

Waldensian and Catholic Theologies of History in the XII-XIV Centuries: Part I

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I. Introduction

A fundamental tenet of Christianity states that God exerts his will on history.¹ Theologies of history explore the implications of this idea dealing with questions that involve how and why God intervenes in human history, which are God's purposes for humanity, how human free will affects history, whether history is intelligible, and which sources provide clues to the above questions. In the High Middle Ages there were in the Catholic official milieu some interpretations of history which were fairly accepted and established. However, the serious challenge instantiated by the dissenting Waldensian view attracted increasing attention as witnessed by the growing awareness in the writings of controversialists and inquisitors. Common objections were periodically leveled against the Roman Church by people that denounced the corruption of some of the clergy, which led sometimes to the creation of new religious orders. But the Waldensians subscribed to a theology of history of radical arguments that questioned the most fundamental and cherished doctrinal tenets of the Roman Church and the religious and political authority of the papal office from a historical-theological perspective.

The Catholic theology of history was undergirded by several sources in addition to Scriptures, that included but were not reduced to Roman

¹ E. Breisach, *Historiography* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 77ff; E. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Pacific Press, 1917), 499.

historiography and the philosophical ideas of some Fathers. Its salient features included the uniqueness and ceaselessness of the Roman Church along with the theocratical character assigned to the papal office by some publicists of the 12th–14th centuries.

Conversely the Waldensians grounded theirs exclusively on Scripture within a popular and mostly oral transmission in the vernacular. Despite disadvantages, the Waldensians had an articulated and complex theological system that hinged around a self-appraisal as a chosen remnant, a peculiar conception of eschatology, the dismissal of Fathers' writings as authoritative, and the prophetic role assigned to the Roman Church as becomes apparent from juxtaposing the surviving documents. By necessity the Waldensian theology in general and of history in particular was not a mere speculative construct but rather a source of meaning and endurance to resist the persecutions throughout centuries. Consequently, a special focus has been devoted in this study to understand the authoritative status that the Waldensians conferred to Scripture.

The study of the Waldensian understanding of history provides an important insight into their elaborate theological and philosophical thinking which defined their identity, fueled their confrontation with the Roman Church, and sparked persecutions. This study is presented in two papers that survey these diametrically opposed theologies of history drawing from texts of the 12th-14th centuries. Both papers are organized as follows: first a descriptive survey of each theology of history and its constituting elements is presented and then an assessment of the theological and philosophical presuppositions that underlie the construct are discussed. In both cases texts translated from original sources and numbered for ease of reference. This paper presents the key characteristics of the Catholic theology of history that was challenged by the Waldensians in the High Middle Ages. In the second paper the Waldensian theology of history is explored with detailed treatment of their appraisal of Scriptural authority and a tentative comparison of the resulting points of conflicts between both theological systems is described in the final section.

II. A Note on Documentary Sources and the Origins of the Waldensians

Our current knowledge of the history of the Waldensians in the Middle Ages is almost exclusively tributary of the sources coming from the official

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Roman Church such as papal decretals, Council canons, inquisitorial dossiers and manuals, treatises of polemist; and also from acts of the secular arm, decrees and constitutions of Emperors, kings, and princes, and other neutral works such as chronics, letters, and literary compositions.² G. Gonnet warns that the documentary asymmetry for the study of Waldensians beliefs is also correlated with an inherent partiality, unilateral points of view, incomprehension, superficiality, or falsity in the documents. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, some of the key features of the Waldensian theology of history still can be grasped by superimposing the narratives.

In order to get a somehow accurate representation of the Waldensian beliefs from the polemist's writings, it is important to clarify the different ways in which the former are designated in the documents.³ The available texts blend under the same designation of "Waldensian" a number of disparate religious groups which were not necessarily identical in fact or in doctrine along history, for example Waldensians, Poor of Lyon,⁴ Leonists,⁵ and Poor Lombards.⁶

Specifically the designation of Poor of Lyon (*paupere de lugduno*) is the most frequently mentioned in the documents. Originally in the mid 12th and early 13th centuries, these were the followers of Peter Valdès⁷ and had a mostly orthodox Catholic doctrine along with an emphasis on poverty, itinerant preaching, and Bible in the vernacular.⁸ The Poor in their initial years were a kind of protégé of the Lyonese Archbishop Guichard and also

² G. Gonnet, *Enchiridion Fontium Valdensium I*, (EFV I), (Claudiana, 1958), 5ss.

³ Some of the names are: Valdesiani, Valdesianorum, Waldenses, Valdenses, etc.

⁴ Pauperes de Lugduno, Poverley, Poverleone, Poverlewe, Powerlove, Paupere de Gluduno, Pouer Lion, Ludinenses pauperes, etc.

⁵ Leoniste, Leonistae, etc.

⁶ Heresis Lumbardorum, etc.

⁷ The few accounts of the life of Valdès until his conversion have all the elements of the medieval hagiographical style. In one of those accounts, the Anonymous of Laon relates how Peter Valdès converted after listening the story of St. Alexis, a rich beggar. See Breisach, 98-100.

⁸ Peter Valdès asserts in his Confession that whoever says "he comes from us [the Poor of Lyons], but has not this faith [that of the orthodox Confession], you may know with certainty that he is not from us. ("Si forte contigerit aliquos venire ad vestras partes dicentes se esse ex nobis, si hanc fidem non habuerint, ipsos ex nostris non fore pro certo sciat") EFV I, 36.

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of Pope Alexander III⁹ until they died around 1181. Shortly after the Poor of Lyon lost the favor of Rome and were excommunicated by Lucius III in the Council of Verona in 1184 with the Bull *Ad Abolendam*.

It should be noted that the beliefs of the Poor of Lyon of the 12th and early 13th century as registered in the surviving documents, might not be univocally identifiable with those of the group that later came to be known as the Waldensians. Considering the system of beliefs ascribed to them in the documents, it might seem that the Poor of Lyon adopted some of their ideas from pre-existing religious groups. What seems to confer weight to the hypothesis that the “Waldensian” ideas predate Valdès is the theological complexity and coherence achieved in a short time after the alleged defection of Valdès, and also in the practical improbability of deriving such a complex doctrinal building as the Waldensian’s from Valdès’ initial ascetic tenets. Therefore, there are reasons to believe that the Pooors might have drawn from an already existing group of dissenters.

