delicose Viventibus«, 24 lines, Wright, *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets* (as in n. 3), p. 230–231; André George Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066–1422*, Cambridge 1992), p. 66.

Most of these poems are short in length, three have ten lines or less (No's 3, 5, and 12) and four from 11 to 20 lines (No's 2, 4, 8, 10). This is to be expected since

seven of them are epitaphs and these were usually brief. Notably longer is an epitaph of 24 lines for Robert d'Arbrissel (No. 1) celebrated for his life as a monk and as founder of the abbey of Fontevraud and who died in 1116. The *magister* Anselm, the subject of another of the epitaphs (No. 2), was almost certainly Anselm of Laon, a distinguished theologian and dean of the cathedral of Laon, mid-eleventh century–1117. Two of the epitaphs were written for well-known political figures of the day, the count of Flanders (No. 3), probably Baldwin VII, 1111–1119, and William Clito, a son of Robert Courthose Duke of Normandy, and grandson of William the Conqueror (No. 12). One (No. 5) was for a Milo, a man of uncertain identity. Strangely enough the last two epitaphs, No's 4 and 7, were written for unnamed persons, hence could not have been intended for display at their graves but must have been the author's own meditations which he kept for himself. One, No. 4, concerns »a good man« – *prob(us) vir* – the other, No. 7, much longer with 22 lines, is about a person who had committed simony and died while under excommunication. The subject of death caught the poet's attention in another short poem, No. 10, twelve lines, on the brevity of human life, »De brevi subsistentia hominis«.

The predominance of epitaphs among Galo's poems might seem surprising and lead one to wonder what attracted him to this genre of poetry. Recent findings have shown that far from being the only one to write poetic epitaphs, the most prominent poets of the Loire valley region in his day, Baudri of Bourgueil, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Marbode of Rennes, all of whom he knew personally, also made frequent use of this literary form<sup>71</sup>. Could not this be an indication of the influence these poets had on the poetic career of Galo?

In what is by far the longest of all these poems (No. 6, 140 lines) the author once again expresses his sorrow not for a person, however, but for the church of Poitiers: »Somnium de lamentatio Pictavensis ecclesiae«. In this instance he is referring to the troubles of the diocese in the years 1115–1118 when, after intense controversy the Duke of Aquitaine, William IX the troubadour 1086–1126, drove the incumbent bishop Pierre II, out of office leaving the church without leadership<sup>72</sup>.

Five of the poems criticize various practices and beliefs of the day through the use of satire.

The »De quodam genere hominum, scilicet in omnibus fraudulenter conversantium« (No. 9, 24 lines) has been called a »satire des hypocrites« and »Ad Romam de descensu sui« (No. 11, 38 lines), a »satire de Rome«<sup>73</sup>. The »Gualonis Britonis Invecio in ordo monachos« (No. 13, 42 lines) was similarly described as »une satire contre les moines simoniaques«<sup>74</sup> and the »Heu stolidi qui tam cupidi dubiis inihiatis«,

71 »The Eleventh and twelfth centuries mark the peak of the popularity of the epitaph as a poetic genre among Latin authors of the Middle Ages. Baldric of Bourgueil, Hildebert of Lavardin, Foulcoie of Beauvais and, to a lesser extent, Marbodius of Rennes wrote several dozen of these metric compositions«, Vincent DEBIAIS, Estelle INGRAND-VARENNE, *Inscriptions in Orderic's Historia Ecclesiastica: A Writing Technique between History and Poetry*, in: Charles ROZIER et al. (ed.), *Orderic Vitalis. Life, Works, and Interpretations*, Woodbridge 2016, p. 127–128.

72 POIREL, *Poème sur la mort* (as in n. 10), p. 596.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 595.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 599.

(No. 14, 37 lines) appears to be a satire about ecclesiastical avarice. Finally, »De Abbatibus mitris...«, (No. 17, 24 lines), is a warning about abbots becoming bishops.

