

THE CHALICE AND THE CUP: THE CHANGING ROLE OF WINE IN  
THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the absence of the chalice in the Christian ritual of the Eucharist in the thirteenth century. The absence of the chalice in the ritual indicates the absence of wine. In an interdisciplinary approach, this study integrates the historiographies of viticulture as well as of the Christian liturgy to answer the question: why did wine disappear from the Eucharist in the high Middle Ages? It is specifically focused on the northern regions of France, as this region is understudied in terms of viticulture.

An exploration of the historiographies of viticulture and liturgy shows that they are segregated. Liturgical scholarship is largely theological in character. Any explanation for the absence of the chalice offered only refers to sacred trends. The historiography of viticulture is either strictly geographic and economic in character, or strictly cultural. Both strands of historiography are teleological in that they work towards the modern cultural, economic, or geographic importance of wine.

By problematizing and integrating these distinct historiographies, is it possible to paint a fuller picture of the change in the Eucharist. Closely tied to the rise of towns and town culture, wine grew in expense and status. Also in this urban setting, wine became an important part of drinking culture, with a close connection to secular life. At the same time, concern for the spiritual purity of the ritual was growing. The belief in the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist was part of this growing spirituality. Wine was not only closely connected with impious lay practices, but its biblical symbolism was also ambivalent. These factors pushed the laity and the Church away from using wine in the Eucharist. At the same time, the principle of concomitance and the veneration of the host pulled people towards the use of bread in the ritual.

By explaining more completely the absence of the chalice in the thirteenth century, this thesis aims to show the broader implications of this narrow doctrinal issue as well as to underscore the value of an approach that brings together separate historiographical traditions.

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## INTRODUCTION

At some point during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Eucharist – a central ritual practice of the Christian Church – underwent a rather important change. In the mid-second century AD, Justin Martyr (100 –165), in his *Apology*, described the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. Based on the biblical account of Christ’s last supper with the Apostles (1 Cor.1:23 – 26), the rite consisted of eating bread symbolizing the body of Christ, and drinking wine symbolizing His blood. In Justin’s account, the communicants received the Eucharist in both kinds (that is, as part of the ritual, they both ate bread and drank wine). However, by the time of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) the wine had disappeared from the ritual, and only the clergy took communion in both elements. For the laity, taking communion at all was rather uncommon. Indeed in the early thirteenth century the Catholic Church had to establish a minimum requirement upon the laity to take communion at Easter to correct the problem.<sup>1</sup> Although this distinction between clergy and laity regarding the Eucharist may seem like a narrow doctrinal issue, it had a wide reaching effect. This significant doctrinal change resulted from and itself re-enforced a growing separation between the clergy and the laity. Furthermore, it was, in itself, clearly an issue of spiritual importance. In the fifteenth century, for example, heretical movements as well as reform movements clamored *specifically* for the chalice – the vessel for the sacred wine – to be re-instated in the ritual.

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<sup>1</sup> Canon 21, Fourth Lateran Council, 1215. (“Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council,” *The Middle Ages: Sources of Medieval History* Vol. I, Trans. H.J. Schroeder, Ed. Brian Tierney, (New York: McGraw – Hill Inc., 1999), 217-222)

At the time when the wine disappeared from the Eucharist, the laity's perception of the spiritual importance of wine must also have changed. We can see this most clearly by looking at wine in contrast with the bread. This second element of the Eucharist was commonly termed the host. During the twelfth and thirteenth century, as the Eucharist grew in spiritual importance, the consecrated host was elevated to nearly the same status as a relic in the minds of the laity, while the spiritual status of wine did not grow. The change in the Eucharist also had an impact beyond the sacred sphere. As wine grew in popularity and prestige – especially in urban areas – many towns and cities began to make significant revenue from taverns and the wine trade. Such shifting popular attitudes to what was ultimately a valuable commodity must have influenced wine in its social and economic capacities.

In short, the absence of wine in the Eucharist speaks to changes both within the sacred sphere as well as within the socio-economic sphere of western medieval society. Yet, despite the key role played by wine in the Christian ritual, its absence from the Eucharist has not received much scholarly attention. Although it is very difficult to discuss the presence or absence of wine in the Eucharist due to the highly symbolic language employed by the sources, it is possible to address this issue and its import by using the chalice in which the wine was served as an indicator of its presence or absence in the ritual. When scholars do take up the absence of the chalice, it is generally understood either in relation to larger devotional trends, such as the increasing sacredness of the Eucharist, or the growing separation between the clergy and the laity both prominent in the high Middle Ages. In fact, the absence of wine in the liturgy has far wider implications than its function within religious

development. I shall argue that the absence of the chalice, and thus wine, in the Eucharist can be explained by connecting it to social, cultural, and economic realities of the thirteenth century. Further, drawing this connection between its presence or absence, and thus its function and value, sheds light on the complex issue of the interaction between the secular and sacred worlds, and demonstrates the merits of a comparative approach to medieval European history.



## CHAPTER ONE: Historiography

### Historiography of Viticulture

According to the existing scholarship on wine in the Middle Ages, the Christian Church is generally credited with almost single handedly preserving viticulture after the fall of the Roman Empire – the assumption being that, without such a “protector,” viticulture would have been interrupted by the chaos following the end of official Roman governance.<sup>2</sup> Tim Unwin states that “[i]n the context of medieval viticulture, once the necessity of wine for the Christian Eucharist had been established, it then became possible for the owners of vineyards to generate profit from the sale of such wine. While the use of wine for religious purposes only consumed a small fraction of the total wine produced, its symbolic significance assured it an important market.”<sup>3</sup> Unwin’s statement assumes a rather great influence of the Church over the medieval economy. Yet the connection between the Church and economic affairs underlying this assumption – of a direct link between the importance of wine in the Eucharist and the importance of wine in the economy – is not at all clear. In fact, this unproblematic assumption raises many questions. Could the symbolism of wine in Christianity really have had such a massive impact on its production, when wine had long been an enjoyable beverage in Classical Antiquity?<sup>4</sup> Was wine really “carried through” to the

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Harm Jan De Blij, *Wine: A Geographic Appreciation*, (New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld, 1983), 46; Roger Dion, *Histoire de la vigne et du vin en France des origines au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, (Paris: Collège de France, 1959), 188; Tim Unwin, *Wine and the Vine*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 134.

<sup>3</sup> Unwin (1991), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Although wine did play a significant role in pagan religion, it did not have nearly so strong a connection to religious practices as it did in the Christian Middle Ages. Although wine was often used to pour libations, it was far from exclusive in its religious connection. Any item of food or drink could be offered to the gods. Wine was far more influential in the social culture of Rome. It played a central role in *symposia* and formed the subject for many poems and satires. Although wine did have a necessary connection to Dionysus in the Classical world, it was clearly not the same sort of symbolic connection one might identify between Christianity and wine. (On wine in classical antiquity, see Dion, *Histoire de la vigne et du vin en France des origines au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*)

Middle Ages by the Church,<sup>5</sup> or did secular practices of viticulture play a more important role in its preservation and cultural significance? Did the spiritual importance of wine in the sacrament affect the production, consumption, and meaning of wine in the lay economy?