Even though it is difficult, if at all possible, to clearly characterize an independent religious group prior to the Poor of Lyon in the available documents, there are actually a few scattered statements that suggest the existence of such religious group(s) predating the Poor of Lyon. In one of the texts from the early 13th century it is stated that:

[a]fter they were excommunicated from their city [Lyon] and banished from their fatherland, they [Poor of Lyon] multiplied over the earth, scattered in their own province, in nearby regions, and the confines of Lombardy. And when they were cut off from the church, they mingled with other heretics, and filled and fused these heretics’ errors with their own original errors and heresies.¹⁰ (1)

⁹ As a matter of fact, Peter Valdès was asked to provide a Confession of Faith which in one of the articles reads that he believed in: “One Church, Catholic (Universal), holy, apostolic, and immaculate, outside of which nobody can be saved.” (*“Unam ecclesiam catholicam, sanctam, apostolicam et immaculatam, extra quam neminem salvare”*). EFV I, 34. Besides Valdès asserted that he believed in the efficacy of alms, Masses, and other good works for the purgation of the dead faithful: *“Hemosynas et sacrificium, ceteraque beneficia fidelibus posse prodesse defunctis non dubitamus.”* EFV I, 35.

¹⁰ *“Exinde excommunicati ex illa civitate et patria sunt expulsi—sic multiplicati super terram, disperserunt se per illam provinciam et per partes vicinas et confines Lombardiae, et praecisi ab ecclesia, cum aliis haereticis se miscentes et eorum errores imbibentes suis adinventionibus antiquorum haereticorum errores et haereses miscuerunt.”* v. Döllinger II, 6. See also, EFV II, 49-50.

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Another indication of a mingling with a preexisting group is afforded by Stephen of Bourbon (c. 1220):

Thereafter, since they mingled in Provence and Lombardy with other heretics whose errors they imbibed and propagated.¹¹ (2)

Yet another indirect reference to a certain Thomas who supported the authority of Peter Valdès to preach as being granted by the Poor Lombards which predated Valdès:

Thomas a perverted Doctor who claimed that Valdès received the succession from his brethren.¹² (3)

It must also be noted that in the 12th and 13th centuries, inquisitors and controversists were not interested or able to delineate a sharp taxonomy of the dissenter groups for the sake of it. Their main interest was focused in providing practical resources to those involved in the capture of heretics. Therefore, it might be expected that under the name of Poor of Lyon or Waldensians, the polemicists fused everyone falling under a commonly held inquisitorial stereotype of the Waldensian heretic.

Lastly, many scholars consider that Waldensian theology originated in the asceticism of Valdès and then subsequently evolved into a sophisticated corpus of doctrines.¹³ This argument rests in the increasingly detailed accounts of Waldensian beliefs available from the late 12th century onwards. But given the initial inquisitors' descriptive inability just mentioned, it might seem more plausible to interpret the richer accounts not necessarily as a doctrinal evolution by the Waldensians themselves, but rather as a sign of the increasing understanding that the former gradually gained of the Waldensians' more or less already established doctrines. To

¹¹ From Wakefield, W. and Evans, A., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), 210. (WE thereafter). See also Papini, C. *Valdo di Lione e i «poveri nello spirito»*. (Claudiana Editrice, 2001), 79 on the preexistent doctrines from which the Poor of Lyons took.

¹² Moneta of Cremona (1244), *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses Libri Quinque*. (Ricchini, Roma, 1753), p. 406. See also the paragraphs by an anonymous Poor Lombard (number 12) and by Durand of Huesca (number 34) in the next paper.

¹³ For instance, H. Grundmann, (1935), *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). E. Cameron, *Waldenses: Rejections of Holy Church in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

support this view, the interpretation of heresy that the official authorities developed in time became more stringent and extreme as the inquisitors learned more about the Waldensians.¹⁴

Because of the documentary vagueness in the taxonomy of the religious groups related to the Waldensians I have drawn information from documents that refer indistinctly either to Poor of Lyon, Poor Lombards, Waldensians, or similar names. The next section presents a survey of the Catholic theologies of history until the 14th century.

III. Topography of Catholic Theologies of History in the 12th to 14th Centuries

A description of the key characteristics of the Catholic theology of history is presented in what follows. The opinion that the post-apostolic church had of the Roman Empire was altogether unfavorable. Tertullian (160-225) and Origen (c.184- c.254) pointed to Rome's worshipping of false gods as evidence that God could not have intended its greatness.¹⁵

However, the Fathers' attitude towards the Roman Empire changed with the conversion of Constantine. The new more favorable social circumstances produced a historical revisionism which brought forth a profound historiographical shift in the interpretation of the role played by the Roman Empire in God's salvational scheme, both before and after the Incarnation. The key historian of the time, Constantine's panegyrist Eusebius (c. 260-c. 341) proposed that the Roman Empire had been the instrument that God deployed to pave the way for the world's conversion to Christianity (the *praeparatio Evangelica*). Eusebius held that Jewish religion, Greek Science, and Roman Law coalesced providentially to facilitate the optimum conditions for the blossoming of Christianity.¹⁶ Moreover, the very fact that Christ was born under the rule of the Romans was for Eusebius a clear indication that the Roman Empire had been willed, endorsed, and therefore divinely instituted by God Himself. The remarkable achievements of the Roman Empire such as the peace and laws, could not have been the product of chance, reasoned Eusebius, and therefore might have been willed by God himself. Had not those achievements facilitated

¹⁴ L. Bosworth, *Perceptions of the Origins and Causes of Heresy in Medieval Heresiology*, Ph.D. Dissertation, (University of Edinburgh, 1995).

¹⁵ Breisach, 80-81.

¹⁶ See R. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford University Press, 1945), 51ss.

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the spreading of the gospel? Augustine (354-430) also developed a favorable role for the Roman Empire. He considered that the universal empire was entrusted to the Romans because of the unmatched civic “*virtus*” and “*pietas*” they achieved. As such, Augustine reasoned, they were given the task of uniting the world prior to the coming of Christ.¹⁷

In another example of the change of historiographical mentality, Lactantius (c. 240-c. 320) the Christian advisor to Constantine, considered that the regency of Augustus was the “Golden Age,” a human equivalent to the Earthly Paradise.¹⁸

As such the Roman Empire was then regarded by historians and theologians from the 4th century onwards as the unparalleled epitome of the human achievement, instituted by God himself. It was considered that no previous or posterior political entity could ever surpass the Roman Empire as the optimal human organization, for this had achieved unique power, it had developed a legislation capable of uniting heterogeneous states (*vinculum societatis*), and had also raised the civic, moral, and cultural virtues of those nations.