The author wrote two of these poems for living individuals whom he knew personally. The first of these, (No. 8, 19 lines), was to the successor of his uncle as bishop but the poet's decision not to name either his uncle or the successor complicates the interpretation of this poem. The Gerard to whom he wrote the second poem (No. 15, 26 lines) may very well have been Gerard bishop of Angoulême and papal legate. On both of these more below. Only two lines of No. 16 have been published making it difficult to know how to classify it<sup>75</sup>.

In four instances the author identifies himself by name in the poem itself; thus the opening line of No. 8 reads: *Gualo ad episcopum successorem patruï sui* – »Galo to the bishop, successor of his uncle«. No. 15 begins with *Pene Girarde Gualo scribo* – I »Gualo am writing you Girarde«, and in No. 16 it is *Galo Leonensis, cui sanctus spiritus* – »Galo of Léon to whom the holy spirit«. In No. 14 the last line is *Iste tuus Galo perpetuus tibi mittit amicus* – »Thus your Galo presents himself as your perpetual friend«.

In contrast to this the author does not identify himself in the remaining thirteen poems but twice the scribe who copied the text into the manuscript did so in the heading which he placed above the text. In his twelfth-century history of the English people Henry of Huntingdon included an epitaph on William Clito, whom he had just been discussing, describing it (No. 12), »De quo magister Galo versificator egregius sic ait« – »About whom magister Galo, a writer of verse, thus says«. »Gualonis Britonis Invectio in ordo monachos« – »The attack of Galo the Briton on the order of the monks« – is the title given by the scribe to the poem No. 13. Containing no identification of the poet in either of these two ways, the remaining eleven poems are anonymous thus the subject of particular interest in this inquiry.

### Reflections of Galo's life in the poems

In his 2006 article on one of these poems – No. 1, »De morte Roberti de Arbriscel« – D. Poirel ascribed it, and the other ten anonymous ones, to Galo of Léon on the basis of a number of shared traits including subject matter, length, and poetic structure (above, p. 50). I find his arguments persuasive. What I propose to do here is to see if further evidence corroborating, or refuting, Poirel's conclusions can be found in what is now known about Galo's life and career. Prior to his 2006 article historians knew almost nothing about either of these because almost nothing had ever been written about Galo. I believe that my own research into that subject, presented above p. 51 ff, changes that situation by introducing new information about who this man was and what he accomplished. As convincing as Poirel's arguments are, they remain hypothetical so this leads to the question, does this new knowledge about Bishop Galo correspond with what the poet wrote in these poems, or indeed cast new light on them? Conversely one could ask, might any of the references in these poems derive from what Galo did or thought, first as a monk and then as bishop?

75 WILMART, *Le florilège de Saint-Gatien* (as in n. 5), p. 29, No. 154.

Another way of learning whether the eleven anonymous poems were written by Galo is to compare them with six known to be his because he names himself in them or the scribe does so in the poem title. If Galo was the author in some or all of the eleven then the two groups of poems might resemble one another not only in poetic structure, as shown to be the case by Poirel, but perhaps also in subject matter, and in other ways. This will be looked into in what follows.

An obvious question would be: could Galo have known the people for whom the epitaphs were written? In fact, as Poirel notices, he certainly would have known Robert d'Arbrissel who founded the abbey of Fontevraud and died in 1116. This Robert lived close to Galo's abbey of St. Florent of Saumur and the poem's (No. 1 »De Morte Roberti«) detailed tribute to him suggests that two men were personally acquainted and perhaps friends. If the *magister Anselmus* of No. 2 was indeed the theologian Anselm of Laon († 1117), as is most likely, then Galo would have known him as well. Since both were present for a Council in Troyes in 1104 they must have met personally and the poem's praise of Anselm – *dormit in hoc tumulo celeberrimus ille magister Anselmus*, »the most celebrated magister Anselmus sleeps in this tumulus« – was based on personal acquaintance and possibly friendship<sup>76</sup>. No such evidence exists for a personal acquaintance between Galo and the count of Flanders, probably Baldwin VII, 1111–1119, epitaph No. 3, so it is not possible to know what could have motivated him to write this. But the poet's admiration for this count who sought to be »at the same time both count and monk« – *Pene simul comes est monachus* – is unmistakable. The same uncertainty also hangs over the epitaph for William Clito (No. 12), Count of Flanders and Duke of Normandy 1102–1128.

