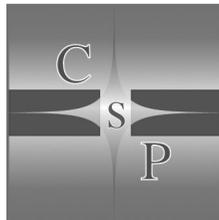


Christ Among Them

Christ Among Them:
Incarnation and Renaissance
in Medieval Italian Culture

By

Edoardo Mungiello



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Wer sagt, daß alle verschwinden müssen? Weir weiß, möglicherweise
der Flug des Vogels verwunden Sie des Remains und möglicherweise
überleben Blumen Liebskosungen in uns, In ihrem Boden.

Es is nicht die Geste, die dauert, aber es kleidet Sie wieder in der
Goldrüstung - von Brust zu knie- Und die Schacht war – ein Engel
trägt ihn nach Ihnen so rein.

—*Was Überlebt*, Rainer Maria Rilke.

“S’ a voi piace
Montare in su, qui si convien dar volta,
Quince si va chi vuole andar per pace.”

—*Purgatorio, XXIV, 139-141*.

Per la mia famiglia; defunti, vivi, e futuri.

Non enim, secundum positionem huiusmodi, Deus carnem assumpsisset ut fieret homo, sed magis homo carnalis Deus factus fuisset; et sic non verum esset quod Ioannes dicit: Verbum caro factum est (Ioann. I, 14), sed magis e converso caro Verbum facta fuisset. Similiter etiam non conveniret Dei Filio exinanitio aut descensio (kenosis) sed magis homini glorification et ascensio; et sic non verum esset quod Apostolus dicit: Qui, quum in forma Dei esset...exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens (Philipp. II, 6, 7), sed sola exaltation hominis in divinam gloriam, de qua postmodum subditur: Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum (Philipp. II, 9). Neque verum esset quod Dominus dicit: Descendi de coelo (Ioann. VI, 38) sed solum quod ait: Ascendo ad Patrem meum. (Ioann. XX, 17), quum tamen utrumque Scriptura coniungat; dicit enim Dominus: Nemo ascendit in coelum nisi qui descendit de coelo, Filius hominis, qui est in coelo (Ioann. III, 15, 10), et: Qui descendit, ipse est et qui in ascendit super omnes coelos (Ephes. IV, 10). Sic etiam non conveniret Filio quod missus esset a Patre, neque quod a Patre exiverit ut veniret in mundum, sed solum quod ad Patrem iret, quum tamen ipse utrumque coniungat, dicens: Vado ad eum qui missit me (Ioann. XVI, 5); et iterum: Exivi a Patre, et veni in mundum: iterum relinquo mundum et vado ad Patrem (Ioann. XVI, 28); in quorum utroque et humanitas at divinitas comprobatur.

This position destroys the whole mystery of the Incarnation. Instead of teaching that God assumed a human nature, it teaches that a mere man became God. This contradicts John who said that the Word became flesh and not that the flesh became the Word.

Similarly, such a position disallows the Son of God from extinction and descent to emphasize the glorification and ascension of man. And here it contradicts the Apostle Paul who says: In this way He took shape, by emptying (*exinanivit*) Himself, and accepting the nature of a slave” (*Phil.* 2, 6), considering only the exaltation of man to the level of God’s glory, of which Paul later says “that is why God exalted him to such a height.”

Nor can the Lord’s statement be true in this, namely that “I have come down from heaven (*John* 6, 38) but only his later statement, “I am going up to him who is my Father” (*John* 20, 17). Scripture, though, combines these things: “No man has ever gone up to heaven; but there is one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven’ (*John* 3, 13)...

Again “it was from the Father I came out, when I entered the world and now I am leaving the world and going on my way to my Father” (*John* 16, 28): in these two movements of descent and ascent both the divinity and the humanity of Christ are made manifest.”¹

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* Bk. IV, Chap. 28, 1024. (Paris: Migne, 1863).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
A BRIEF NOTE	x
PREFACE	xi
INTRODUCTION.....	xiv
REASONS FOR RENAISSANCE	
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
JERUSALEM LOST AND CHRIST DELIVERED	
CHAPTER TWO.....	19
EUROPE IN THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST	
CHAPTER THREE.....	33
FRANCESCO: CENTER AND CIRCUMFERENCE	
CHAPTER FOUR.....	55
THE CATHARS AND INCARNATIONAL DENIAL	
CHAPTER FIVE.....	69
OCKHAM, GIOTTO, AND THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD	
CHAPTER SIX.....	87
THE FIRE NEXT TIME: DANTE, TRANSFORMATION, AND INCARNATIONAL CODA	
EPILOGUE	117
UNDER GOD, IN THE FLESH	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	133
INDEX.....	153

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For my mother and mother-in-law, who, with the wisdom of the Italian matriarch, realized a man like me needs two mothers, and for my extraordinary family, both given and adopted, for the truly extraordinary sacrifices they continuously make for me. Especially for my nieces and nephews: Michael, Christopher, Antonella, Stephanie, Claire, and Joseph, who will probably never read this, but will always know that dedications are not confined to ink. They are the hope of my heart, and the love of my blood. I wish God’s great smile to shine on them, as their faces have lovingly assuaged the passing of my youth. I love you all.

A song of gratitude goes out to the constellation of strength I call my friends. Much of what the wise call success is measured in the draughts drunk and meals shared among them.

For Florence, Rome, Assisi, Venice, Padova, Oxford, London, Chartres, Paris, Vienna, New York City, and many others. Thank you Western Civilization. Yes *this* civilization, *this* culture, warts and all, is worth saving. It is worth celebrating, and for all the right reasons.

Of course, without the extraordinary grace, guidance, and love of my wife, Diane, I would not have the courage or the wherewithal to do what I need to do within this brief vigil of the senses. If you ever met her, you'd realize why I became an optimist, and why my hope of love is colored by the brown of her eyes, and composed by the sound of her voice. She carries our child. Could I say more without sullyng those four words? I am the luckiest of men. Thank you, my love.

Finally, and I know my wife will not begrudge me this, for the extraordinary man who spent half of his life being my father. His final days burnished the faith he held since childhood into the looking glass of Incarnational Christianity. How happy he must be to know face to face that darkly grasped God in whom he trusted. In that vision, for that vision, are my hopes and prayers.