In addition to the favorable reappraisal of the Empire’s role before the Incarnation, a key historiographical and theological innovation was afforded by Jerome (c.340-420). Based on Daniel’s prophecy, Jerome made the key proposition that the last beast of the sequence symbolized the Roman Empire, and that as a result Rome had been prophesied to last until the end of times.¹⁹ This very idea became paradigmatic and remained more or less unchallenged until the Renaissance.

Thus, by the end of the 5th century most theologians of history considered the Roman Empire to be divinely endorsed. This theological idea attributed fundamental qualities to the Roman system that spanned three dimensions: political, geographical, and temporal, i.e. uniqueness, universality (catholicity), and perpetuity. This meant that these three dimensions were postulated as cohering in the Roman political power, which was deployed universally and would last until the Parousia in order

¹⁷ De Civitate Dei, V. 15 in A. Pagden, *The Lords of all the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c.1500 – c.1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 30.

¹⁸ See Pagden, 26.

¹⁹ C. Mierow, (1928), in the Introduction to Otto of Freising’s *The Two Cities*, Columbia U.P. 2002, p. 29.

to assist the Church with the mission it had been entrusted by Christ himself through Peter.

Theologies of History in the 12th to 14th Centuries

Two theologies of history became predominant in the official schools of thought by the 12th to the 14th centuries. They were rooted either in Orosius or Augustine.

Orosius (c.375-418), a personal acquaintance of Jerome and Augustine, upon gathering and studying political events prior to the advent of Christ, concluded that no meaningful pattern was ascertainable from a mere chronological ordering of events.²⁰ The only feasible explanation that Orosius found was the Eusebian thesis, namely that the peace and social stability achieved by Augustus were providentially ordained to welcome the birth of Christ. Moreover, the fact that Christ consented to be born under the Roman rule, Orosius held, had conferred legitimacy and even some sanctity to it.²¹ This legitimacy would later manifest itself in an intertwinement of Empire and Church. In regards to the unfolding of history, Orosius followed Jerome by interpreting history as a sequence of empires under the Danielic scheme in which the power (*potestas*) was granted by God to specific empires and passed down from one empire to the next. Again following Jerome, Orosius also held that the Roman rule would reach to the end of times, although in a Christian phase.²² However, even though the Orosian periodization of history outwardly rested on the Danielic narrative as the *locus classicus*, it seems to have actually drawn from Roman sources instead,²³ especially the 1st century roman historian Trogus.²⁴ In any case, several objections were leveled against the Orosian scheme in view of the recent crimes of the Roman Empire after

²⁰ Pocock, J. G. A., *Barbarism and Religion: Vol. III The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 84-85.

²¹ Pocock, 92-93.

²² Mierow, op.cit., Breisach, 86-88. See also, S. Bodelón, (1997) *Orosio, una Filosofía de la Historia*. *Memorias de historia antigua*, 18, 59-80.

²³ J. Swain, (1940), *The Theory of the Four Monarchies Opposition History under the Roman Empire*. *Classical Philology*, 35 (1), 1-21.

²⁴ Trogus held that history is driven by two forces, (1) the conflict of freedom and domination, and (2) the world empires have succeeded from east to west. Trogus proposes that the sequence of empires have been Assyria, Media, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. See Mierow, 28-29. Similarly, Polybius presented a similar succession ending in the Roman Empire.

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Constantine, and the sack of Rome by the Goths. But he explained them away as mere local historical disturbances that did not impinge upon the grand providential scheme for the Roman Empire.

The influence of Orosius was significant, for his interpretation of history was adopted by medieval theologians as the standard scheme²⁵ with its core tenet regarding the Roman Empire as *the* essential ingredient to the continuity of sacred history: history from Constantine until the Final Judgment would be a Roman history in its Christian phase, grounded in a providential unity of Empire and Church.²⁶

The other key thinker in the construction of the other key theology of history was Augustine (354-430) who built his system upon the dualism of the City of God (*Civitas Dei*) and the Earthly City (*Civitas Terrena*). Similarly to Orosius, Augustine conceded that the empire is given by God to whom He pleases. However, Augustine noticed, He who gave it to the both gentle Vespasiani, also gave it to the cruel Nero; he who gave it to the Christian Constantine, did so to the apostate Julian.²⁷ Therefore, the true underlying causes remain hidden in God's inscrutable but just purposes, and so Augustine asserted, the earthly city does not have any legitimate divine endorsement and the interpretation of secular history is therefore meaningless. This Augustinian detachment of both cities did not convince the majority of theologians of the High Middle Ages.²⁸ But what was indeed influential was Augustine's mystical schematization of history through a sequence of six ages corresponding to a man life stages, i.e. infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, mature, old age, spanning from Adam to the Second Coming. This mystical sequencing lent itself to the historiographers with a Platonic bent.

By the 12th and 13th centuries, the prevailing interpretations of history had departed little from the views of Augustine and Orosius. Among the theorists influenced by the latter was bishop Otto of Freising (c.1114-1158), one of the most important representatives of high medieval

²⁵ J. Alonso-Nuñez, (1994), *La metodología histórica de Paulo Orosio*. *Helmántica*, 45, 373-379. Martínez Caveró, P. (1990), *Los Argumentos de Orosio en la polémica pagano-cristiana. Cristianismo y aculturación en tiempos del Imperio Romano*, *Antigüedad y Cristianismo*. VII, 319-331. Ediciones de la Universidad de Murcia.

²⁶ Breisach, 86, 89.

²⁷ Pocock, 94.

²⁸ Breisach, 86.