The debate over the importance of the Church in the preservation of viticulture after the “fall of Rome” and its expansion highlights a broader issue, for modern scholars have argued that the idea of the “fall of Rome” is itself deeply problematic. Chris Wickham provides an excellent example of this argument. Generally, the classical world and the medieval world are associated with different modes of production; Rome with slavery and medieval Europe with serfdom. However, Wickham shows that the shift to feudal modes of production occurred in the second century AD, well before any date traditionally associated with the “fall” of Rome.<sup>6</sup> Rather than adhere to artificial divisions or breaks, however convenient they may be, recent scholarship has found it more useful to speak in terms of continuity and change over time. Without assuming a rupture between the classical world and the medieval, scholars have been able to pursue topics such as trade and economy over the *longue durée*, whereas earlier assumptions made this impossible. However, the metaphor of “decline and fall” in history is still pervasive.<sup>7</sup> For instance, the argument of whether the Church preserved viticulture into the Middle Ages still assumes that it had to be “preserved” from something, which is generally assumed to be the chaos left in the wake of the fall of the

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<sup>5</sup> An example of this mode of thought comes from Hanneke Wilson: “Christianity made wine compulsory for all believers, male and female: all the faithful shared in the blood as well as the body of the Lord. It made no sense to abstain from wine or to exclude others from drinking it...at least not until the thirteenth century, when the laity no longer took communion in both kinds.” (Hanneke Wilson, *Wine and Words*, (London: Duckworth, 2003), 71) However, as it seems that communion was not compulsory and communion in both kinds not that common throughout the Middle Ages, this logic doesn’t seem to hold up.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Wickham, “The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism,” *Past and Present* 103 (May, 1984) 3-36.

<sup>7</sup> See P. E. Dutton, “Awareness of Historical Decline in the Carolingian Empire 800-887,” Ph.D. Thesis, (Centre for Medieval Studies: University of Toronto, 1981).

Roman Empire. If one accepts the idea that Rome did not fall, then much of the scholarship on viticulture in the early Middle Ages must be reconsidered. Although this larger project is beyond the scope of my paper, I shall contribute to such a re-evaluation by taking a narrow question (i.e., the role of wine in the liturgy) and examining it in terms of change over time, without assuming that there is a rupture between the classical world and the Middle Ages. In short, an exploration of the doctrinal issue of the presence and absence of wine in the liturgy may contribute to the debate about the relative extent of sacred versus secular viticulture,<sup>8</sup> the influence of sacred versus secular organizations on trade, and the nature and extent of Europe's transition from late antiquity to the Middle Ages.

This study is focused on the northern regions of France because they are understudied.<sup>9</sup> To give one example, while the Champagne district was ideal for growing grains rather than wine, it was still the site of many mercantile centers and fairs. These fairs often traded heavily in wine and made it accessible to northern markets. This made trade in wine quite important in this region during the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, wine, or at least the vines from which it comes, is a land-intensive good, and there is much available land in northern France.<sup>11</sup> Yet, despite its importance, little scholarly attention has been paid to the trade and production of wine and their implications concerning its significance. Although this region did not gain major importance for its wine production until the invention of

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<sup>8</sup> For examples of those who consider sacred viticulture more important, see note 2. Younger (William Younger, *Gods, Men, and Wine*, (Ohio: World Publishing Company, 1966) ) considers secular viticulture more important, but, interestingly enough, still holds onto the concept that viticulture had to be saved from the fall of the Roman Empire. (Unwin 1991, 134)

<sup>9</sup> Most viticultural studies focus on southern France in the later Middle Ages. In Tim Unwin's analysis "the majority [of studies] have concentrated primarily on analyses of the post-medieval period...the main areas of France represented...are the Bordeaux region, Languedoc, and Burgundy." (Unwin 1991, 4)

<sup>10</sup> W.C. Jordan, *Europe in the High Middle Ages*, (London: Viking, 2003), 61.

<sup>11</sup> Lester K Little, *Religious Poverty and Profit Economy in Medieval Europe*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), 10.

champagne in the eighteenth century, wine had long been produced in northern France and formed an important part of daily life there during the Middle Ages.

In addition to giving attention to an under-investigated region, this study is unusual in its focus. In general, the historiography of viticulture is strongly economic and geographic in character. Most scholars focus either on the geographic expansion and influence of wine or the interaction between viticulture and the economy over time.<sup>12</sup> These studies largely aim to justify and explore the modern economic and social importance of wine in general or in a specific location associated with a particular quality of wine. Another line of inquiry focuses on the cultural and literary importance of wine, but does so at the exclusion of its economic or geographical significance.<sup>13</sup> Similar to geographically focused works, there seems to be a teleological pattern to the investigations of the development of wine, a trend that plots the history of wine along a chronological axis towards its current social importance. Not only does the focus on modern wine encourage teleology, but this segregation of the historiography of viticulture from other historiographies, such as social history or history of the liturgy, creates gaps and problems in our understanding of wine in the Middle Ages. In the pages that follow, I intend to identify some of these problems, as well as fill in some of the gaps.

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<sup>12</sup> Rolande Gadille, *Le Vignoble de la Cote Bourguignonne: Fondements physiques et humains d'une viticulture de haute qualité*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967); Unwin (1991); de Blij (1983); Dion (1959); Younger (1966); Edward Hyams, *Dionysus: A Social History of the Wine Vine*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

<sup>13</sup> Wilson (2003).

## Historiography of the Christian Liturgy

Before surveying the historiography of the Christian Liturgy, let us pause for a moment to make clear the connection between wine and the liturgy of the Christian Church. From the earliest days of the ritual of the Eucharist, the Church has used a special vessel – the chalice – to serve the wine to communicants. Accordingly, from a very early period, writers refer to the wine in the ritual not explicitly, but rather by mention of the chalice. Although the metonymy<sup>14</sup> of chalice for wine may seem fairly straightforward, it must, in fact, be demonstrated. Andrew McGowan, in his work on early Christian meals,<sup>15</sup> discusses the practice of other liquids being used for the Eucharist. The most prevalent alternative was water, but in certain cases milk or even beer was consecrated and served from the chalice as part of communion.<sup>16</sup> However, even in the earliest canonical works that describe the ritual, it is wine that is specifically connected to the sacrament; in the second century, Justin Martyr states that wine mixed with water should be used in the chalice.<sup>17</sup> In short, the use of other liquids in the ritual was the exception rather than the rule. Since wine is named and linked to the origins of the Eucharist, as well as being rich in biblical symbolism (as will be discussed below), it seems reasonable to assume that, unless otherwise stated, the chalice used in the sacrament typically contained wine. If we accept this assumption, then the presence or

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<sup>14</sup> The term metonymy is quite specifically chosen rather than the term metaphor. As McGowan (following Jack Goody) explains: “rather than imagining that we can ultimately decode meals and hence reduce them to other social structures, we ought to consider them as one aspect of social life which even has a certain autonomy and does not merely mask some other form of activity which itself determines and explains the uses of food.” (Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 5) In other words, when a communicant receives the chalice, he is not merely participating in the Eucharist; he is also actually having a glass of wine.

<sup>15</sup> McGowan (1999).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 89-142.

<sup>17</sup> Justin Martyr, “The First Apology,” *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin and Irenaeus*, Trans. Phillip Schaff, Ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (Peabody, Mass.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 65.

absence of the chalice in the Eucharist can be reasonably equated with the presence or absence of wine.

Given the connection between the Eucharist and wine, let us turn now to the nature of medieval evidence concerning the ritual itself. When considering a geographic focus for religious issues, it is difficult to be as selective as one can with viticultural concerns. This problem is largely due to the nature of the source material. Evidence concerning the growth of vines, the production of wine, and its sale tends to be connected to a particular location. Religious evidence, by contrast, is less apt to be attached to one place, largely because Christian doctrinal writings were intended to apply to all of Christendom, and canonical information concerning the Eucharist tended to come from locations of central religious importance, such as the Vatican or northern religious centers such as Paris.

Turning our attention to northern France, the area under investigation, it is possible to follow a distinctly “Frankish” liturgy, although it is harder to narrow the discussion to a particular change in ritual practice to one geographic area. While it is conceivable in some respects to link the absence of the chalice to regions in northern France, the link between broad changes and specific regions is not always clear. This is an issue with which scholars of the medieval world often have to deal. Yitzhak Hen vividly describes the predicament as being akin to “looking at a large painting in a dark room with a very small torch.”<sup>18</sup> His solution is to look for similarities or differences, continuities or ruptures, between texts from a variety of geographical locations.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, for scholars such as Theodor Klauser,

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<sup>18</sup> Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul A.D. 481-751*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Hen (1995), 6.

archaeology has proved to be a fruitful technique with which to study the regional expression of normative trends.<sup>20</sup> I will follow the lead of Hen and Klauser in this regard, and consequently will show how northern France fits into a larger, coherent picture of Christian worship.