A BRIEF NOTE

This little essay does not attempt to account for every cultural and political event that happened (or may have happened) during the Italian century under discussion. There are some brow raising omissions that may seem unforgivable at first glance; Frederick II, Jacopone da Todi, the Humiliati, and the Waldensians are peripheral if present at all. This admission is more in the way of stemming any critique based solely on comprehensive inclusion. The book in short is an essay defending the notion that a particular brand of Christianity was principally responsible for what became the individualism of the Western World, specifically the so-called resurgence of cultural identity called the Renaissance. It is not, nor cannot be, a history of Europe or Italy, during the thirteenth century. That said it is not confined to a particular discipline that would limp following threads to their appropriate ends. As the Age (here termed the Incarnational) was one of *speculum*, the reflection best suited to explain the culture is one of metaphor and symbol. There is a methodology here, but it adheres to the cadences of the Age and not its statistics. It may be that this essay is in itself a betrayal of the principles of the Incarnational Age; another dull scalpel wrought of words, words, words to set in motion a pageant and conjure the stilled flames which once burned and danced for Christ. Perhaps. Or perhaps beneath it all, this too can reflect the sincerity of a time when men attempted to act like Christ because they didn't know what was 'good' for them. It was the hope of Francis and Bernard. It has become the hope of many since who see gain and success in an ethos of charity, service, love and sacrifice. It is a noble tradition, and one which I seek to join in the fullness of faith for its expectations. Essays are easy compared to that.

PREFACE

A sustained query into the origin and nature of the individual in Western Society will come upon many presumptions laid down firmly by previous scholars. The literature on the development of the Western personality through historical influences in the Middle Ages may be immense but a diligent sifting will show the same nuggets of gold still in the tray after the waters have receded.

The nature of Christ himself, or the perceptions concerning his cultural place, within the sphere of the centuries under discussion is unavoidable in Western historical studies. Two books served to steer the shoals. Of course Jaroslav Pelikan's magisterial book, *Jesus Through The Centuries*, remains a touchstone. The nature of Christ within the Middle Ages was succinctly and admirably laid about by the scholar who concisely telescoped the achievement of centuries into an hourglass. Especially moving are Pelikan's thoughts on Bernard's contribution to Christian mysticism beginning to take hold of the Age. Many observations in the present discussion serve as no more than a Baedeker through some chapters in Pelikan.

The other book, Graham Ward's *Christ and Culture* is more a repository of the current debates on Christology referencing the past as counter levers for much of the arguments raised. Although the dissertation deals with a specified historical period and its understanding of Christ in the world, Ward's incarnational theology makes use of von Balthasar and Moltmann to a degree that greatly aided and supplemented my view of these theologians, who play a strong role in my own understanding of Christ as *fons et origo* in culture.

Arno Borst's insistence on the advent of the *persona* preoccupied me as much as Walter Ullmann's codification of a theory of legalism and its comprehension in assessing the reflection on entity in the Medieval mind. As far as the theories concerning separatism in orthodoxy, I can make no strides that have not been covered over and over by the careful and exuberant pens of Malcolm Lambert, Gordon Leff, and Raoul Manselli. When at Oxford on the High, I bought an exorbitantly priced volume on the Albigensian Crusade (of which I came across later in Paris-much more moderately priced) just for Lambert's signature.

The major influence in the actual writing was the work of Miri Rubin on the role of the Corpus Christi processions in Medieval Europe. Although the development of the feast is outside the scope of this investigation, there was a wake in which I could trawl for the pertinent discussions.

Jacques Le Goff and Beryl Smalley's identification of Pauline doctrine as rehabilitating the novelty of the *imitatio Christi* to the new Mendicant Orders, as well as the Frenchman's tireless advocacy of new studies in medievalism led to a comprehensive outlook only fortified by Colin Morris' magisterial view of the cultural shifts both responsible for and initiated by a new type of psychology.

Aaron Gurevich and Gerhardt Ladner developing theories of self-examination through solitude influenced my thinking immensely. Ladner especially in his essays on *homo viator* and the Life of the Mind in the Twelfth Century became Ur-texts for many of my suppositions. Such thoroughness in a scholar coupled with a concomitant *vrai geste* in rhetorical flourish gave me reason to pause at pursuing any ideas so enticingly hinted at.

Caroline Walker Bynum's view of the interior landscape as helpful but not decisive in producing the modern equivalent of the individual was a good barometer to keep exuberance in check, as well as her pioneering in 'body' theories of the Middle Ages. Von Balthasar and Moltmann have already been mentioned, although this study is naturally interdisciplinary and makes no claim to originality in theological discourse. Among theologians, and after Bernard and Abelard, their thinking on Christ was paramount in my Christology, with the single ineffable exception of the *poverello* from Assisi.

Lizette Andrews Fisher's Columbia dissertation *The Mystic Vision in the Grail Legend and in the Divine Comedy* (1917) was as decisive in my thinking as Ladner's essays into the period under discussion. It was (along with Curtius and Lewis' *Allegory of Love*) a work that sent me into a particular direction in considering the literature of the period as reflective of greater themes in the historical and theological arenas.

These interpretations of the period in question are more than sufficient to allow for a framework to be reared needing precious little addition. Yet it is not in hopes to overthrow but in desire to connect that the present endeavor is taken. It is neither comprehensive nor universal. It will investigate the nature of the individual within the Italian peninsula between (roughly) 1180 and 1300. It shall by necessity look both forward and backwards from the dates given for purposes of illumination.

It shall hold a meandering route that at times touches and at other times runs through the *zeitgeist*. It always maintains a parallel course and attempts no further exercise than this; to follow the historical events and the cultural products that define the ethos with the question “and where is Christ?” Not in any metaphorical sense and not with the cadence of the dispossessed anthropologist, but the actual Christ as perceived by the careful chronicler of the Age. For it is the time when Jesus was known to be in the Eucharist, lurking among the individuals of the Age, perhaps causing individualism itself.

It, perhaps, may not be overstatement to say that the Renaissance that was to come was as much a specific reaction to a particular understanding of Christology within the cultural sphere as it was a reawakening of Classical ideals through a new paradigm of European selfhood outside of Christianity. Understood in this way of the Incarnation helped to produce an action based Christianity amenable to the needs of the Roman Church. The *kenosis*, which is precedent in Incarnation, leeched the culture of the impurities of selfishness in understanding and activating personality. The fulfillment of a communion with God by the act of penance, begun by Innocent in the Fourth Lateran Council led to investigating conscience with the caveat of *kenosis* as an understood penumbra.