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historiography. Otto advocated the unity of history reached with the advent of Constantine.²⁹

I think, regarding the two cities: how one made progress, first by remaining hidden in the other until the coming of Christ, after that by advancing gradually until the time of Constantine. . . But from that time on, since not only all the people but also the emperors (except a few) were orthodox Catholics, I seem to myself to have composed a history not of two cities but virtually of one only, which I call the Church. . . the city of Earth was laid to rest and destined to be utterly exterminated in the end; hence our history is a history of the City of Christ. . . .³⁰ (4)

For “Otto the *civitas Dei* on earth” indicates E. Mégier, “is realized by means of the Roman Empire, and the Roman Empire as such that Christ transforms, with his advent as citizen of the Empire, from *civitas mundi* into *civitas sua*. Christ is the new king with which the Church inherits all that the Roman Empire involves. As such, the Church is nothing but the Roman Empire itself become from *civitas mundi* to *civitas Christi*, from pagan to Christian.”³¹ The Empire became a “typos” of the Church. What about the Hebrews? Otto considered that the realization of the Church was linked not to them which were “politically weak, but to the Romans, the masters of the world.”³²

Otto’s views are also important because they represent the understanding that theorists of the day had of the place of heretics in the City of Christ. This and similar views influenced the legal rigors to the Waldensians, Jews, and Cathars. Otto considered that the City of Christ did not encompass the whole world, but:

. . . the faithless city of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles [including heretics] still remains. . . [but is] insignificant not only in the sight of God but even in that of the world, hardly anything done by these (5)

²⁹ M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 189.

³⁰ Otto von Freising, (*Otonis episcopi frisingensis Chronica; sive, Historia de duabus civitatibus*) Intr. to 5th Book. In Mierow, 323-324.

³¹ E. Mégier, (2001), *La Chiesa cristiana, erede della Roma antica o dell’Antica Alleanza? I punti di vista di Ugo de Fleury e di Ottone di Frisinga*. In *Roma antica nel Medioevo*. V&P Universita, 528.

³² Mégier, 528.

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unbelievers is found to be worthy of record or to be handed on to posterity.³³

Otto participated of the common inquisitorial view that heretics did not belong to the Christian order. As such, the step between this and their proscription, was short.³⁴ In another example of the merged Cities framework, the premonstratensian Abbot Bernard of Fontcaude (d.c. 1192) prohibited the Waldensians to preach:

... nobody should presume to teach other way of perfection, but being in the City, that is the Holy Church.³⁵ | (6)

Among the theorists influenced by Augustine's mystical scheme of history were the "neutral" chroniclers like John of Salisbury (c. 1120-1180), author of the *Historia Pontificalis*, and also mystical theologians like Rupert of Deutz (c. 1075-c. 1129), Gerhoch of Reichersberg (1093-1169), Hugh St. Victor (1096-1144) who posited a mystical flux in history, and Anselm of Havelberg (1100-1158). These men propounded allegorical eschatologies as their interpretation of history.³⁶

The Orosian and the Augustinian theorists converged into a common conception of an Aristotelian version of God, more specifically Parmenidean, as a distant mostly indifferent, and irate deity³⁷ that had

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Some legal entailments included: death penalty as the general remedy for heresy, the mere suspicion of heresy incurred outlawry, etc. See M. Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages: The Papal Monarchy with Augustinus Triumphus and the Publicists* (Cambridge University Press, 1963), 511ff, 446ff.

³⁵ "... nullus praesumere debet docere aliquem viam perfectionis, nisi sit in civitate, id est in sancta Ecclesia" Bernardus Fontis Calidi, *Adversus Waldensiaum sectam*, II, iv in EFV I, 68.

³⁶ A particular interpretation of historical events arose around the year 1000. Many were expecting the coming of the Antichrist and Satan was expected to be set free from his captivity around that year. Portents in the sky, miracles, and interpretations abounded. Among them Raoul (Rodulphus) Glaber (985-1047) - *Historiarum libri quinque ab anno incarnationis DCCCC*, Ademar of Chabannes (988-1034), Thietmar of Mersebourg (975-1018), Richer of Reims (c.950-1000), Aimoin (c.960-1010) *Historia Francorum*, Bernard of Angers (f. 1013-1020) *Liber Miraculorum Sancte Fidis*. For a detailed study of the mental habits of these chroniclers see G. Duby, *L'an mil* (Paris: Julliard, 1967).

³⁷ See A. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. (Harvard University Press, 1936), 39.

abdicated in favor of the Pope.³⁸ While Parmenidean most of the time, God was viewed by some as intervening in human affairs in an immanent, Heraclitean sense, mostly through miracles and portents. However, there were not ascertainable ways that linked these random providential interventions with the coarse-grained overall purpose of God as exhibited in the periods of history. As such, some events were interpreted as providential interventions and utilized in a fine grain sense as endorsements for specific endeavors or persons.

Although devised mainly to explain trends in a large historical scale, the common entailment of both historiographical schools was the priority of the Church over the secular. This idea quickly impinged onto the political plane of the quotidian (small scale) working relationship between both, Church and Empire. It was Pope Gelasius I (494-496) who picked up the idea of the supremacy of Peter and developed the political theory of the “two swords” which ultimately dealt with the temporal power of Church and State. The Gelasian doctrine asserted mildly but decidedly that each power has its own autonomous sphere, but that ultimately the religious prevails over the political. This view acquired its full relevance in the Investiture Controversy starting with Gregory VII and Henry IV in the 11th century.

IV. Commonplaces in the Catholic Theologies of History of the Period

Beyond their dissimilarities, both Catholic theologies of history in the 12th to 14th century shared fundamental elements that were more or less undisputed commonplaces such as that history was organized in ascertainable metahistorical periods;³⁹ history after Constantine had reached a standstill;⁴⁰ that the Roman Empire in a Christian phase would last until the end of times as the vehicle of the Church for the spread of the Gospel; that God was posited as a Parmenidean-Heraclitean deity who had completely delegated the economy of salvation (*dispensatio salutis*) onto the Roman Church in the person of Peter; that the Roman Church in the

³⁸ The idea that God rarely intervened in the world is of Aristotelian origin, and was used repeatedly in the 14th century for many practical reasons. See Wilks, 294-296.

³⁹ Pocock, 127-150, Chenu, 194.

⁴⁰ In a way somehow resembling F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Free Press, 1992).

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person of the Pope was the recipient of both, the transference of power by previous empires, and the priesthood from the Jews.