When we look specifically at the Christian Liturgy, its historiography is essentially very insular. Up to the late twentieth century, studies generally focused on the evolution of the words and practice of the liturgy in documents that are largely programmatic in nature.<sup>21</sup> More recently, the liturgy and its connection to the laity has received greater attention.<sup>22</sup> However, with a few exceptions, even these studies do not fully engage with secular life. They do not connect secular activities, such as social life, day to day economics, or entertainment, to the sacred proclivities of the laity. Instead, they turn their attention to the

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<sup>20</sup> Klauser connects the movement of the altar to the rear wall of the Church, resulting in the mass being celebrated with the priests back turned to the communicants, to the increasing exclusivity and sanctity of the Eucharist. (Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, Trans. John Halliburton, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 100-101)

<sup>21</sup> Marshall W. Baldwin, *The Mediaeval Church*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953); Charles M. Radding and Francis Newton, *Theology, Rhetoric, and Politics in the Eucharistic Controversy 1078-1079*, (Columbia University Press, New York: 2003); Istran Perczel et. al., *The Eucharist in Theology and Philosophy*, (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2005); Ann W. Astell, *Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Gary Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom: Medieval Religion and the Eucharist*, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999); Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979); Bernard Hamilton, *Religion in the Medieval West*, (London: Arnold, 2003).

<sup>22</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); G.J.C.Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995); Miri Rubin, "The Space of the Altar," *Sacred and Secular in Medieval and Early Modern Cultures*, Ed. Lawrence Besserman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 167-176; McGowan (1999); Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); Marjorie Chibnall et. al., *Church and City 1000-1500*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Adrian Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages: The Relations between Religion, Church, and Society*, Trans. Reinder Brunsma, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994); Christopher and Rosalinda Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe 1000-1300*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984); J.A. MacCulloch, *Medieval Faith and Fable*, (London: George G Harrap & Company Ltd., 1932).

small proportion of time the laity spent in devotional activities, and how this activity intersected with the liturgy.<sup>23</sup>

Wine itself evinces the insular nature of liturgical historiography. Although wine does play a very important role in the liturgy from the very beginning of Christianity, there is little cross fertilization between the historiography of the liturgy and the historiography of viticulture. The unfortunate result of this artificial segregation is that, while historians of wine recognize its changing role in culture and the economy, historians of the liturgy treat wine as a stable and unchanging presence in the Eucharist.

Liturgical scholars largely approach their work from a purely theological standpoint. Analysis of the development of the liturgy centers on the changing prayers and rituals, and how each change contributes to and is a reflection of the larger Christian community. As we will see below, the absence of the chalice in the liturgy – beginning around the thirteenth century – is typically explained as part of an overall trend of the increasing sacredness of the Eucharist and the concomitant separation of the clergy from the laity. Yet this phenomenon is not in itself an explanation, but, like all trends, a symptom of something else. Although the task of revisiting the extensive historiography of the liturgy and integrating it with larger social, economic, or political historiographies is beyond the scope of this thesis, I believe that a useful case study can be made by investigating one narrow piece of the liturgy – the absence of the chalice – and relating it to the secular world of which it was a part. The

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<sup>23</sup> One exception to this, McGowan, also points out this phenomenon in discussing the role of food and eating in early Christian ritual meals. “[Liturgical meals] have been treated largely as specifically sacral acts whose nature belongs to the realm of worship and prayer, and hence have been interpreted together with actions less clearly related to the day-to-day.” (McGowan 1999, 14)



fruitfulness of this path of inquiry, I hope, will underscore the value of comparative history for scholars of medieval Europe.

## CHAPTER TWO: History of Viticulture

The history of wine and its production stretch far back into the pre-history of the Western world. Wine making probably originated around 6000 – 4000 BC in the mountainous area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, near modern Turkey.<sup>24</sup> By the time the practice made its way into the Greek world, wine was grown in vineyards, and there was a specific awareness of certain selective and organized practices of viticulture, such as the importance of pruning and knowledge of a variety of different types of grapes.<sup>25</sup>

Although the practice did spread under the Greeks, it was largely thanks to Rome that viticulture reached northern Europe and the Paris basin.<sup>26</sup> By the second century BC, Roman colonists were importing vines from the Mediterranean to numerous areas of Europe.<sup>27</sup> This long distance trade shows the growing commercial importance of wine in the Roman world; wine must have been a valuable trade item if it had a significant market even in the farthest northern regions of the empire. Cato the Elder's (234 – 194 BC) treatise on agriculture, *De Agricultura*, makes the commercial nature of Roman viticulture clear, providing a systematic layout of wineries, wine presses enabling large quantities of grapes to be pressed, and many grape varieties.<sup>28</sup> This large scale, organized production supported trade over long distances and in high volumes. Indeed, viticulture in northern Europe extended so far and grew so

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<sup>24</sup> Unwin (1991), 63.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 97.

<sup>26</sup> De Blij (1983), 44.

<sup>27</sup> Dion (1959), 97.

<sup>28</sup> Cato the Elder, "De Agricultura," *Loeb Classical Library*, Trans. W.B. Hooper and H.B. Ash, (1934), [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cato/De\\_Agricultura/home.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cato/De_Agricultura/home.html) (Accessed March 25, 2008), 104-125.

successfully under the Romans that Italy began importing wine from the colonies.<sup>29</sup>

The commercial production of wine in large quantities in the Roman world relied upon slave labor.<sup>30</sup> As slave labor fell out of practice beginning in the third century and the feudal economy grew,<sup>31</sup> wine production was incorporated into this new economy. According to Roger Dion, the production of wine occurred in three different ways in the Middle Ages: episcopal viticulture, monastic viticulture, and viticulture of the nobility.<sup>32</sup> Of course, it is likely that wine production also continued as part of the peasant economy, especially in southern Europe. But it is only the larger scale and more commercially oriented viticulture that has left any evidence.

Concerning episcopal viticulture, the ninth-century estate survey (polyptych) of the abbot Irminon mentions that Saint Germain (496 – 576), Bishop of Paris, was responsible for planting vines, and evidence exists elsewhere for the personal initiative of bishops in viticulture.<sup>33</sup> In general, episcopal viticulture satisfied three demands. First, and probably least in volume, episcopal vineyards supplied wine for the Eucharist. Second, if the diocese produced wine of good quality, it would be consumed, as well as offered to important guests. Third, wine was a commodity that contributed to the fiscal resources of the episcopacy.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> De Blij (1983), 45.

<sup>30</sup> Unwin (1991), 12.

<sup>31</sup> Chris Wickham describes this process as motivated by the onerous taxation of the Roman empire and its declining ability to provide protection. Those who used to work the land and pay taxes to Rome eventually entered a feudal relationship with local strongmen, who required less from them and were more able to provide protection. (Wickham 1984)

<sup>32</sup> Dion (1959), 171-196.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 171-172.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 174.

Monasteries were also an important location of medieval viticulture. A portion of the labor of the monks would have been directed towards clearing land and growing vines.<sup>35</sup> Peasants working land belonging to a monastery or abbey would also contribute to the production of wine. However, some of the wine produced in this manner may have also been consumed by the peasant farmers, providing some evidence for the persistence of peasant viticulture. As Unwin describes concerning the abbey of St. Germain-des-pres in Paris, “[t]he large amounts of wine produced by the peasantry, over and above the rents they owed to the abbey, suggest that even here in northern France a peasant viticulture and demand for wine had survived.”<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, a monastery would have ensured that they were well supplied from their vineyards. According to Dion, the production of wine was important to monasteries for the same reasons it was to episcopacies, but with the added burden of hospitality. Monasteries were often called upon to provide food and lodging for travelers from all walks of life. Moreover, they were reliant on the favor of the nobility and the institution of the Church for donations and exemptions. A significant part of being a good host to such important visitors was providing wine of high quality.<sup>37</sup>

The importance of wine to social relations was no less a matter for the secular nobility. As Dion puts it, “[f]or these nobles, from the high Middle Ages, the feeling that, in the exchange of hospitality, the honor paid to the host and that which returns to the

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<sup>35</sup> For example, at the abbey of Pontigny, a certain Thibaud Count of Blois donated a vineyard to the monks. (*Cartulaire de l'Abbaye Cistercienne de Pontigny*, Ed. Martine Garrigues, (Paris: Bibliotheque Nationale, 1981), 112)

<sup>36</sup> Unwin (1991), 148.