After the Plague and within the new fabric of Italian culture of the Fifteenth Century, insistence upon text and exegetical delimitation, coupled with the same impulse in the North led to notions of personal conscience that identifies the Reformation. This can now be seen as a true break, and hence end to the pursuit of a Christian praxis that produced the cultural explosion of the Italian peninsula in the *Duecento* and early *Trecento*.

It may be that this by itself is no revelation and perhaps by the end of the discussion much that will be said will have little effect on an understanding of the period already firmly in place. If this is true, then I exercise the right to be redundant, without, I hope, the risk of repetition.

Perforce my discussion will be interdisciplinary and range through the theology, history, art, and literature of the times. It cannot be exhaustive and yet my hope is that it will not be perfunctory. By tracing possible interpretative reactions of both intellectuals and the rising Mendicant Orders to the figure of Christ, a new tool will be offered to the historian to properly assess achievement in the cultural products of the time. Taking themes and motifs prevalent in the Middle Ages, I range cross disciplines to demonstrate how such motifs may have been understood in the time and how we, as inheritors of the tradition of Western culture, may be rightfully or wrongfully understanding them.

INTRODUCTION

REASONS FOR RENAISSANCE

There is indeed some light in men: but let them walk fast; walk fast, lest the shadows come.

—Augustine, *Confessions X, xxiii, 33*.

Human nature is such that the call for a personal relationship with God is predicated upon the assumption that we understand ways to communicate with Him. Consequently we fall upon a reliance of codes forged in the crucible of interpersonal human experience. To speak of a personal savior is a reductivist method of implicating the Godhead as a personality, that is, as a friend. This is more particular to the act of speaking and writing, where language can be the experiential mode by which friends agree or disagree.

Since language is by nature parochial, it cannot be universal. And since it cannot be immediately universal, needing translation, it is impure. Should we think of God only with these baser tools? Can we think of him in any other way? Human nature needs to communicate with a divinity so it assumes a language able to comprehend him. A deity not prone to the vicissitudes of mortal fortunes begets the necessity of understanding the human within the divine.

When it becomes increasingly clear that the Deity is aggressively *sui generis*, theology erects a bridge over the chasm of the unknown, and the rubrics of language become rarified. Bad theology begins to limp under the weight of a leaden tongue in a clouded head. Sometimes, if the theology is any good, the bridge springs from, and ends in the human heart. When it does, it finds that the arts have beaten the path there long before. Rhetoric and philosophy rest their weary abstractions at the door of instinct and can only claim wearily when they arrive at the long conquered truth, *et in arcadia ego*.

The Judaeo-Christian God began as a Maker, and makes what he can communicate to us. His is not the way of the abstract, but of the real. The humanity he informs begins a selfsame quest for permanence in the emptying of talent, and sees such a resolution as necessary. With time and

hindsight, those of us made in that image by those imaginations, see clearly that that resolution was revolution.

For those able to distinguish honest craftsmanship from an exploitation of faith, it is a duty to trace what can be essentially convincing to the mind when explanations concerning God rear themselves above the calm Elysian pitch of logic. The arguments, convincing or otherwise, leave a wake in their path, like pulling a fishermen's net on drying sand. One can realize that the catch was negligible if the imprint is ephemeral. But if the furrows go deep, the sea has done its share in giving to the fisherman his fill. Indeed his catch can be shared when the fish betrays affinities with fowl. When the catch is like yet unlike, when it says more about those left, then those caught, then understanding can be laid out, like a table for a feast.

The overwhelming evidence from the Middle Ages has led some to call it an Age of Faith. This is a half-truth that does disservice to the practical potentialities of the Medieval mind. The term Age of Faith is oft mistook to mean that there was a docile and debilitating acceptance of the spiritual status quo that was the legacy of the earliest Latin Fathers. Instead, the men of those times (and some very influential women) began to fabricate a spiritual world resonant with the world of tangibles, perhaps even (to an extent) inhabited by the Real, rather than the Numinous. Consequently this insistence on *speculum*, or reflection, tended to embolden rather than enervate, the quest for identity.

Since Burckhardt, the Renaissance has held the distinction of vanquishing the ogre of "fatalism" which seemed to be the Middle Ages. Even after Curtius' sympathies for the literature of the Middle Ages, the common view remained of an Age of Faith as a dim anteroom to the triumphant Age of Man. A closer look will prove that like so many prejudices, it is kernel not the corn of fact that supplies the meal, and as such, leaves us all a little hungry. There are grounds for divorce, here. For it is the understanding of the contradistinction of the Trinity that has, superficially at first, but lastingly, caused Medieval Man to see himself anew. And such vision demands separation from the tired formulas that leave the Middle Ages in the Middle Ground.

Like many revolutions throughout history, The Incarnational Age was ushered into existence through the crucible of war. Others were the result of the influence of new institutions that sprang up throughout Europe almost hand in hand: Mendicancy and Universities. A new breed of man was forming: one beginning to be concerned with his civic functions as

well as his spiritual duties and one prone to influence outside of the acceptable hierarchy of Church and State.

The purpose of this essay is to follow lines of cultural thought within Europe and specifically Italy between 1180-1300 that gave rise to a particular conception of the individual. This conception, I shall prove, had as much to do with negation as affirmation and as such, sustained a tension partly responsible for the explosion of creativity that was to follow on the peninsula following the Black Death. It was a concept at first broached by the *raison d'être* of the Franciscans and was inaugurated by a sense of loss, the very real loss of Jerusalem to Saladin in the late twelfth century. It became a subconscious reflection of Medieval Man's continuum within the historical canvas on God's easel and activated by the aesthetic of Incarnation. God and man had begun a dialogue at long last, and the language, the vernacular of salvation, was Jesus Christ.² The Incarnational Age had begun.

The Crusades were a watershed in European history, and not more so than in the concept of the historical self. For the Crusades became an opportunity for the European Christian to see himself as part of history and not subject to it. He became a lever of God in history, rather than a pawn of time immemorial.