A particularly interesting and explicit account that elaborates the commonplaces listed above is afforded by the song to Archbishop Anno II of Cologne (*das Annolied*) composed around 1080 by an anonymous monk of Siegburg Abbey. The *Annolied* refers the sequence of Empires of Daniel 7, in which the fourth creature is considered a wild boar, that “*stood for the courageous Romans. . . He was so large and frightening: the whole world paid tribute to Rome*”:

In the days of Augustus it came about that God looked down from Heaven. Then a king was born who was served by the angels of Heaven: Jesus Christ. . . At once, God’s sacred signs appeared at Rome. Pure oil sprang from the earth and ran everywhere across the ground. Around the sun there appeared a circle, bright red like fire and blood. For a new kingdom was approaching, bringing God’s grace to all of us. The whole world must succumb to it. St. Peter, the sacred apostle, defeated the Devil at Rome. He set up the sign of the holy cross there; he declared the city to be in the vassalage of Christ. From there he commissioned three holy men to preach to the Franks: Eucharius and Valerius; the third (Maternus) died on the cliffs. They commanded him to rise from the dead and accompany them to the Franks as St. Peter instructed. When he heard his master’s name he obeyed them at once. . . There in Franconia they won over many men to God’s service in a better war than that in which Caesar had previously won them.⁴¹ (7)

The *Annolied* exemplifies the above-listed conjunctural aspects in the medieval theology of history: (1) by being born under Rome the “king” Christ replaced the “excellent” Augustus in the temporal throne, (2) God subsequently anointed the Roman Empire with “pure oil” and portents, (3) Christ bestowed onto Peter all his authority on heaven and earth (*omnis potestas*) who as a result defeated the Devil in Rome (conquered Rome-vassaled her to Christ), and spiritually became Christ on earth. Later in history, Constantine too would bestow his temporal power (*potestas terrena*) onto Peter, through Pope Sylvester; (4) Peter commissioned bishops to preach (*translatio sacerdotii*) to the Franks who will later be the

⁴¹ *Das Annolied*, XXXI – XXXIII. Translation of G. Dunphy. Univ. of Regensburg.

heirs of the Empire (*translatio imperii*); even a man was raised from the dead in the name of Peter; (5) Peter's envoys fought a spiritual battle which anticipated the temporal struggle.

The salient issue exemplified in the Annolied is that for medieval Catholic theology of history Peter and his successors were the single depositaries of the total power (*omnis potestas*), the point of confluence of the temporal with the spiritual, the point in the universe at which the human and the divine connect with each other.⁴² Ultimately, both Christ and Constantine⁴³ (a type of Christ for Eusebius) had divested themselves of their *potestas* and bestowed it onto Peter and his successors from whom all the authority streamed down within the Roman Church and the Empire.⁴⁴ A brief description of the processes of power transference onto Peter follows.

Transference of Temporal Power—the *translatio imperii*

Medieval theologians considered that human order depended fundamentally on two powers: the spiritual and the temporal. As J. Pocock observes "both church and empire were conceived as sacred entities transcending time and circumstance, modes of divine action upon, rather in, secular history."⁴⁵ The prophecies of Daniel 2 and 7 were adopted as the metahistorical prototype that revealed God's ordering of time and described the historical process of power transference from one empire to the other.⁴⁶

The idea of transference of temporal power was known as *translatio imperii*.⁴⁷ As J. Harrison indicates, "[o]ne of the characteristics of this

⁴² As Augustinus Triumphus (Summa, xlv. I, 240) declared: "*Papa est vicarius et minister, potissime cum secundum Dionysium lex divinitatis hoc habeat, ut eius influentia non transeat ad inferiora nisi per media. Medius autem inter Deum et populum christianum est ipse Papa.*" Cited in Wilks, 274ff.

⁴³ Pocock, 130, observes that "Constantine's apparent Donation was really a recognition that Peter's successor enjoyed it already."

⁴⁴ "Data est mihi omnis potestas in caelo et in terra" Matt. 28:18.

⁴⁵ Pocock, 128.

⁴⁶ Pocock, 127.

⁴⁷ The term *translatio* had a juridical usage in Ancient Rome and literally means "transference of the charge." In the specific Roman legal context it has been rendered as "competence" by Butler in Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 3.6.23n2, 5.13.2n1, 9.2.106n2. Loeb Classical Library. The first rendering seems adequate for *translatio imperii*. There are, at least two, encyclicals which seem to imply this usage: viz the *Quanta Cura* (Pius IX on 12/8.1864) and *Notre Charge Apostolique* (Pius X, 08/10/1910) in which *officium* and *charge* (in French) as "transference of the charge" are pivotal to the encyclical line of

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theory is that while the nations entrusted with world political power may change, the power itself does not. . . . The power itself never perishes, even if a pagan nation in which it resides does. The authority given by God remains constant; only the carrier changes.”⁴⁸

Following Trogius and Polybius, the *translatio imperii* was considered to have moved from East (Babylon) to West (Rome), and as proposed by Jerome, Rome would keep the temporal power until the end of time.

To accomplish the incorporation of Rome into the salvational scheme of history, theologians and historians of the day had to laboriously exonerate it from the responsibilities of the crucifixion of Christ and the death of the martyrs, which they transferred to the Jewish nation instead.⁴⁹ All the subsequent transfers of political power in medieval Europe were not necessarily seen as a refutation of the *translatio imperii* thesis, but were rather interpreted as local transfers confined within the political realm of the Roman Empire.⁵⁰

The Ceaselessness of the Roman Empire

As a logical consequence of the role assigned by Jerome to Rome, later theologians saw in the Roman Empire the attributes of indestructibility, perpetuity, and ceaselessness. This was no ideological innovation, but a transposition of Rome’s original mission from a pagan role, as originally conceived by Roman panegyrists, to a Christian role. The same attributes that pagan thinkers had already assigned to Rome were now accommodated to the Catholic theology of history. For many, pagan and Christian, Rome represented the epitome of human achievement in power, peace, arts, and sciences. As such, theologians of history posited that Rome had been divinely instituted to expand the Kingdom of God on earth until the Parousia. Therefore, Rome was considered as the legitimate heir of Israel. The conversion of the Roman Empire by Constantine was the

argumentation around the dogma of Church authority. Moreover, insofar *translatio imperii* and *translatio sacerdotii* both entail a dynamic aspect of transference of charge, by the same token *officium*, charge, and *auctoritate* entail the static possession of that charge by the Pope at any given moment of his pontificate, and which is considered to have been “divinely conferred” (*divinitus commissa*) upon him.

⁴⁸ J. Harrison, (2013), *The Myth of the Eternal Return and Its Reflexes in Medieval German Literature: Time in the Annolied*. Unpublished essay, 10.