<sup>37</sup> Dion (1959), 182.

hospitable master is attached to the offering of wine, is strongly felt.”<sup>38</sup> Land owning nobility would ensure that the peasants who worked their land produced wine,<sup>39</sup> not only for its social benefits, but also because there was a great deal of profit to be made from its trade.<sup>40</sup>

Certainly it was not only the nobility who profited from the trade in wine. Papal records show that, in the fifteenth century, the Vatican was making significant income from wine:

	Florins	Shillings	Pence
From wine in bulk	372	32	8
From wine [transported] by land	293	122	6
From wine at retail	4, 145	35 <sup>41</sup>	

To put this amount into perspective, the average peace time crown revenues for a European monarch in the fourteenth century was 30, 000 livres.<sup>42</sup> A florin is worth (very approximately) two livres, making the papal revenue from wine almost 10, 000 livres. This income, from the city of Rome alone, was proportionately a very great sum of money.

The production of wine for the nobility and the clergy was possible almost everywhere in Frankish territory. (Fig. 1) Although it was not as warm as the Mediterranean,

<sup>38</sup> “Chez ces grands se manifeste avec force, dès le Haut Moyen Age, le sentiment que, dans le commerce d’hospitalité, l’honneur fait à l’hôte et celui qui revient au maître qui accueille sont attachés à l’offrande du vin.” (Dion 1959, 188)

<sup>39</sup> The wine was not only consumed when the landowner was near the vineyard, but would also be shipped to him wherever he might be. “When a demesne specialized in a certain crop the lord could not consume it all on the spot at one time; it had to be dispatched to him wherever he was. This was the case with wine: every year at the time of the vintage a monk of St. Bertin would visit the vineyard which the abbey owned near Cologne and would return with a convoy of casks.” (Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, Trans. Cynthia Postam, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), 43)

<sup>40</sup> “The care of the vines demanded the expenditure of a great deal of manpower. We know that vineyard work was the first to be entrusted to workers paid by the day, to those *ouvriers de vigne*, especially numerous on the outskirts of towns where most of the vineyards were situated. Added to the large outlays for renewing vats and casks, and *vaiselles vinaires*. The costs of viticulture were exceptionally high. Nevertheless the lords bore them cheerfully, for the wine produced on their land and by their own care was essential for entertainment and gifts. Besides, no other agricultural product sold better than wine. So well indeed, that, in spite of their high level of wages, vineyard workers usually cost less than half of the value of the wine harvest.” (Duby 1968, 272)

<sup>41</sup> William E. Lunt, *Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages: Volume I*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 25.

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth Hodges, “Medieval Prices,” *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Ed. Paul Halsall, (Fordham University, February 2002), <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/medievalprices.html#WAGES> (Accessed April 2, 2008).

much of northern Europe has a suitable climate for grape vines.<sup>43</sup> Generally, the best areas for viticulture have an annual isotherm between 10° – 20° C (this includes areas between latitudes 30° - 50° north and south).<sup>44</sup> Consequently, before modern viticultural practices, the quality of grapes was largely dependent on the climate in which they grew. Outside of the ideal climatic zone for grapes, very little wine could be made.<sup>45</sup>

Even within climates suitable for viticulture, local microclimates and other specific conditions meant that the quality of a wine in the medieval period was largely dependent on its particular region.<sup>46</sup> Henri D'Andeli, in his thirteenth-century poem "La Bataille des Vins," mentions seventy different qualities of wine identified by locale, including those of Cyprus, Ypres, La Rochelle, Provence, and many more.<sup>47</sup> Until quite recently, the variety of grape, the manner in which it was grown, and the local microclimate were the main factors influencing the quality of wine. There was little variation in method.<sup>48</sup> Even annual fluctuation in weather could affect the quality and quantity of wine. For example, in 1315 an overabundance of rain led to a grape yield 80% smaller than usual; contemporary sources complain about the poor quality and small quantity of wine produced in that year.<sup>49</sup> Thus we

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<sup>43</sup> For more on the early Medieval European climate, see Michael McCormick, Paul Edward Dutton and Paul A. Mayewski, "Volcanoes and the Climate Forcing of Carolingian Europe, A.D. 750-950," *Speculum* 82.4 (2008): 865-891.

<sup>44</sup> Unwin (1991), 34.

<sup>45</sup> For example, Jordan (2003), 268.

<sup>46</sup> Unwin (1991), 28.

<sup>47</sup> Henri D'Andeli, "La Bataille des vins," *Oevres*, Ed. A. Héron, (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1974), 23-24.

<sup>48</sup> Unwin (1991), 45.

<sup>49</sup> Jordan (2001), 290-291.

Figure 1: Removed for copyright purposes

Description: Map showing global zones of viticulture

Source: Unwin (1991), 35.

find the quality of medieval wines closely associated with particular regions.

### **Quality**

An appreciation of the care and knowledge that is required to make good wine is demonstrated by the fact that wines of good quality were recognized as such even in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. This was not only a secular appreciation. As the biblical story of the marriage at Cana shows (John 2:1-11), there is a connection between God and the quality of wine. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus attended a wedding, but the hosts ran out of wine. At the request of the servants, Jesus changed six jars of water into wine. The master of the banquet then congratulated the bridegroom for saving the best wine for last, which was not typical practice. Although this story shows a connection between holiness and the quality of wine, high quality wine was not always used in the holy Eucharist. Early in the history of the Church, sacramental wine was taken from the wine offered by individual communicants who brought their oblations forward in the offertory procession, and thus cannot have been of a particular quality; however, with the decline of the offertory in the twelfth century, sacramental wine was provided by the celebrant. At this point, the quality of wine provided was at the discretion of the Church. Given the biblical connection between spirituality and quality, it would not be surprising if they chose to provide wine of good quality, assuming they were able.

There is indeed some evidence that a given church might ensure a supply of high quality wine. Although a church might be in possession of a vineyard, they may have engaged in trade as well. Alcuin, abbot of Saint Martin at Tours, wrote to bishop Theodulf in



the eighth century asking him to send him wine from the notable wine producing region of Orleans, making reference to the wedding of Cana, and thus referencing the quality of his wine. While this letter indicates that wine of high quality was important to a particular cleric, it stands to reason that in general men in the clerical profession enjoyed the flavor of a high quality wine in the same way that a layman might. Thus, Alcuin's letter to Theodulf letter underscores the importance of quality, as Alcuin sought to import wine of high quality from a significant distance rather than simply drink the wine that was locally available.

If wine of good quality had importance within the Church as well as in the secular world, what did this quality entail? It is difficult to say. The Middle Ages did not have the diverse vocabulary of today's sommeliers to describe a wine of high quality. It does seem clear that, although the ideal of age was held as important (being a remnant of the criteria of quality wine in the Classical world), wine was not deliberately aged in the Middle Ages.<sup>50</sup> The shift from storing wine in amphorae to wooden barrels in the second century AD meant that it generally did not survive for more than a year.<sup>51</sup> Wine of the Mediterranean, being higher in sugar and alcohol content due to the region's heat, may have survived longer, but its quality in the Middle Ages was largely determined by where it came from and not, as had been the case in antiquity, by how old it was. The gap between ideal and reality regarding a wine's age was a prominent feature in wine's description in the Middle Ages.

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<sup>50</sup> Peter the Venerable in Ep. 121 compares friendship to wine, debating the value of old versus new. ( Peter the Venerable, "Letter 121," *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, Ed. Giles Constable, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 314-315) Ecclesiastus 9.15 also mentions the merits of old wine.