They were finally worthy to enter history; Godfrey and Tancred joined the worthies of antique memory and the men who had dreamed of a united Latin Christian kingdom that spread to, and contained therein, the Holy City of Christ's earthly trajectory became the midwives of God's purpose. It became an empirical fact that the men engaged in taking up the cross were helping to reengage the divinity in history. Such men were bound to see themselves in a new light, but it should not be assumed that this new dispensation was one of privilege. Indeed, the greatest impetus toward selfhood began in the Crusades but took its final, definitive form

² A succinct definition of the Incarnational relationship most suited to this study is given by Michael Robson, "Bonaventure" in *The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to the Theology in the Medieval Period*, G. R. Evans., ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 191. "The Deus-homo becomes humanity's neighbor, brother, friend, and teacher and gives himself in the passion as the price of redemption, thereby manifesting his charity and benevolence. The perfection of creation is matched by that of the redeemed order...The Incarnation demonstrates the closeness of the bond between the Creator and fallen humanity and this is reflected in the lexicon of friendship which is restored by the most amicable mediator capable of uniting Creator and creature."

from the Mendicant Orders that predicated their vocation upon loss, not gain.

The Crusades had by this time become problematic as far as permanent conquest was concerned. The defeat at the hands of Saladin had many psychological ramifications as well as cultural implications. Those that concern us have to do with how the Crusaders and then Europeans in general began to understand Christ and his Incarnation. The loss to Saladin allowed for a particularly geographical notion of a Christ outside of Europe to be replaced by a Christ within Europe. The actuality of presence went from place to being.

The new crusade, not military but intellectual, began to seek the Christ among us rather than the places he walked. This does two things for identification with Christ: It understands Christ himself as now a *homo viator*, a fellow pilgrim upon this Earth and it quickens a sense of eschatology, because of a sense of defeatism. Both these ideas played prominent roles in the period's cultural residue, and both are reflexes inherent *par excellence* within the Franciscan Order. In this new dispensation the Christ found would be actual, and salubrious to idea of the self. The individual would no longer see himself as adjudicated by authorities outside of his understanding and therefore bereft of hope and action, but as a potentiality; as a guest of the Bridegroom, as a neighbor, perhaps even as a friend of Jesus himself.

As Francis would teach, the idea was to copy virtue by an aggressive mimicry of Christ. This is a radically new idea and as such comes with radically new cultural manifestations. Indeed it is the purpose of this book to justify certain acts of peculiar originality that led to the explosion of cultural production known as Renaissance as being understood as ornamental to the citizenship of a terrestrial, corporal Christ. What Christianity gained by eventually losing the Holy Land during the Crusades was a new sense of self.

By 1215 the Franciscans and Dominicans had been given official status and their Rules codified (or atrophied) by Innocent III unwilling to risk more with a potent heresy rampant in the Languedoc. To marshal the resources of such sons as Dominic and Francis and to codify an understanding, an orthodox understanding, of the Eucharist was a simultaneous thrust to the Cathars and a bolstering of the faith throughout a Christendom now threatened with the loss of Palestine. The decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council attempted in this understanding to renew Christian understanding through bold and untried measures, and to level the field of infidels, placing stable and resolute markers of orthodoxy where there might spring doubt.

One of these markers was Innocent's imprimatur on the theory of transubstantiation which mirrored his understanding of the True Presence hitherto explicated in the Fourth Lateran Council and in his *de Sacramento Altaris Mysterio*. Another was the binding of intentional Penance to a necessary Communion, leaving the Christian free to make an honest assessment of the self before seeking absolution to enter into a deeper communion with his brethren. A third, as mentioned previously, was the official recognition of the new Mendicant Orders, which would later become the instruments of dissemination, by the improved uniformity of the *ars Praedicandi*. They would become the hounds of conscience and the explicators of doctrine, by both their intellectual achievements in the nascent Universities of Bologna, Padua, Oxford, and Paris, and by their insinuation within the urban life of North Italy.

Such a situation within the times of a concurrent rise of the merchant class began to germinate new theories of what it meant to be a Christian and indeed the theological concerns of the early thirteenth century had raised a deeper and more troublesome question; what did it mean to be Christ?

If such a question were raised, the theory of the Incarnation within the Eucharist began to be a referential point of the utmost significance and indeed the proliferation of the *cultus* surrounding the host and its worship attest to the fascination for Christ in the world. More than this the adumbrated theories of the theologians worked their way down to a populous eager to know Jesus through sense, not argument. These theories, although sent through orthodox channels and through the Orders' hierarchy to the crowds became remarkably protean by a benign misapprehension within the greater societal sphere. A Christian was being encouraged to meditate upon a dualism hitherto left to the theologians, and the result was a new dialogue amenable to commoner minds.

Now the Dominicans and the Franciscans were offering them *exempla*, at times living (Francis himself) of the attainability of Christ himself within the realm of the senses. The concentration upon actual witness was a result of the intense interest upon the Eucharist itself as a *locus latreia*. Things reserved to divine speculation and within the limited purview of ecclesiastical hierarchy had come down to earth. Christ was here, now, there and everywhere. The relationship between believer and his worship became personal, and as such could be personalized. This was prepared through long years by the ordeal of the Crusades, which promised to return the sepulcher of Christ to his people and a Christology of extraordinary and intense psychology, such as that of Abelard or

Bernard. It also manifested a new and radical understanding of art within the function of liturgy and as a reflection of urban consciousness.

The result was that the understood and tried Augustinian lines of division between the Sacred City and the Secular City had become nebulous and hence the frontiers could be breached by intrepid believers now asked, nay, compelled to investigate their motives. This would entangle a psychology of introspection with one of worship. It was also a fresh look at the humanity of a Savior long outside of the ken of observation. The obvious eye of any theological storm concerning Christological identity in the time under scrutiny would be the Incarnation.

The Incarnation, as understood by the theologians and the spiritualists of the Age, was the central tenet in Medieval perceptions of a soteriological Christology. Why God came into history was an ongoing debate in the Western theology. But the ramifications of theology were far removed from the dour realities facing the proponents of the cultural life, the rising class of burghers. And the foot soldiers of preachers that emanated from the Mendicant Orders were invested with making sense of a reality that were bound to live in, for their own sake and the sake of their flock. It is only with distance that the historian can apply words that would have had resonance to only the cultured few in describing the potentialities and purposes of many. *Kenosis* may not have seemed familiar as a word to the Medieval man, but as a concept it was his distinction.