The briefest of all these epitaphs (No. 5, 8 lines) is one for a Milo who unlike the other three men above is not recognizable by his name alone. Nonetheless there was a Milo who stood out as a distinguished monk, bishop, and papal legate from the 1090's until his death in 1104 or 1105, and who came from the abbey of St. Aubin in Angers in the Loire valley, hence Galo would have known of him at the beginning of his own career at St. Gondon<sup>77</sup>. And this Milo wrote a Latin poem praising Pope Paschal II after the latter's consecration in 1099<sup>78</sup>. However Galo's epitaph was for a man who was murdered in prison – »Epitaphium Milonis incarcerated jugulati«, No. 5 above p. 68 – hence it seems unlikely that this was for the former monk of Angers.

With regard to two of the epitaphs, No's 4 and 7, the question: could Galo have known these people? cannot be answered because he (the poet) did not name them. These were epitaphs for unnamed people. The same question can be asked about the two poems written for living people whom the author may have known personally, No's 8 and 15, and these are two of the four in which the author identifies himself in the opening line as Galo. But in No. 8, »Gualo, ad episcopum successorum patru sui«, his decision not to name either his uncle or the latter's successor complicates the interpretation of the poem. Nonetheless an earlier discussion (above p. 52–53) found

76 MARCHEGAY, *Cartulaire de Saint-Gondon* (as in n. 25), No 11, p. 30–31.

77 Gianluca PILARA, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 74, Rome 2010, s. v.; Germain MIRON, *Un fragment du rouleau mortuaire du cardinal Benedictin Milon de Palestrina*, in: *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 4 (1903), p. 241–246; FOULON, *Église et réforme* (as in n. 37), p. 178, 182–183, 303, 305, 321, 339.

78 MIGNE PL, vol. 163, col. 27.



that almost certainly these were two successive bishops of Vannes in Brittany, Galo's uncle Maingui, and Morvan, his contemporary. If so then there can be no doubt that the poet Galo was Galo Bishop of St. Pol of Leon.

No such problem with No. 15, »Pene Girarde Gualo scribo tibi pene Girarde«, where the name of the person to whom he wrote this poem, Girard, stands out twice. Who was this Girard? A survey of Galo's life as reconstructed in the first part of this article shows that he had close and long-lived contacts with Girard bishop of Angoulême (1102–1136) and papal legate in Aquitaine for many years (1107–1136)<sup>79</sup>. This began as early as 1104 when Galo, then a monk at St. Gondon, attended a council in Troyes in which Girard, along with several other bishops, ruled in favor of the claims of the abbey of St. Florent for the possession of St. Gondon (above p. 57). Then in 1108 the two men, Galo now bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon, witnessed together at Bourges Archbishop Léger's donation of land to St. Gondon (above p. 58, 62, 66). Just four years later the men worked together in an entirely different way and setting, as the only two French prelates participating in Pope Paschal II's council on Investiture in Rome (above p. 62). When this was finished they were two of a group of six bishops who formulated the written summary of the council. Under these circumstances they must have become close collaborators even if this was not already the case. That his relationship with Girard left a lasting impression on Galo is visible in the latter's charter of 1128 in which he writes that the transaction he had just made was carried out in a council in Déols (Brittany) celebrated by the »venerable« legate Girard of Angoulême (above p. 66). The poem which Galo wrote to an otherwise unknown Girard appears to have a personal note in the opening line: *Pene Girarde, Galo scribo tibi, pene Girardus* – »I am almost, Girard, I Galo, am almost writing to you Girard«. As fragmentary as it is the above evidence about the relationship between Galo and Girard bishop of Angoulême would suggest that the poet is here addressing himself to the bishop of Angoulême.