<sup>51</sup> Wooden casks made wine cheaper than ceramic amphorae. Thus, as the presence of a wealthy elite disappears in the West, the desire for old, expensive wine declined, and the cheaper wine in wooden barrels proliferated. (Wilson 2003, 192)

## Trade

The development of viticulture and the growing demand for wine of good quality in northern Europe also involved a concomitant development in the trade of wine, since the region did not produce enough wine by itself to ensure a regular supply.<sup>52</sup> If a particular area wished to import wine of a higher quality for sacramental or secular purposes, it could be very difficult and costly to obtain depending on the region in question – particularly due to the speed with which wine deteriorated. If it could not be sold promptly, it lost its value. For example, in 1226 Henry III of England ordered “old wine” to be distributed to the poor.<sup>53</sup>

Certain regional characteristics also influenced the growth in the wine trade. Southern Mediterranean regions generally produced wines considered to be of higher quality. In the cooler northern regions, wool and cloth of high quality were produced. The difference in climate between the north and the south facilitated trade between the two regions. Since grapes grew easily and wine was generally of good quality in the south, viticulture was part of the peasant economy as well as long distance trade. Wine was not a beverage that was hard to come by. By contrast, wine was harder to grow and of poorer quality in more northern regions, so wine of good quality was a more exclusive drink, a commodity of the luxury trade.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, as noted earlier, the fairs of Champagne were important hubs for this trade.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Unwin (1991), 28.

<sup>53</sup> Wilson (2003), 193.

<sup>54</sup> Unwin (1991), 2.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. 181.

The growing trade in wine was part of a larger process of economic growth in the twelfth century. As the French economy grew from many small local economies to a highly specialized and integrated whole,<sup>56</sup> obtaining a particular quality of wine became easier. Lester K. Little identifies wine as an excellent example of a type of specialization that leads to economic integration. Before such specialization, many different groups made their own wine. Later, as specialization grew, the modern wine producing districts that we know today appeared.<sup>57</sup> The cost of shipment and the necessity for rapid movement of wine meant that, as large scale production of wine grew, it became concentrated around waterways to facilitate movement.

The commercial production of wine did not grow in isolation. By the eleventh century, urban populations were growing as well. The growth of commercially oriented wine production was closely linked to the growth of urban areas, as well as the elevation of the social status of wine.<sup>58</sup> Towns tended to grow up around pre-existing episcopal centers with existing trade routes, making it easier for commodities like wine to reach these growing markets.<sup>59</sup> The growth of towns created larger markets for wine in particular, as it became identified with a certain status, due to the relative expense of wine of good quality in the north. It was a beverage drunk by the citizens of a town, as opposed to its peasants, who would drink beer.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> This is Little's argument about the development of the Medieval economy.

<sup>57</sup> Little (1979), 10.

<sup>58</sup> Unwin (1991), 175.

<sup>59</sup> David Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City*, (London: Longman, 1997), 65.

<sup>60</sup> Unwin (1991), 175-77.

Unwin, following Dion's categories,<sup>61</sup> notes that the three major categories of viticulture – princely, episcopal, and monastic – were generally practiced near towns and cities.<sup>62</sup> This is not particularly surprising, as viticulture on a large scale requires a significant market. Also, the use of wine in significant amounts for hospitality, as discussed above, presupposes a location that is often visited. Indeed, if we turn to the Paris basin as an example, viticulture (albeit not a commercial viticulture) was flourishing as early as the ninth century.<sup>63</sup>

Paris is an excellent example of the importance of the medieval commerce in wine. Located on the river Seine, the city – which had been a major urban center under Roman rule – was well situated to participate in the urban renewal of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. From at least the eighth century, and likely earlier, the fair controlled by the abbey of Saint-Denis in Paris was an important location of medieval trade.<sup>64</sup> It was also an area that supported many vineyards.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, by the thirteenth century, some of the most celebrated wines could be found in the Paris basin.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, and not surprisingly, a great deal of wealth in Paris in the thirteenth century came from the buying and selling of wine. In fact, because of the importance of wine in Paris, the city was one of the first to gain local autonomy in the wine trade; in 1190, Phillip Augustus granted exclusive selling rights of wine in the Paris markets to citizens of the town.<sup>67</sup> Paris not only exported wines from its

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<sup>61</sup> See p. 14 above.

<sup>62</sup> Unwin (1991), 146.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 175.

<sup>64</sup> Dagobert, "Grant of a Fair at St. Denis," *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Ed. Paul Halsall, (Fordham University, 1999), <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/629stdenis.html> (Accessed March 27, 2008)

<sup>65</sup> Dion (1959), 214.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 222.

<sup>67</sup> *Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisieme race*, Vol. 11, Ed. Eusebe Laurier et. al. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1723- 1849), 316.

surrounding countryside, but also imported wine from elsewhere. For example, Guillaume d'Auvergne, bishop of Paris from 1228 to 1248, was able to serve the notable wines of Saint-Pourcain, Anjou, and Auxerre at his dinner table.<sup>68</sup> It is clear that wine played an important role in the growth and expansion of Paris in the thirteenth century.

### **Wine in the Secular World**

A large part of the social life that developed in growing cities like Paris centered around taverns and drinking culture. Evidence indicates that the Church was aware of and itself linked to this culture, for in 1260 Pope Alexander IV had to prohibit clerics from selling wine or holding taverns in cloisters.<sup>69</sup> The taverns within which much of the social drinking in cities occurred could be very informal; some may have been simply in the wine cellars of merchants or, as Pope Alexander IV's edict shows, in cloisters.<sup>70</sup> However, more formal taverns also existed and were often, as in Paris, frequented by university students.

Indeed, wine seems to have been very important in university life. Alvarus Pelagius, a Franciscan friar, wrote concerning the vices of students in the early fourteenth century, "[t]he expense money which they [the students] have from their parents or churches they spend in taverns, conviviality, games and other superfluities."<sup>71</sup> A popular thirteenth – century university song also attests to the pervasiveness of drinking culture among university students:

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<sup>68</sup> A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Anecdotes historiques, legends et apologues tires du recueil inedit d'Etienne de Bourbon, dominicain du XIII<sup>e</sup> siecle*, (Paris: Renouard, 1877), 389.

<sup>69</sup> Nicholas (1997), 209.

<sup>70</sup> Dion (1959), 484.

<sup>71</sup> Alvarus Pelagius, "The Complaint of the Church," *The Middle Ages: Sources of Medieval History*, Vol. I, Trans. Lynn Thorndike, ed. Brian Tierney, (New York: McGraw – Hill Inc., 1999), 272.

The mistress drinks, the master drinks,  
 The soldier drinks, the cleric drinks,  
 The man here drinks, the man there drinks  
 He drinks late with the maidservant,  
 The fast man drinks, the slow man drinks,  
 The white man drinks, the black man drinks,  
 The constant man drinks, the aimless man drinks,  
 The unskilled man drinks, the wizard drinks.<sup>72</sup>

Not only prominent in the social life of students, wine also appears in the official educational program. In the regulations for disputation in the College de Sorbonne, the penalty for disobeying the leader of the debate was to provide wine to those who were in attendance.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to its connection with the purely social element of secular town life, wine had a role to play in the guilds that grew up along with the cities. In the rules of the guild merchant at Southampton, it is stated that the alderman must be provided with two gallons of wine each night that the guild sits. Moreover, the chaplain is to have one gallon of wine and the usher a gallon.<sup>74</sup> In the customs of the Guild of Saint-Omer (c. 1100), the great number of rules concerning the drinking festival, an annual gathering of all the guild members provided by the administrators of the guild, show the concern felt for the cost of wine and for wine's abundant availability. Largely these rules consist of payments and fines for non-guild

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<sup>72</sup> Bibit hera, bibit herus, / Bibit miles, bibit clerus, / Bibit ille, bibit illa, / Bibit serrus cum ancilla, / Bibit velox, bibit piger, / Bibit albus, bibit niger, / Bibit constans, bibit vagus, / Bibit rudis, bibit magus. "*Bibit, Bibit Magus*," *A Source Book of Mediaeval History: Documents Illustrative of European Life and Institutions from the German Invasions to the Renaissance*, Ed. Eric Austin Ogg, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972), 259.