The new theory of atonement took into account by way of reference (but not word) the theory of kenotic salvation. *Kenosis*, the Greek word for emptying, is a contention in modern christological soteriology, but did not cause a great stir in the Middle Ages. Paul's hymn-like Philippians 2: 5-11, has exercised a profound effect on the contemporary dialogue concerning the Incarnation, and on myself, through the writings of Moltmann and von Balthasar, as well as the synthesis of Graham Ward in his *Christ and Culture*.

The passage reads that Christ "emptied himself" to accept the death of a slave "even death on the cross." Abelard's concept of Atonement spoke to the compassion this activates within the worshipper. As such, it had a persuasive power over cruder conceptions of the Incarnation for the very simple reason that it was more palatable to the reality of what Medieval man was, rather than aggressively exploiting his fear.

Kenosis, an emptying, was an accurate reflection of the instincts of a defeated psyche which wished to exorcise the more dubious aspects of its heritage by assuming the novel and precious vocations thrust upon it by the will of an active and newly historical God. The Mendicant Orders, the

Eucharistic Controversy, the Cathar heresy and the Troubadours all arrayed themselves in a reality at once imminent and passing. A spirituality that invoked the spirit through the distinguishing marks of flesh, both positive and negative, became the hallmarks of the Age, and was infinitely more responsible for the explosion of creativity on the Italian peninsula than the recovery of classicism. Identity was not an outgrowth of having, but a result of losing.

The later Franciscan controversy, the withering away of the troubadour ideal, and Giotto's solidity and painterly corporality sought to make room for the weight of the world that was descending upon the mercantile and intellectual classes by the mid-fourteenth century. Ownership, coinage, double entry bookkeeping, civic guilds, and political maneuvering, all dull and necessary workhorses of the magnificent cart of capitalism, pulled the European into an age of predictable seasons outside of the realm of nature, where the colors of the Fall would not surprise but be proscribed by a diligently up to date *Mater Ecclesia*. Society was closing in on Christ and man was caught in the conspiracy. It was good that Francis had not lived to see this.

And yet Franciscan extremists insisted not upon ownership through contemplation, but on the negation of possession that forms the very basis of a specified identity. Perhaps it is much to say that the notion of the individual as a right bearing legal entity emerged from the conflict over Franciscan poverty, but the notion, lived by Francis, that Medieval man can attempt to imitate the life of Christ Himself without post-lapsarian guilt impeding the attempt, and in the full light of the ecclesiastical authority which hitherto had codified behavior towards Christ is significant and indisputable. Francis was *kenosis* personified without the concomitant responsibility of emptying divinity for humanity. Instead, and ironically Francis emptied his humanity for his sanctity and earned the respect of a world he tried so hard to escape.

The issue of the influence of a particular notion of the Incarnation within the Franciscan Order in its early years became a troubled one. Their view of the Christ-like life was predicated upon a renunciation of significant, if not extreme, proportion. The lengths to which the Friars Minor would renounce possession were not a matter of moderation or of degree. The Franciscan depended upon a total abnegation to begin his life as a Friar. The ineluctable right for renunciation was a duty for the Franciscan but the attempt to give it a Rule based on the temporal life of Christ supposed that Christ was poor and that second that his poverty was an intrinsic and crucial aspect to the messianic purpose of the Incarnation. Christ being was not enough in this sense: Christ denying was the sticking

point and since identity could be viewed as the capacity to live either having or wanting, the focus on denial constitutes a radicalization of the Christian life, as the fascination with Francis in his own time and ours can attest.

Poverty therefore to the Franciscans is not an end to itself but it is as a lifestyle an exercise for ultimate and final sacrifice. The *imitatio Christi* is a wiping away of identity by proclaiming identity. The potential heresy that lies within this attempt is that the acolyte sees himself as Christ. This was certainly the case for Francis, who although aware he himself was not Christ, took to taking on his suffering. This can be seen as a negative reflex, couched as it is, in the sorrowful Jesus, and adumbrating any possible alter interpretations of the Christian life. Against the Medieval propensity to see the Christian life as a vale of tears as inherently negative, it set itself a goal to mimic the Incarnation, by which the concept of the speculum of the Medieval imagination is satisfied.

The attempt to bridle legalistic notions of the individual to the Franciscan life can be done, but as Pope John XXII testified, it will be arrived at in an attempt to dispute the notion of their vocation. The debate over the competing notions of dominion and use as exemplified within the life of Christ Himself resulted in a dualistic rendering of the Christian life, and specifically the implied legitimacy of either one in the context of the Medieval world. Poor or possessive the Jesus of the Gospels had become a temporal concern as a temporal entity and concomitantly the emphasis was now, in the legal wranglings over the poverty debate and in the primary impetus of Francis' vocation, on Jesus within the world and not Jesus without.

For the rest of the rising mercantile class that began to understand the notion of the personal Savior, the *imitatio Christie* was outside of their temporal possibilities. Now did the necessity of Penance before Communion to eradicate the obvious guilt of possession become a catalyst for charity. Still, this giving was personal and possessive, which identified the giver as generous patron rather than anonymous donor. Guilt could only have so many inroads to vanity. This would be, as has been noted, a real *fons et origo* for cultural production in the century to follow.

The waning scholasticism of the Universities, the personal interpretative power of parish priests upon penance, the uniformity of homiletic subjects as manuals became more widespread, the rise of an increasingly urban elite and the pacification of the West under the impetus of Crusade all contributed to the rapid dissemination of key ideas that concurrently became digested in particular, even provincial ways because of the concurrent rise of cities, and the increasing use of the vulgar tongue

in poetry and prose, personal interpretation in artistic endeavor, and the rise of nominalism as a challenge to absolutes. Within all this heaving metamorphoses the still point of reference remained the Christian faith, centered on Jesus Christ. As Christ as person became a consistent idea, the relationship towards that idea would become one of identification; and just as much as Christ could be us, we indeed could be Christ.