⁴⁹ The arguments of Moneta of Cremona in regards to this topic will be covered in Part II.

⁵⁰ Harrison, 9.

consummatory historical act in the sanctification of the Empire. The temporal and spiritual authority converged in the Roman Church. As such the Empire was considered an extension of the Church, the *consummatio*, the marriage of the secular and the sacred. For medieval theology, Rome reached what Israel could not accomplish. In fact, Israel was but a small remnant (*reliquiae Iacob*) whereas the Roman Church was conceived as destined to span the orb (*populorum multorum*). Gregory VII triumphantly claimed that Christ had succeeded Augustus,⁵¹ as such the successor of Peter was credited the *universale regimen*.

Delegation of Salvation onto the Roman Church—the *translatio sacerdotii*

Jerome and Orosius considered that Israel was an imperfect and temporary vehicle for the Church because it was absent from the Danielic sequence of world empires.⁵² Moreover, Otto of Freising stated that the Hebrews were politically too weak to be the temporal ancestors of the Church—and so definitely absent from the unfolding of the *translatio imperii*. However, theologians recognized, that despite being left aside from the temporal power, Israel had been entrusted with its counterpart the priesthood which it possessed until the Ascension. Yet after that, they held, God had removed the administration of salvation from the Jews and had bequeathed it onto Roman Church. Hence it was posited that the Jews had been emptied of their original possession of the priesthood in favor of the Roman Church by means of a transference of priesthood, the *translatio sacerdotii*. So in parallel with the *translatio imperii*, a salvation gradient had occurred from the East (Israel) to the West (Roman Church).⁵³ Other transferees also followed the alleged depletion of the Jews' commission in favor of the Roman Church in the medieval theological ideology which were encompassed *translatio religionis*.⁵⁴

⁵¹ . . . *quibus imperavit Augustus, imperavit Christus*. P. Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum* ii, 75, 237.

⁵² Molnar, 48. See also, Mégier, 505-536.

⁵³ See note 24.

⁵⁴ Along with the *translatio imperii*, there was also associated with it the *translatio studii*, or *translatio artium*, the transfer of culture and studies from Antiquity to the Romans, and from them to the Church. Another idea was that of the *translatio linguae* which posited the transfer of Hebrew to Latin. It was believed that Adam spoke Hebrew until the tower of Babel. The people of God, including later the Jews, preserved Hebrew until the Dispersion.

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Therefore, the transference of priesthood from Israel to the chief apostle Peter inaugurated the *successio apostolica* whose administration was granted to the Pope. The apostolic succession is the uninterrupted temporal sequence of men in charge of the priesthood, but what it is ultimately transferred is the *potestas ligare et solvere* that originates in the Pope. Consequently, both *translationes* were the vehicles of the same dual object: the *omnis potestas*. For the publicist Augustinus Triumphus (1243-1328), this meant that the Pope became the personification of Christ and stood in the line of Melchisedech, granting him the status of Priest and King (*sacerdos et rex*),⁵⁵ “the Supreme Pontiff has every and all kinds of power in the temporal world.”⁵⁶ As a result, Pope’s power was considered to be complete and total (*plena et totalis*).⁵⁷

By founding the Church of Rome, Peter was posited to have inaugurated the new salvific phase of history, a new *dispensatio*. The merging of the temporal with the spiritual was not immediate though, for it involved a period of adjustment that was consummated in the reign of Constantine the Great. However a new Neoplatonic metahistorical realm was thus inaugurated signed by the co-extensiveness of Christianity with the temporal power (*Imperium*). In addition, a new system of social ordines or groups with special functions was established, a symbiotic temporal-spiritual Pax Romana composed of a clerical order (*ordo clericalis* or *sacerdotalis*) and the lay order (*ordo laicalis*).⁵⁸ So, the fusion process of the spiritual and the temporal realms involved the passage from the Roman *orbis terrarum* to a Roman *orbis Christianum* in the fifth century, which developed afterwards in an *Imperium Christianum*, which in turn became, at least conceptually, in the 6th century a *sancta respublica*, equivalent to

But afterwards Hebrew was no longer fit to serve as the *lingua franca* of the world. And so a *translatio linguae* occurred from Hebrew to Latin as the language of the People of God. See e.g. Vance, E. (1986) *Marvelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages*. U. Nebraska Press.

⁵⁵ Augustinus, *De duplici potestate*, 499.

⁵⁶ *Summus pontifex habet omnem et omnimodam potestatem in temporalibus*. Aegidius Spiritalis, *Libellus contra infideles*, 112.

⁵⁷ Augustinus, *Summa*, xlv, 2, 247 in Wilks, 259n3.

⁵⁸ See Robinson, I. (1991) *Church and Papacy. The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, Cambridge U.P., 261ss. It is interesting to note that the concept of ordines is rooted in the platonic notion of a cosmic hierarchy of beings (and ideas) having a predetermined function. This notion was articulated by pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

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Cicero's *respublica totius orbis*,⁵⁹ and finally to the Gregory VII's theocratic and coercive *societas christiana*.

The Petrine "auctoritas": the Point of Confluence of the Human and the Divine

The single most important element which provided coherence to Medieval Catholic theology of history was ultimately the papal office. Medieval theologians posited that the Pope was the point of confluence of both *translationes*. The Petrine order was seen as an eschatological point of arrival where the *translatio imperii* and the *translatio sacerdotii* had asynchronously converged.

This idea was at the base of the doctrine that held the Pope to be the ultimate source of *omnis potestas* on earth. As M. Wilks observed: ". . . there is a "point" in the universe at which the divine and the human connect with each other. This point is the Pope as the vicar of God, half human and half divine—*verus Deus et verus homo*. We cannot overestimate the importance of the mediatory role assigned to the Pope in the Middle Ages. He becomes the bridge between heaven and earth, and this not only means that mankind cannot attain God except through the medium of the Pope, but equally that the divine wisdom as expressed in the Christian faith is obtainable only through the same channel."⁶⁰

The new *dispensatio* embodied a fundamental transposition of the roles in the history of salvation from Israel to Rome. This meant an inversion of the scheme in which the Law as the expression of God's character was at the base of the covenant with Israel. In the new *dispensatio* the Pope was the source of the Law.⁶¹ So the Law was not at the base any more in the new dispensation: the Pope was. This idea led to important theological implications such that the former obedience to the Law as the requisite for salvation (*obedientia legem*) was replaced with the obedience to the Pope as the ultimate requisite for salvation (*obedientia papae*): "all Christians must obey the Pope" (*omnis christianus papae obedire*).⁶² The role and authority of the Law as the source of Israel's *raison d'être*, was now

⁵⁹ Pagden, 24.