<sup>73</sup> "If anyone does not obey him after the third warning, expressed in these words, 'I impose silence upon you,' he shall pay two quarts of wine of the house at the end of that disputation to those who were present to the end." ("Disputations in the College de Sorbonne 1344A.D.," *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages*, Ed. Lynn Thorndike, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 198-201)

<sup>74</sup> "The Rules of the Guild Merchant at Southampton," *The Middle Ages: Sources of Medieval History*, Vol. I, Trans. E. P. Cheyney, Ed. Brian Tierney, (New York: McGraw – Hill Inc., 1999), 165-167.

members brought to the festival or caught drinking at it.<sup>75</sup> The number of rules dedicated to the drinking festival shows how central wine was to the Guild.

The existence of several songs and poems discussing the role of wine and drinking also attests to its presence in the social sphere. Andreas Capellanus' work *De Amore*, probably published in the mid 1180s, condemns all women as drunkards. Although, Capellanus, a lay poet, may have been connected to the royal court,<sup>76</sup> this does not necessarily mean that it is impossible to use his work to discuss larger social trends. Indeed, his work is part of the body of Courtly Love poetry which was so popular at the time. His condemnation of female drunkenness falls within a long list of evils to which the female sex is disposed.<sup>77</sup> Capellanus also describes women as unashamed to drink in daylight, never refusing another cup, hating spoiled wine, loving unmixed wine, and willing to ignore all else in order to drink.<sup>78</sup> Unsurprisingly, this is a double standard, for male drinking is not also condemned as unequivocally evil, at least in poetry.

The *Carmina Burana*, a collection of songs and poems, is found in a thirteenth-century manuscript, but its composition reaches back to the twelfth century.<sup>79</sup> Although the manuscript was discovered in Bavaria, the contents of the collection are part of the twelfth-century renaissance that had its center in Paris.<sup>80</sup> A song from the *Carmina Burana* explicitly

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<sup>75</sup> "Customs of Saint-Omer," *University of Chicago Readings in Western Civilization Volume 4: Medieval Europe*, Ed. John W. Boyer and Julius Kirshner, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 88.

<sup>76</sup> P.G. Walsh Ed., *On Love*, (London: Duckworth, 1983), 3.

<sup>77</sup> "Est quoque ad omne malum femina prona." (Andreas Capellanus, *On Love*, Trans. P.G. Walsh, (London: Duckworth, 1982). III:107)

<sup>78</sup> Capellanus (1982), III:99

<sup>79</sup> David Parlett Ed., *Selections from the Carmina Burana*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 13.

<sup>80</sup> Parlett (1986).

mentions the drinking habits of students, describing them as snatched by Bacchus and tempted by “food for – not thought, but – delight.”<sup>81</sup>

In another song, the Archpoet of the *Carmina Burana* praises the unmixed wine of the tavern as being more pleasant to drink than the bishop’s wine (whether this speaks to quality or merely potency is unclear).<sup>82</sup> He connects the drinking of wine in a tavern to a life of debauchery, and discusses the vices of women, gambling, drinking, and indulgence. Clearly, by stating that he chooses indulgence in these vices rather than salvation, he is aware that they are directly in contrast with Christian virtues.<sup>83</sup> The Archpoet’s confession reflects a theme running through poetry in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries concerning the classical traditions of wine. As in classical antiquity, drunkenness is frequently connected with artistic inspiration, and Bacchus or Dionysus, the pagan god of wine and revelry, is often invoked.<sup>84</sup>

The social aspect of drinking is also emphasized by another song from the *Carmina Burana*. *In taberna quando sumus* describes activities that occur within the tavern, such as playing dice and wrestling, but then goes on to propose toasts to the people one might find there. The list includes unemployed soldiers, loose women, clerics ignoring their vows, sailors, penitents, tailors, rich men, poor men, doctors, scholars, and many others.<sup>85</sup> Although men of all rank were probably not found in the same tavern, the poet’s remarks speak to the social breadth of drinking culture.

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<sup>81</sup> “*Dum domus lapidea*,” *Selections from the Carmina Burana*, Trans. David Parlett, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 167-168.

<sup>82</sup> “The Archpoet’s Confession,” *Selections from the Carmina Burana*, Trans. David Parlett, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 13.

<sup>83</sup> “The Archpoet’s Confession.” (1986).

<sup>84</sup> “The Archpoet’s Confession.” (1986), 19. and “*Dum, domus lapidea*.” (1986)

<sup>85</sup> “*In taberno quando sumus*,” *Selections from the Carmina Burana*, Trans. David Parlett, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 165-166.



A common theme in poetry concerning wine is the juxtaposition of wine and water. Even Capellanus has his women eschewing water in favor of wine.<sup>86</sup> Perhaps the most interesting song about wine from the *Carmina Burana* is *denudata veritate*, which is a debate between wine and water.<sup>87</sup> *Denudata veritate* argues against the mixing of wine and water, for the two substances do not enjoy each other's company. In the song, wine accuses water of adding nothing to a dinner party and of making people sick from over consumption.<sup>88</sup> This is because, without modern sanitation practices, water was often unsafe to drink. Water in response accuses wine of loosening morals, causing drunkenness, and being a drink of murderers and fornicators.<sup>89</sup> Wine then praises its own merits. Like in the Archpoet's confession, wine connects itself with artistic inspiration, leading to more knowledge for students and lecturers than the classroom, and improving the fertility of women.<sup>90</sup> The rest of the song generally discusses the merits and drawbacks of water, with water claiming purity and necessity in nature, while wine accuses water of being dirty and impure.<sup>91</sup> In the end, wine is pronounced the victor.<sup>92</sup> Wine, then, was preferred not only for positive (and not so positive) social values, but it was also considered a healthier substance.

Another debate between wine and water is found in the *Carmina Medii Aevi* dating to the mid thirteenth century. Like *denudata veritate*, the poem *cum tenerent omnia* argues that, unlike wine, water is unclean.<sup>93</sup> However, in opposition to *denudata veritate*, this poem

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<sup>86</sup> Capellanus (1982), III: 99.

<sup>87</sup> "Denudata veritate," *Selections from the Carmina Burana*, Trans. David Parlett, (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 158-164.

<sup>88</sup> "Denudata veritate." (1986), 4-7.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 8-12.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 13-17.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 18-27.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 28-29.

<sup>93</sup> "Denudata veritate." (1986), 89.

discusses more than just the secular roles of wine. Indeed, wine calls upon several biblical examples to prove its worth. Perhaps most forcefully, wine states that it is “of which the Lord said: this is my blood.”<sup>94</sup> (Matt. 26:28) Tellingly, wine has the last word in this debate, which underscores its social importance in the culture of the high Middle Ages.

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<sup>94</sup> “de quo dixit Dominus: hic est sanguis meus.” (“*Cum tenerent omnia*,” *Carmina medii aevi*, (Firenze: Libreria, 1883), 68)

### CHAPTER THREE: History of the Eucharist in the Christian Liturgy

The Eucharist has been central to the Christian liturgy from the very beginnings of the religion. Going back even as far as late Judaic practices, the Eucharist entered Christian liturgy through the teachings of Jesus Christ.<sup>95</sup> One might expect that, with such a long tradition and Christological endorsement, the Eucharist would be a stable feature of Christian practice. However, this is not the case. The Eucharist, including both the action of giving communion as well as the liturgical words associated with the act, has undergone more change and debate than any other part of the Christian mass.