From personal names in the poems I turn to references to places in some of the poems with the same question in mind: do any of the poems accord particular attention to any specific towns which were of importance to Galo in his life as monk and bishop? Certainly belonging to this category would be the poet's lament on the church of Poitiers deprived of the rule of its bishop (No. 6: »Somnium de lamentatione Pictavensis ecclesiae«). As Poirel pointed out in his 2006 article Robert d'Arbrissel's abbey of Fontevraud lay within the diocese of Poitiers and its limits were close to Saumur so Galo would have been acquainted with it during his time at the abbey of St. Florent, and also with the bishop who had been driven out of office, Pierre II<sup>80</sup>. This acquaintance could also account for the poet's four-line tribute to Bishop Pierre at the end of his poem for Robert (No. 1).

79 Hubert CLAUDE, Un légat pontifical, adversaire de Saint Bernard, Girard d'Angoulême, in: Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique de Langres 156 (1953), p. 139–148; Soline KUMAROKA, Les jugements du légat Gerard d'Angoulême en Poitou au début du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, in: Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes 155 (1997), p. 315–338; FOULON, Église et réforme (as in n. 35), p. 227, 285, 291, 295–296, 302, 304–306, 308, 319, 322–324, 334, 385, 394, 403, 409–410, 414–416, 423, 469, 501, 602–603, 625, 628.

80 POIREL, Poème sur la mort (as in n. 10), p. 600–601.

The most surprising finding of the earlier inquiry into the episcopal career of Galo was his previously unknown role in the papal council of March 1112 in Rome. Do any of these poems name this city or reflect this experience? No less than four of them indeed refer to Rome, (No's. 8, 10, 11, 16) the only city other than Poitiers to be named in all of the seventeen poems. Two of these are anonymous (No's 10 and 11) but in the fourth (No. 16) the poet names himself and writes: *Galo Leonensis. Cui sanctus Spiritus ensis, Mandat Romanis numquam servire profanis* – »Galo of Léon, to whom the Holy Spirit is a sword, orders the Romans never to serve profane things«. At first glance one might wonder what the poet Galo meant by this – what were the Romans (which Romans?) doing that he considered profane or worldly? But the study of Galo's participation in the papal council in Rome in March 1112 (above p. 63) showed that as the legate of the archbishops of Vienne and Bourges at that council, he was one of the critics of Pope Paschal II for having granted Emperor Henry V the right to invest clergy. How can one avoid suspecting that this is Galo's way of expressing his criticism of the Pope in poetic form? However that may be, the frequency of these references to Rome would suggest, first that the anonymous poet of No's 10 and 11 was indeed Galo of Léon, and secondly, that his involvement in the Investiture Controversy had a lasting effect on his outlook toward Paschal II.

In the above survey of the seventeen poems attributed to Bishop Galo I briefly described them according to subject matter – epitaphs, satires, personal communications – with special attention to their references to prominent people and places at the time. Six of the poems name Galo as their author, four of them in the first person in the text itself, two of them reporting this in the title of the poem as found in the manuscript. This led to the question: was this poet Galo the Galo who was first a monk at St. Florent in Saumur and later bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon in Brittany? Indeed two of the poems identify the author as *Galo Leonensis* – »Galo of Léon« (No's 14 and 16), and the title of »Heu stolidi« (No. 14) calls him *Galo Leonensis episcopus*. So there is no doubt that our bishop Galo of St. Pol-de-Léon was the author of two of these poems, and possibly of the other four since no other poet of this name is known to have lived at this time.

The survey then sought to see if the new information now available about Galo as a monk and then as a bishop in any way supported D. Poirel's belief that he (Galo of St. Pol) was the author of the remaining poems, eleven of them anonymous and four written by an otherwise unidentified Galo. In four instances I could give positive responses. If the Anselm, subject of poem No. 2, an epitaph, was the famed theologian from Laon who died in 1117 then Galo knew him from a meeting at a council in 1104 and could well have written this epitaph. Poem No. 8, »Galo, to the bishop successor of his (Galo's) uncle«. A detailed study of this poem (above p. 53, 55) showed that this was almost certainly Bishop Galo speaking in his poem of his uncle Maingui and the latter's successor, Morvan, both of them bishops of Vannes in Brittany. Poem No. 15, »Pene Girarde Gualo scribe tibi«: a look at Galo's career revealed that one of his closest ecclesiastical collaborators during his episcopacy was Girard, Bishop of Angoulême and papal legate in Aquitaine. This could well be Bishop Galo's poem to Bishop Girard. But the most striking evidence of a connection between Bishop Galo of Léon and these poems is the poet's reference to Rome in no less than four of them

(No's 8, 10, 11, 16). And in No. 16 the poet identifies himself as Galo of Léon. Moreover the poet Galo's criticism of the Romans for serving profane interests – *servire profanis* – may well be his accusation that Pope Paschal II was submitting to secular pressure in allowing Emperor Henry V to invest clergy.