Incarnation and its precedent sacrifice, *kenosis*, were grounds by which the Medieval man could divorce himself not from reality, but the pre-conditions for existence. He, by accepting the Christian understanding of relinquishing, could imitate Christ, and by such an emptying, fulfill his emptiness by whatever he deemed necessary to sustain the personal in a rapidly changing world. And what this was, in effect was a fabrication of identity by a curious denial of what we would call personality. The Augustinian good within men was possible only by activity, a positive activity within the Incarnational dispensation, saddled as it was by the grief of the world. For the heroes of this Age the shadows were kept at bay because they believed themselves capable of perfection. The books and words of the Ancients would have fallen on fallow soil had not Christ come first. This I believe had much to do not only with engendering a new sense of identity in the West, but also gave rise to an individualism that would quicken the later Renaissance into its fullest expression.

CHAPTER ONE

JERUSALEM AND CHRIST DELIVERED

It is here we are compelled to say with the prophet, “Who will change my eyes into a fountain of tears, that I may weep night and day the massacre of my people?” Nevertheless, far from allowing ourselves to be cast down or be divided, we ought to be persuaded that these reverses are only to be attributed to the anger of God, against the multitude of our sins; that the most efficacious manner of obtaining the remission of them is by tears and groans, and that at last, appeased by our repentance, the mercy of the Lord will raise us up again, more glorious for the abasement into which he has plunged us... We ought not then to attribute our disasters to the injustice of the judge who chastises, but rather to the iniquity of the people who have sinned.¹

A dream fulfilled becomes a reality destined to mortality. Gregory the VIII's lament is a justly famous *de profundis*, which, although it spoke to the wound delivered, it betrayed the novel approaches to an emancipation of spirit that had begun to unravel in the Middle East among the transferred Crusaders of the Latin West. By the time of the fall of Jerusalem, things had begun to germinate in the European mind that would eventually slough off the *Christus Pantokrator* implied in Gregory's desperate jeremiad, and don the mantle of a new Christianity. This new paradigm would begin to see Christ as fellow rather than judge.

The dream of a Christendom emanating from Jerusalem and binding the West in a politicized theology had to be exploded after Saladin's victory in 1187, but there was a fruit to be plucked from the defeat: A new idea, a new dream, not subject to the whims of political change and the shifts of strategic supremacy in war. Jerusalem lost became the genesis of a renaissance of personal identity tied almost exclusively to the body, the actual corporeal body, of Christ. Medieval man was to be justified by approaching God on equal terms in the body of His son.

¹ Gregory VIII, “Audita tremendi” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, S. J. Allen and Emilie Amiet, eds. (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003), 164.

The initial success of the first Crusader knights in conquering the object of their most fervent desire gave way to the necessity of organizing and governing what is at once a desert city and a spiritual oasis. By the time of the First Crusade in 1098, Latin Christianity had codified a system of parallel hierarchies of papacy and empire, the clerical and the lay, within the larger framework of the Church. After the conquest of Jerusalem, things needed reconsideration, because, although led by knights and feudal barons of varying degrees of nobility, a common people in their multitudes had gained the victory.² The tenuous nature of the victory, the introduction of a lay power hitherto neglected, the beautiful and strange Orient now passing before their eyes as a reality, and the shining and hallowed city of the golden stone which passed roughly beneath their bloody hands: How can we properly gauge the effect these were to have on the warrior who already had his purpose sanctified as “taking up his cross?”³

Between the years of 1099-1189, the span of its Christian kingdom, Jerusalem was the shining central jewel of *Outremer* although its significance was more symbolic than economic. The deserted city after the Frankish siege needed repopulation after the eventual conquest in 1099, and moreover, once populated begged the skills of a certain class of craftsmen to cater to the pilgrims who would eventually throng the city.⁴

² See Yael Katzir, “The Second Crusade and the Redefinition of Ecclesia, Christianitas, and Papal Coercive Power” in Michael Gervers, ed. *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians* (New York: St. Martin’s Press: New York, 1997), 1 -13, 4.

³ “In connection with the question of individuality it is very important to stress the following: people find themselves in a situation in which their stories are interwoven with the universal historical process, which they experience in a symbolic way as the history of human salvation. Through the mediation of the Church and the liturgy of the individual becomes aware of his or her personal involvement in that history. . . At that point... the overlapping of the ‘small’ and ‘great’ eschatologies becomes possible, even inevitable...this overlapping accentuates the importance of the individual in the current of historical time. ” Aaron Gurevich, *The Origins of European Individualism*. Translated from the Russian by Katherine Judelson. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 109.

⁴ William of Tyre wrote that Baldwin’s request was greeted with satisfaction by these new Syrian pilgrims who “...were attracted thither not only by reverence for the place but also by affection for our people and the love of liberty. Many, even without being invited cast off the harsh yoke of servitude and came that they might dwell in the city worthy of God. ” It seems that a contemporary document such as this states the connection between the weakening of feudal propensities in the newly formed state and a diversified demographic. The shift to an exchange

The poor Franks, in need of food and slow to grasp the significance of the problem, could not rely on the industry of the many peasants who had taken up the cross. King Baldwin I (1110-1118) remedied this by importing the Syrian Christians from the countryside and allotting them parcels of the city for habitation (Syrian Christian Quarter), hoping such an influx of native talent would massage the industry of the destitute city.⁵

Yet, at this fragile beginning of the Latin Kingdom the preconditions of the economic disaster that was the conquered city led the European social infrastructure of the Crusaders to fray and become mutable. Feudalism as it was understood in the Latin West, became untenable, although the exertions and pressures of the jurists of the Latin monarchy attempted to stitch the gaping wounds left by continental displacement. The influx of Syrian Christians lent the cast of demography a somewhat Eastern face, reflected in some of the art and the liturgies to be newly sung in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The new Jerusalem was just that; new.

At first this fact was evident through the harsh economic realities, but it was certain subtle social factors that led to a development of a unique hothouse of political ideas in the European population of Jerusalem. Although never flourishing into an overt revolt in the new desert society, the classes engendered by the conquest would have a profound influence once these new ideas took wing to the old shores of Europe, and lead to a paradigm-changing epoch in the High Middle Ages.⁶

Even before the loss of the Jerusalem, the idea of crusading had been given a strong theological framework and was invested with a mystical import by the inheritors of a particularly monastic frame of reference.⁷ Within this context, the adamantine ties to the actual body of Christ which the Holy Land enjoyed was connected to the idea that the Savior needed salvation by those *made* worthy of the act. The danger, which had befallen the West in the form of Islamic expansion, was a threat to the unity of the Body of Christ, and as such, the God of History was once more activating a response as He had done in Scripture. In turn, the celestial could become temporal by this theological and intellectual

based economy was necessary to provide a homogeneous understanding to retain a stable population. For the above quote, see *The Crusades: A Reader*, 85.