The celebration of the Eucharist in the primitive Church took place within a full scale liturgical meal. Fairly early on, the Eucharist was separated from the liturgical meal, and by the fourth century the meal disappeared altogether. As Theodor Klauser states, the change occurred “under the influence of a general effort to make worship more spiritual.”<sup>96</sup> Apparently, the liturgical meal was difficult to isolate as a solemn, religious occasion. The diners behaved just as they would during a secular meal, often growing boisterous.<sup>97</sup> This is an interesting point, as the concern for isolating the spiritual aspects of the ritual from any secular connotations seems to be paralleled in the growing spirituality of the Eucharist in the high Middle Ages.

The development of the Christian liturgy is generally assessed by scholars through major liturgical works. The earliest surviving works are Justin Martyr’s *Apology* (AD 155)

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<sup>95</sup> Klauser (1979), 5.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. 8.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

and Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition* (c. AD 200). These two works bear witness to early Roman Christian practices that find formal expression in the *Ordo Romanus* in the eighth century.<sup>98</sup> There is a wealth of scholarship on the evolution of the liturgy in general, and on the Eucharist specifically within the Roman tradition. However, since I am primarily concerned with the ritual as it exists in the West between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, I will leave both the broad analysis of the transmission of the Eucharistic liturgy, and the theological changes indicated by shifts in the Eucharistic prayer, to those better equipped than I. For my present purposes, a brief discussion of the character of the Western liturgy shall suffice.

Around the year AD 700, the Roman rite in the form of official liturgical documents was exported north to the Franks. At this point, the Franks had no strong connection to Rome, and thus were not concerned with maintaining a strict adherence to Roman practices. Rather, the Franks mixed the Roman rite with existing practices. The result is revealed in the *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*, an eighth-century text describing liturgical practices that reflect both Roman and Gallican traditions.<sup>99</sup> Around this time, the *Ordines Romani*, the official expression of the Roman rite, also started to include a rearrangement of certain parts of the liturgy to express Frankish practice (Ordo XV).<sup>100</sup> Despite the variations, there was still at least a formal adherence to mass as practiced in Rome. Frankish bishops were ideally meant to give mass in the same elaborate and cumbersome manner as Roman bishops.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965), 3-14.

<sup>99</sup> Klauser (1979), 58.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 59.

<sup>101</sup> Ordo II "episcopus, qui civitatibus president, ut summus pontifex ita omnia agant." (Klauser 1979, 71)

It is possible that Frankish variations were related to the differing demographics of Rome and the Frankish territory. While Rome was largely urban in the eighth century, the Frankish territory was still largely rural. The connection here is not clear, but perhaps the smaller population of clerics in the north contributed to a simplification of the Roman rite, which traditionally required many celebrants.<sup>102</sup>

As the Roman liturgy evolved, the most prevalent changes to the liturgy were modifications to the prayers being spoken. Pope Gregory the Great (540 – 604) was the first to edit the liturgy in order to “lighten what had become an excessive burden on both celebrant and people.”<sup>103</sup> When one looks at the actual practices involved in celebrating the Eucharist alone – the offertory procession where the congregation brings forward gifts (by Gregory’s time only bread and wine); the presentation of the oblations, where the bread and wine is blessed; and the physical act of giving communion in both kinds – it is understandable that the length and the complexity of the Eucharistic prayer was truncated. In Frankish territory, the trend appears to have been towards simplification as well. The most significant early change, recorded by Hrabanus Maurus in the ninth century, was that the Eucharist was celebrated by a single officiator, as opposed to the several present in the orthodox Roman rite.<sup>104</sup> The tendency toward regional variation can be seen in that both Pepin the Short in 754 and later Charlemagne fought for orthodox liturgical practice.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> It is interesting to note that most scholars do not connect Frankish alterations to the liturgy to demographic or social structures. Kilmartin goes as far as to suggest that an innate Frankish desire for “realism” influenced development (Edward J Kilmartin, *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, Ed. Robert J. Daly, (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 82), but it seems to me that the connection between society and the development of the liturgy would be a fruitful path of inquiry. Indeed it parallels my investigation of a social explanation for the thirteenth-century absence of wine from the Eucharist.

<sup>103</sup> Klauser (1979), 47.

<sup>104</sup> Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1952), 592.

<sup>105</sup> Klauser (1979), 72-73.

Neither of the Frankish kings was completely successful; on the contrary, the altered, Frankish liturgy found popularity in Rome itself.<sup>106</sup>

## The Question

Before turning to the question of the absence of the chalice in the Eucharist, it is worth taking a moment to explain the importance of communion to the Christian community. Indeed, the notion of community itself is of central importance. Partaking together in the Eucharist, which is, as Klauser describes it, “a joyful foretaste of the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of Christ,” provided Christian with a sense of connection. Indeed, the act itself was preceded by the “kiss of peace,” which signifies the love and unity of the Christian people.<sup>107</sup> Up until the eleventh century, the liturgy associated with the Eucharist defines it as a communal activity. Large parts of the liturgy were sung, the choir was an integral part of the ritual, and there was an overall participatory sense to it.<sup>108</sup> Participation in the act of communion also signifies that an individual is a member in good standing among the Christian community, since certain qualifications, such as sincere belief and confession, were required of every celebrant.<sup>109</sup>

If the Eucharist has always been such a central part of the Christian community, why did the practice of taking communion in both kinds disappear between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries? Bard Thompson suggests that the chalice was abandoned, “lest it be

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<sup>106</sup> Klauser (1979), 76.

<sup>107</sup> Thompson (1965), 5.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>109</sup> Lizette Larson-Miller Ed., *Medieval Liturgy*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1997), 42.

spilled or irreverently used.”<sup>110</sup> Klauser associates its disappearance with the rise of spirituality focused on the humanity of Christ.<sup>111</sup> Godfried Danneels offers both of these explanations.<sup>112</sup> He also invokes the principle of concomitance, which appeared at approximately the same time that the chalice disappeared. Concomitance is the belief that Christ is fully present simultaneously in both the bread and the wine; thus, celebrants were not missing anything without the wine, as Christ was fully present in the bread.<sup>113</sup> Although the belief in concomitance is generally used by modern scholars to account for the absence of the chalice, I contend that normative theological ideas do not develop in isolation; in short, the idea of concomitance alone is not enough to cause communion in one kind.<sup>114</sup>

### Devotional Trends

Why did the chalice fall out of use? Those scholars who offer any explanation at all provide purely theological arguments. They place it within a larger trend of changing devotional practices. As early as the sixth century, the time of Gregory the Great, the trend towards “real presence,” that is, the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist, was gaining popularity.<sup>115</sup> This increased the spiritual intensity of the Eucharist and, as a result, increased the spiritual importance of the clergy. In Frankish territory, this trend coincides with the development of parish churches, furthering the separation between the

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<sup>110</sup> Thompson (1965), 46.

<sup>111</sup> Klauser (1979), 96.

<sup>112</sup> “worry about the reverent handling of the Eucharist, particularly in the use of the chalice.” “growing realism inspired by the *theology of the real presence*.” (Godfried Danneels, “Communion Under Both Kinds,” *The Church and the Liturgy*, Trans. Theodore L Westow, Ed. Johanees Wagner, (New York: Paulist Press, 1965), 154)

<sup>113</sup> Danneels (1965), 154. Jungman also states that comcomitance is responsible for the disappearance of the chalice. (J. A. Jungman, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, Trans. Francis A Brunner, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1950), 385)

<sup>114</sup> Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 71.

<sup>115</sup> Klauser (1979), 47.

laity and bishops by adding another layer of hierarchy between the members of a diocese and its spiritual head.<sup>116</sup> In the early eleventh century, the distance between the laity and the clergy only increased, as religious individualism gained popularity.<sup>117</sup> This change was tied to the development of towns and cities, and more specifically, the guilds and fraternities that governed lives and livelihoods within the towns. Guilds and fraternities provided alternatives for religious activities, allowing laymen to engage in devotional activities outside of the Church.<sup>118</sup>

It was not only the growing individualism of laymen, but also individualistic practices within the Church, which caused the liturgy, and especially the Eucharist, to become the exclusive duty of the priest.<sup>119</sup> One significant aspect of the exclusively clerical nature of the Eucharist was that important parts of the rite begin to be whispered inaudibly by the priest, further decreasing the participatory nature of the rite.<sup>120</sup>

There are several explanations offered for this practice of whispering. Klauser suggests that there was a growth in the sacredness of the canon, and that saying it aloud was seen as a sign of disrespect.<sup>121</sup> Another great influence on the increasingly individualistic and sacred nature of the Eucharist was the development of private mass. This practice grew out of monasteries. Under Gregory the Great, monks were drawn into missionary service, for which they needed to be priests. Wishing to exercise their ordained duty, these priest-monks began

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<sup>116</sup> Klauser (1979), 80.