Thus this search for new evidence from Bishop Galo's life that he was the author of the poems in question found new information favoring his having written four of them even if absolute proof of this is lacking. For a number of the others, particularly the satires, nothing new emerged suggesting he was the author. Still I would contend that the search was worthwhile, particularly in finding a reflection in at least one if not four of his poems of his exceptional experience in the Investiture Controversy in Rome.

### Conclusion

Whether or not Galo of Léon stood out as someone of renown in northwestern France in the early twelfth century is difficult to know today due to the scarcity of surviving records. As bishop in Brittany for twenty years he was inevitably a man of importance in his own diocese but beyond that one cannot be sure. Almost certainly a Breton of noble origin, he must have been a man of intelligence and gifted in personal relationships. At an early age he studied Latin literature but then he committed himself to a religious life and became a monk in a prominent Benedictine monastery close to his Breton homeland. Then, after perhaps many years in the monastic life, he left his abbey and rose to a leadership position in the secular church as bishop of St. Pol-de-Léon in northwestern Brittany. What was certainly the most unusual and spectacular move in his career was his sudden rise to international prominence just two years after becoming bishop, as a close collaborator of later Pope Calixtus II in the famous Investiture Controversy in Rome in 1112. This led him into contact with some of the most distinguished prelates of the time. He seems to have withdrawn from these affairs in later years and returned to his work as bishop in Léon in Brittany though nothing is known about this.

A second distinctive feature of his life is that he also wrote poetry, including epigrams for distinguished contemporaries, communications with friends, and satires criticizing certain ecclesiastical practices of his day. Though several people of the day praised him for his poetry his reputation as a poet did not survive in later generations and only in recent years have modern historians become aware of him. In combining episcopal administration with writing poetry Galo was in no way setting out on a new path. The three most famous Latin poets of the Loire valley in his day, all of whom he knew personally, Marbode of Rennes, Baudri of Bourgueil, and Hildebert of Lavardin, all took the same step slightly earlier than he did.

But what surprised me in writing this article were the remarkable resemblances between his life and career and that of another Loire valley monk of his day, a man named Ansgar. This Ansgar was, like Galo, a Breton who, after being a student in Latin literature, chose to become a monk at St. Florent in Saumur and later left that abbey to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and then, after several years in a

monastery in Calabria, became bishop of Catania in Sicily from 1091 to 1124. Both of these men were Bretons by origin and lived at the same time, both studied Latin literature, both became monks at the same abbey in Saumur, hence they must have known each other, then both left the monastery to become bishops, one in Brittany the other in Sicily, both were poets, and both have escaped the attention of modern historians. It was my work on Ansgar which, indirectly, led me to study Galo<sup>81</sup>. Could the presence of these two men mean that the abbey of St. Florent contributed in ways previously unknown to the Latin poetry movement in the Loire valley at that time?

81 George T. BEECH, *The remarkable Life of Ansgar, a Breton monk and poet from the Loire valley who became bishop of Catania in Sicily 1091–1124*, in: *Viator* 45/1 (2014), p. 149–174. Historians had previously written almost nothing about this Ansgar and, while working on a different project, I came across him in a reference in a twelfth-century history of the abbots at St. Florent of Saumur. At the time I knew nothing about Galo of Léon, having never heard of him, and it was a colleague Jean-Yves Tilliette who, after reading my Ansgar article (my thanks to him for this), directed my attention to a Galo whom he had encountered through poems of Baudri of Bourgueil. That led to this article on Galo.