⁶⁰ Wilks, 275.

⁶¹ "The law cannot be more than the legislator" (*Non potest esse magis lex quam legislator*). Augustinus, *Summa*, lxxvii, 3, 354 in Wilks, 173n4.

⁶² Augustinus, *Summa*, xxii, 4, 132 in Wilks, 156n1.

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replaced by the Pope's *auctoritas* whose prerogatives were placed above the Law:

The Vicar of Christ is the source, origin, and rule of all the ecclesiastical principalities from whom derive the entrusted power from high, to the weakest members of the Church.⁶³ (8)

The entrustment of the *translatio religionis* onto the papal office brought forth a transposition and an augmentation of religious and temporal functions for the Roman Church: Israel's *dispensatio* had been based upon the following premises: (1) the authority of the Mosaic Law and ceremonial laws upon living, (2) the Judaic *imperium* was local, and (3) the regime of Israel was Theocratic. Whereas for the medieval theologians in the new *dispensatio*: (1) the role of the Law was absorbed into the authority of the Pope, (2) the *imperium* turned universal (*katholikos*), and (3) the Theocratic aspect in the Old Testament remained, but now mediated by the abdication of God in favor of the Pope as witnessed by the power of the Keys. So the new *dispensatio* became in time essentially a Papal theocracy. As such, the obedience to the Popes (*obedientia papae*) was posited by canonists and theologians as the only ineludible requisite for personal and collective salvation.⁶⁴ Therefore as father and Lord of all (*communis pater et dominus*)⁶⁵ the new regime demanded unqualified obedience (*obedientia*) to the Pope.⁶⁶ Even the emperor did not escape the due obedience to the Pope, which was considered by some as the *vicarius papae*:

⁶³ *Christi vicarius, fons, origo et regula omnium principatum ecclesiasticorum, a quo tamquam a summo derivatur ordinata potestas usque ad infirma Ecclesia membra.* Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, vi. 12 in Wilks, 382.

⁶⁴ A recurrent objection against this requirement was naturally the moral idoneity of the Pope. However, that aspect was taken out of the equation by the reasoning of e.g. Bernard Clairvaux, Alexander St. Elpidio, Lambertus Guericci, John of Viterbo, etc. who separated the moral character of the individual and his office. Augustinus Triumphus declared that the Pope could commit any mortal sin, except heresy, and then grant himself an indulgence: *Papa potest dare indulgentiam sibiipsi. . . sed ut est membrum Ecclesiae recipit et ut est caput day.* (*Summa*, xxix, 2, 176) in Wilks, 366.

⁶⁵ Reg. ii, 25, 67 (p. 157, 223) cited in W. Ullman, (2013), *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*. Routledge, 277.

⁶⁶ Ullman, 277ff. Some panegyrist even claimed divine honors for the Pope as: *Dominum Deum nostrum Papam* and *Optimum, Maximum, et Supremum in terris Numen*. Cited in Gieseler, *Compendium* 73ff.

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Peter the key bearer of the earthly and heavenly kingdoms; he has all the earthly and ecclesiastical authority. There is no authority in the material word which does not come from the spiritual.⁶⁷ In regards to the total and universal jurisdiction, the complete and universal spiritual and temporal dominion are Christ's and of his vicar the Supreme Pontiff.⁶⁸ (9)

The theocratical tenets led to the attribution of divinity (*plenitudo deitatis*)⁶⁹ to the Pope.⁷⁰ In like manner the Catholic faithful were asked to believe by faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist *via transubstantiation*, in the same way they were also supposed to accept by faith the real presence of God in the Pope, *similarly to transubstantiation*. As Innocent III stated:

... a mediator was constituted between God and men, below God but above men, less than God but superior to men.⁷¹ (10)

Or as Alvarus Pelagius who said that "no simple man, but like God on earth."⁷² Moreover:

⁶⁷ ... *claviger Petrus terreni et celestis regni; omne posse quod habet terrena potestas abet et ecclesiastica. Nulla est itaque potestas in materiali gladio que non sit in spiritali.*

⁶⁸ ... *quantum ad universalem et totalem iurisdictionem, totalis enim et universalis dominus spiritalium et temporalium est ipse Christus et vicarius eius summus pontifex.* Augustinus Triumphus, *Summa* xxxvi. 3, 214. cited in Wilks, 382.

⁶⁹ Augustinus, *Summa*, xix, 2, p. 118; Also *plenitudo divinitatis*, according to Ptolemaeus de Lucca, *Determinatio compendiosa*, c. 6, p.17, in Wilks, 169 n.1.

⁷⁰ The following statements are commonplace in the literature of the period: not a common man, but God on earth (*non homo simpliciter, sed Deus in terris*) Alvarus Pelagius, *De planctu ecclesiae*, c. 37, p. 47; in a way the pope is God, i.e., the vicar of God (*papa quodammodo est Deus, id est, Dei vicarius*) Aegidius Romanus, *De renuntiatione papae*, iii, 4; *Dominus Deus noster papa* Zenzellinus de Cassanis, *ad Extravagantes ad Io. XXII*, xiv ante c. 5.

⁷¹ ... *inter Deum et hominem medius constitutus, citra Deum sed ultra hominem, minor Deo sed maior homine.* PL, ccxvii, 658.