⁵ Mustafa A Hiyari, "Crusader Jerusalem, 1099-1187," in K. J. Asali, ed. *Jerusalem in History*. (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1990), 130-177 p. 142.

⁶ See Adrian Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of Crusades Society: Landscape and Art in the Holy City under Frankish Rule* (Routledge: New York, 2001), 36-38.

⁷ See Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 137-152.

blurring. The interface between god and man was once again being implemented by the effusion of blood, a new martyrdom to a new *patria*; not for any duke or lord, but for Christ himself.⁸

These were glorious times to be alive and Bernard of Clairvaux, for one, trembled with the fulfillment of the Age:

This age is like no other that has gone before: a new abundance of divine mercy comes down from heaven; blessed are those who are alive in this year pleasing to the Lord, this year of remission, this year of veritable jubilee. I tell you, the Lord has not done this for any other generation before, nor has he lavished on our fathers a gift of grace so copious. Look at the skill he is using to save you. Consider the depth of his love and be astonished sinners. He creates a need – he either creates it or pretends to have it – while he desires to help you in your necessity. This is a plan not made by man, but coming from heaven and proceeding from the heart of divine love.⁹

Along with the apocalyptic undertone of a temporal fulfillment, the Lord himself began to be approached as either complicit with the ideals of the contemporary man or by the zealous interpreter as a paradigm capable of real emulation. Christ, or the reference to him, began to be couched in the social terms of a knight, whose honor had been besmirched, or an aggrieved landowner, distressed at the loss of his rightful patrimony.¹⁰

⁸ “From the outset, therefore, one should at least consider the possibility whether-before the full impact of legal and humanistic doctrines became effective-the new territorial concept of *patria* did not develop as a re-secularized offshoot of the Christian tradition and whether the new patriotism did not thrive also on ethical values transferred back from *patria* in heaven to the politics on earth. ” Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 235.

⁹ From Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 122.

Bernard, as could be expected, placed a premium on the polysemous significance of Jerusalem itself, as maternal land: “In via estis, fratres, quae ducit ad vitam, in via recta et impolluta, quae ducit ad civitatem sanctam Jerusalem illam, quae libera est, quae sursum est, quae est mater nostra. ” From “De Diversis Sermo XXII: De quadruplici debito” in *Patrologiae Latina* (henceforward *PL*) 183 (Paris: Migne, 1862), 595.

¹⁰ Examples abound beginning with Baldric of Dol and Urban II himself at Clermont. The *Chronicle* of Villehardouin’s underlines a Compact with the Venetians to take up arms “on behalf of the noble barons of France who have taken the cross in order to avenge the shame of Jesus Christ and to reconquer Jerusalem”.

Christ himself can, in the Western imagination prevalent at the time, become as vindictive as his Christian soldiers, blurring the nature of mercy inherent in him, and perhaps justifying vengeance in his servants. In the famous *Chanson d'Antioche*, part of a late twelfth century song cycle, the dishonored Christ speaks from the cross to Dismas, the thief on his right, about his beleaguered city, and the rightful inheritance to be restored by his faithful Crusaders:

“Friend” he said, “the people who will avenge me are not yet born or baptized but they will come with their sharpened swords to kill these fiendish pagans who would not listen to me. Then my land will be delivered and reconquered. Holy Christendom will be exalted. But it will be a thousand years before the Holy Sepulchre becomes a place of pilgrimage and an object of veneration. Men of those times will come to serve me as if they were my sons, and I shall treat them as such: I shall be their safeguard and they will enter into possession of their inheritance in paradise...Friend you may be sure that a people will come from beyond the sea to avenge the death of their father. There won't be a pagan left from here to the Orient. The Franks will be the undisputed masters of the land and the soul of anyone who perishes on the journey will be saved.”¹¹

The duty bound Christian then was enjoined to participate in an elaborate ritual of vendetta for a de-sacralized Savior. Not only that, but the unenviable familial standing of the second son in a noble house was mitigated by the fact that inheritance in this understanding was not based upon birth order. Christ retained a significant rite of *auctoritas* beneath the veneer of a man despised and rejected. This paradox could only be resolved in the spiritual and temporal sphere by the suffering king, who could both bestow blessings and accept personal indignation. The deliverance sought after cut two ways, for the Crusader and for Christ, and only those willing to leave everything were privy to this marvelous and unique opportunity.

The Crusade then became a methodical way of Medieval man to understand the world, and his role in it, which, despite the distances involved, claimed Jerusalem as it's goal. The pilgrimage became a way to emulate the itinerant nature of Christ in his ministry and served to disassociate the European from the ties that bound him too fondly to his

In Edward Peters, ed., *Christian Society and the Crusades 1198-1229* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 3.

¹¹ Translated in Susan Edgington, “Holy Land, Holy Lance: Religious Ideas in the *Chanson d'Antioche*” in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, R. N. Swanson, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 146-147.

familiar earth. He became what his God was, and strove to reestablish what his Savior had conquered; all this under the guise of the wandering man, the dispossessed in search of possession, a *homo viator*.¹²

Man as wayfarer in this phase of medieval thought, combined modes of alienation with order, as the influence of monasticism and a burgeoning spirituality combined to offer the sincere Christian a dilemma: What was the best way to order the world when the ultimate purpose was to remove yourself from it? Alienation became a pre-requisite of order and Christ's sojourn an exemplum of how to best engage the times by withdrawing from them. This accorded the serious pilgrim a deep respect from his contemporaries, as the goal (in a quite literal sense), was the ultimate sacrifice of a martyr's death if the example were to be followed to the bitter end. A pilgrim strove to be a sort of speculum of his worship, a Christ in the flesh.¹³

This was nothing new as it was a ripening of the conceptual fruit first reared by Augustine in the *City Of God*; namely that the rightful Christian was a pilgrim so long as he remained tied to the terrestrial and hence fallible nature of the worldly city. Salvation depended upon a flight from the world- a *fuga mundi*. Perhaps the most far ranging among the chief ideas that developed through crusade, the *fuga mundi* was the acorn that grew the oak of a renewed spiritualized laity on the European continent.¹⁴

The merchant class of privilege had bifurcated and spawned the *homo viator as pauper*, mendicant, beggar, and at times,(negatively) leper or

¹² For the most complete treatment of this phenomenon, see Gerhardt Ladner "Homo Viator: Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order," in his *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies in History and Art* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1983), 937-974.