⁷² *Non homo simpliciter sed quasi Deus in terris.*

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Only the pope is the Vicar of God, for he alone binds and looses. . .⁷³
one and the same is a judgment from the Pope and a judgment from
God . . . there is one council between God and the Pope . . . same
judgment and same seat, God and pope . . .⁷⁴ the dominion of God
and the Pope is the same.⁷⁵ (11)

These claims, although not shared by all theologians, certainly percolated in the interrogations, accusations, and charges against the Waldensians for their active refusal to obey the pope as we will show in Part II. Augustinus Triumphus⁷⁶ summarizes the entailments of the ideas related to the authority of the papal office:

Only the authority of the Pope comes unmediated from God. . . the
Pope's jurisdiction is major than any of the angels', for to him was
entrusted the authority and curate of the whole world . . . Nature⁷⁷
is but a single principality; and all the principalities of the
world belong to Christ, whose vicarius is the Pope according to (12)

⁷³ The authority to bind and loose was conceived to operate both on the living and also on the dead: *papa sit iudex vice Christi vivorum et mortuorum* (*Summa* xlvi I, 249); on earth, heaven, and hell: *coelestium, terrestrium, et infernorum* (*Summa dedicatio*) by administering the treasury of the Church: *papae committitur cura et custodia omnium universaliter, et hoc non solum dum vivunt, sicut committitur sicut committitur angelis, sed etiam post mortem per communicationem suffragiorum Ecclesiae*. (xviii, I-II, 113). See Wilks, 355-361. Also, as Wilks indicates "for all practical purposes, and as far as mankind is concerned, the Pope is Christ himself. . . a reincarnation of Christ," Wilks, 360.

⁷⁴ *Solus papa dicitur esse vicarius Dei, quia solum quod ligatur vel solvitur . . . Sententia igitur Papae et sententia Dei una sententia est...unum consistorium est ipsius papae et Dei. . . una sententia et una curia Dei et papae. . .*, Augustinus Triumphus, *Summa* vi, I, 57.

⁷⁵ Augustinus Triumphus, *Summa* xlv, ii, 247.

⁷⁶ Augustinus Triumphus, *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica* q.1, art.1.

⁷⁷ The arguments in this paragraph are crafted from a Platonic framework and draw from *translatio imperii*. Augustinus resorts to the doctrines of unity and continuity, cosmic and earthly hierarchy, and the downward flow of authority. As such he explicitly references the pseudo-Dionysius as authoritative. Cf. Aquinas, *Quaestiones de quolibet* XI, Q. 1, Art. 1, a6: *dato quod tota machina mundialis esset unum corpus continuum, constat quod illud corpus esset ubique. Non ergo est solius Dei proprium esse ubique*. O. von Gierke, (1900), *Political Theories of the Middle Age*. Cambridge University Press, 105. The term *machina mundialis* was used by diverse authors to signify the cosmos or the physical world (Bonaventura of Bagnoregio see Di Maio, A. (2008), *Piccolo glossario bonaventuriano*, Aracne, 75ff), the newly created planet earth as a system (i.e., Petrus Comestor, *Historia*, 1, q. II.1; Bernard Clairvaux, *De passione*, 7).

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Dan. vii . . . The laws of the pagans owe obedience to the Pope. The Pope is the Vicar of Christ, and so nobody can evade legal obedience to him, just as nobody can evade obedience to God . . . The imperial authority of the Popes was transferred from the Greeks to the Romans. Constantine made such transfer of authority to the Supreme Pontiffs, who by virtue of their being the Vicars of the Son of God the celestial Emperor, have universal jurisdiction over all kingdoms and empires . . . All fair laws proceed from divine Law. Therefore, all imperial legal right proceeds from the Pope's authority, insofar law proceeds from divine law of which the Pope is its vicar and minister, and according to Dionysius the influence of the divine Law does not reach the lower, but through the mediator. The mediator between God and the Christian people is the Pope, therefore no law will be given to the Christian people, save under the Pope's authority. It is now evident that the Pope is the interpreter and regulator of the Law, on account of him being the architect of the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy in the place of Christ.⁷⁸

(12)

These theological statements provide a necessary background to understand the Waldensian refusal and challenge to the ecclesiastical authority of the day, and the persistence with which they were charged with heresy.

⁷⁸ (Q1,art.1) *Sola potestas Papae est immediate a Deo.* . . (Q18,art.3) *Major est jurisdictio Papae quam cujuslibet angeli.-Pape totius mundi jurisdictio et cura commissa est.* . . (Q22.art.3) *Tota machina mundialis non est nisi unus principatus: princeps autem totius principatus mundi est ipse Christus, cujus Papa vicarius existit juxta illud Dan. vii. (Q. 23, art. 1) Pagani jure sunt sub Papae obedientia.—Vicarius Christi est Papa, unde nullus potest se subtrahere ab ejus obedientia de jure, sicut nullus potest de jure se subtrahere ab obedientia Dei.* . . (Q. 37, art. 3) *Auctoritate Papae Imperium a Romanis est ad Graecos translatum.—Constantinus hujusmodi translationem fecit auctoritate summi Pontificis, qui tanquam vicarius Dei filii, caelestis Imperatoris, jurisdictionem habet universalem super omnia regna et imperia.* . . (Q.44, art.1) *Omnis justa lex dependet a lege divina.—Illo ergo jure lex imperialis dependet ab auctoritate Papae, quo jure dependet a lege divina, cujus ipse Papa est vicarius et minister, potissime cum secundum Dionysium lex divinitatis hoc habeat, ut ejus influentia non transeat ad inferiora nisi per media. . . Medius autem inter Deum et populum Christianum est ipse Papa, unde nulla lex populo Christiane est danda, nisi ipsius Papae auctoritate.* . . (q.73, art.3) *Planum est autem, quod Papa est omnis juris interpres et ordinator, tamquam architector in tota ecclesiastica hierarchia vice Christi.* . . .

V. Summary

The documentary scarcity and unconnectedness from which we must draw the description of Waldensian beliefs is often aggravated by the fact that the questions, descriptions, and refutations that their opponents presented were frequently made within a set of theological postulates that were either taken for granted or just obliterated for the sake of conciseness. Moreover, the target audience was composed of educated readers imbued in the theological thought of the day. In addition, the very Waldensian statements that have survived in a few texts were also targeted to an audience well versed in the theological minutiae of the day which assumed a detailed understanding of the Catholic dogma. Consequently, it has been necessary to survey the main medieval Catholic theological tenets about history and salvation in order to provide the conceptual framework to better appraise the Waldensian declarations that will be studied in Part II.

This very succinct survey of the ideas about hierocracy and papal theocracy in the 12th to 14th centuries has a double objective: first, to understand some individual Waldensian belief statements that are frequently repeated in many of the documents from polemicists and inquisitors such as that they “ought to obey God rather than men” as will be discussed in Part II. Secondly, this survey also provides a systemic picture that allows locating the loose Waldensian statements in a coherent whole.

Part II will survey in some detail the Waldensian understanding of the history of Salvation and the authority they conferred to the Bible as elicited from the available texts today.

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