¹³ Brenda Bolton's conclusion on this is that the "Church in western society had not yet found a solution to the problem of individual rebirth in a renewed society," (103). This, to my mind, was not the purpose of the Church in its political pose upon the age. Monolithic treatments deny the exuberance and evolutionary processes of the Body of Christ within the laity. The Church was, in this time, western society in toto, and it's political responses at times did not reflect the cultural reactions to the age which jolted it forward into novel understandings of the self.

See Brenda Bolton, "Paupertas Christi: Old Wealth and New Poverty in the Twelfth Century," in *Studies in Church History: Vol. 14. Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, Derek Baker, ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), 95-103.

¹⁴ See Andre Vauchez "The Church and the Laity," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Vol. V: c. 1198-c. 1300*, David Abulafia, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 182-203, esp. 197-199

criminal. Absence by either denial or want was to be the new medium to establish identity in positive rather than in negative terms, an epiphenomenon that would ripen and bear fruit in the Franciscan model.¹⁵ It was a paradigm perhaps only possible with the rise of cities, so that the excluded could view themselves as an apposite of the agreed upon nexus of society.

This being so, Jerusalem had a privileged rank in the paradigm, as it was both a city and The City, both terrestrial and spiritual, idea and reality. The idea of Jerusalem (tying in nicely with the nature of the new urbanized social systems)¹⁶ became directly connected to the figure, the physical figure of Christ: In that these new social identities based themselves around the witness of the land wherein the Savior walked, spoke, and died. Such an idea became a social as well as a spiritual hope. Jerusalem had become, by the Crusades, a literal as well as a spiritual goal, which corresponded chronologically with the rise of urban centers in Southern Europe and the slow decline of feudalism in the North.

The loss of the city made immediate pilgrimage impossible until much later and hammered home the reality of withdrawal from the sands that once dusted Jesus' feet. The common Crusader, be he knight or no, was severed from the experience of his God, the actual, tangible experience for which he took up his own cross in the first place. The swell of support for Urban's appeal was unprecedented and the First Crusade a seeming historical exercise in bellicose serendipity. This being so, the spiritual aspects of the quest, although misapprehended by the conquering armies of the Latins, could be said to have been a real motivational force outside of overt clerical influence. Later it became evident that theologians had wished to perpetuate the crusading effort into a certain "monastery on the move".¹⁷

¹⁵ See Brenda Bolton, "Paupertas Christi: Old Wealth and New Poverty in the Twelfth Century" 95-103. Bolton's conclusion is that the "Church in western society had not yet found a solution to the problem of individual rebirth in a renewed society", (103) which wasn't its function in any age to my mind. Say rather that the conflicts arising later in the poverty of the Mendicants widened a gulf between the hierarchical political sphere and the spiritual laypeople. The Church itself was both. The monolith of the Church as political presence is justified if the concentration is upon the strengthening of the Papal powers, especially under Innocent III, but the Church was and is the people who make it up, especially in a cultural sense, which is how it should be seen in the present discourse.

¹⁶ See Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty: A History*. Translated by Agnieszka Kolakowska. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 21-23.

¹⁷ Jonathan Riley Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 47.

Culturally, this was conceived as a *renovatio* rather than a colonization, wherein the conquerors sought not so much to supplant as to renew.¹⁸ Economically and socially, this can be deduced by the telling debilitation of previously held beliefs of fiefdom and service. The novelty of the situation in the captured city engendered a concretized method of exchange, making the parameters of this economy the walls of Jerusalem themselves.¹⁹ The new dispensation did not readily take to the old ideas of servitude of Frankish feudalism, although the status of Jerusalem was unique in the *Outremer*.²⁰

Dangerously for a church and state dependant upon hierarchical structure and duty, the *fuga mundi* could be wed to the *imitatio paradiso*; that is that the act of renunciation which is concomitant with the pilgrimage to Jerusalem became an act of selfhood disguised. And such an act became eschatological in the sense that the liberation of the Holy City was tied to a divine purpose incumbent upon the Crusaders to fulfill. So, for an unlettered warrior, battle scarred and knowing little well besides the call of war, what better way to attain paradise than by storming it? For Jerusalem, like Rome, is and was a city at once in Heaven and on Earth,

¹⁸ Riley-Smith's preface in the above mentioned text, (p. xxv), mentions that historians of the period have "lost interest in the question whether the Latin settlements in the East were colonies or not. . . (although)...the conviction that the settlements were examples of earlier colonialism is still axiomatic in Arab and in some Israeli circles. " It is difficult to assert that the paramount concern for the exodus of warriors into the East was for colonization as it is well known that following the conquest of Jerusalem, a sizable proportion of the warriors returned to Europe, their quest fulfilled, which left the early demography of the city at sixes and sevens. Rather, colonization, or a form of it, was a social outgrowth of the necessity of conquest: *Post hoc*, not *propter hoc*.

¹⁹ "The fief holders in the Latin Kingdom in the first quarter of the twelfth century are all homini novi ...(and)... the use of money became ubiquitous and was introduced clumsily into a sort of feudalism set up ad hoc for the terms of conquest," in Joshua Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem: European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), 65-67.

²⁰ Hans Eberhard Mayer's work contends that the dispersal of fiefdoms became ubiquitous save for "most church lands, the properties of the military orders and the autonomous quarters of the Italian communes. " This would leave Jerusalem in a position of solitude as it was all three at once, with Baldwin IV, (at the time immediately preceding the loss) as the titular head of a state that extended beyond its walls. See Mayer's "The Latin East, 1098-1205" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, v. IV., c. 1024-c. 1198. Part II*, David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley Smith, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 644-674, esp. 668.