<sup>117</sup> “growing religious individualism sought to satisfy its devotional needs to an increasing extent in extra-liturgical devotions, for example in devotions of many kinds practiced by the fraternities.” (Ibid. 97)

<sup>118</sup> Macculloch (1932), 127.

<sup>119</sup> Klauser (1979), 97.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 99.



to conduct private mass for themselves. These private masses were typically conducted silently.<sup>122</sup> This practice contributed to the silent recitation of mass in public as well.<sup>123</sup>

Thompson offers another explanation for the development of the silent Eucharist. The *apologia sacerdotis*, a prayer, recited silently, that was a unique feature of Frankish liturgy even before the eleventh century,<sup>124</sup> together with the development of private mass re-enforced each other in the practice of the whispered Eucharist.

Another development of this period which contributed to the growth of the sacredness of the Eucharist (and therefore to the practice of whispering) is the doctrine of transubstantiation.<sup>125</sup> Although a very complex issue, transubstantiation generally describes the real presence of Christ in the communion offerings, the bread and the wine.<sup>126</sup> As mentioned above, a concurrent theological development was the principle of concomitance, where Christ is wholly present in both elements. The physical presence of Christ in both of the elements of the Eucharist had the effect of increasing the reverence felt by both clergy and laity towards the bread and the wine. This increased reverence was expressed in the growth of practices such as the priest's placing the host into the mouth of the congregant and the veneration of the host as a relic.

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<sup>122</sup> Klauser (1979), 102-103.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. 106.

<sup>124</sup> Thompson (1965), 41.

<sup>125</sup> "the *eucharistia* became an *epiphania*. The Canon of the Mass, in the course of which this "epiphany" occurred, was now spoken by the priest in muted tones, as if he alone could afford to enter upon this innermost sanctuary." (Ibid. 43)

<sup>126</sup> Kilmartin (1998), 64.

Why the doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitance crystallized at this time is still not clear. It is not enough to say that they fit within the trend of the increasing sanctity of the Eucharist. Those scholars that propose explanations for the timing of these doctrines generally refer to the rise of scholasticism. Beginning in the eleventh century, certain theologians, namely Berengar and his orthodox opponents, including Alger of Liège, debated the nature of the elements of the Eucharist.<sup>127</sup> Berengar proposed a rational re-evaluation of the ritual, while his opponents preferred an argument based on faith and authority. In the end, the latter, orthodox argument triumphed, leading to an Aristotelian distinction between appearance and real character: the appearance of the bread and wine remained the same, while their real character transformed.<sup>128</sup> This was essentially transubstantiation *avant la lettre*, as Kilmartin describes it, a harmony between realism and symbolism precipitated by the scholastic education of the clergy.<sup>129</sup>

Returning to the increasing reverence paid to the ritual, the whispering of the Eucharist clearly signifies both a separation between the clergy and the laity and the increasing sacredness of the ritual. However, the separation between the clergy and the laity finds even more extreme expression, from about AD 1000 forward, in the practice of the priest conducting the Eucharist facing away from the congregation. Dix describes it as an almost accidental development due to the “character” of the Frankish people. He states that the Franks’ desire to *see* the holy relics that were traditionally enclosed within the altar led to

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<sup>127</sup> Charles E. Sheedy, *The Eucharistic Controversy of the Eleventh Century*, (New York: AMS Press, 1947), x.

<sup>128</sup> Hamilton (2003), 57.

<sup>129</sup> Kilmartin (1998), 149. Undoubtedly, scholasticism had an influence on doctrinal development, but it cannot have been the only influence. Indeed, a fundamental point of this paper is that by focusing only on liturgical explanations, much is missed. The issue of why the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation were formalized in the thirteenth century is a completely separate investigation and beyond the scope of my paper, but an avenue for further exploration.

them being raised up behind the altar in a visible, prominent place. With the priest now displaced by the relics which were now occupying his customary space behind the altar, he moved to the front of the altar. This had the effect of forcing the priest to turn his back to the congregation in order to face the elements of the Eucharist that were on the altar now behind him.<sup>130</sup> Whatever the initial reason, the persistence of this practice clearly contributed to the separation of the clergy from the laity.

Perhaps the most prominent effect of the separation of clergy and laity was the general decline in lay communion. In the high Middle Ages, communion for most lay people was incidental and exceptional rather than regular and even when they did take communion, it was in only one kind.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, in the thirteenth century lay communion aside from Easter required special permission.<sup>132</sup> Even the practice of Easter communion had to be re-enforced by Innocent II in the Fourth Lateran council.<sup>133</sup> Larson-Miller describes this lack of communion not as lay indifference, but as a product of the increasing sacredness of the ritual. The increasing reverence that the laity held for the clergy and for the Eucharist meant that they were reluctant to participate, lest they take communion unworthily.<sup>134</sup> Concomitant with this increased reverence was a general increase in the emphasis on the sanctity required of a communicant.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, the clergy discouraged frequent communion in order to prevent

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<sup>130</sup> Dix (1952), 591.

<sup>131</sup> Thompson (1965), 49.

<sup>132</sup> Larson Miller (1997), 41.

<sup>133</sup> See note 1.

<sup>134</sup> Larson Miller (1997), 41.

<sup>135</sup> Dix also blames the decline in communion on the influence of "immigrant barbarians too stupid to build more than huts." (Dix 1952, 595) So we may wish to take some of his value judgments with a grain of salt.

the breeding of indifference toward it, reflecting the clerical concern with the sanctity of the ritual.<sup>136</sup>

### Religious Symbolism

Certain aspects of religious symbolism surrounding wine may have also influenced the shift from administering the Eucharist in bread and wine to only giving bread. The symbolism of wine and the moral understanding of its effects (drunkenness) are very complex issues within the sacred sphere that change over time. The Old Testament is replete with references to vines, wine, drinking, and being drunk. Generally, the cultivation of vines and production of wine meant peace, stability, and prosperity.<sup>137</sup> Conversely, the lack of wine could be a sign of the wrath of God.<sup>138</sup> Judaic tradition connected wine in a positive way with love, and drunkenness with sexual ecstasy. Many of these connections are drawn through symbolism in wedding ceremonies.<sup>139</sup> There also seem to be some darker connotations to the symbolism of the vine. In the Hebrew Old Testament, the tree of knowledge of good and evil is not a tree at all, but a vine. God allows that Noah should replant it, and its fruit will become the blood of God.<sup>140</sup>

Although the primitive Church, by way of Judaic tradition, seems to have been comfortable with the symbolic connection between wine and love, sexual ecstasy, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it did not take long for the institutionalized Church to

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<sup>136</sup> Larson Miller (1997), 41.

<sup>137</sup> Deut. 6:10-11

<sup>138</sup> Micah 6.15, Amos 4.9, Isaiah 17.6, Joel 1.10, Joel 2.19

<sup>139</sup> For example Psalms 103.15, Song of Songs. One element of this symbolism is a closed wine cask that is carried in the wedding procession, signifying the bride's virginity. This cask is then opened during the ceremony.

<sup>140</sup> "III Baruch," *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. R.H. Charles et. al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 4:15.

react against it. This seems to fit within a general trend of increasing concern with the sacredness of the Church. The clearest example of this reaction is the presence of several commentaries on the book of Genesis and what they have to say about Noah.

According to the Bible, Noah was the first to plant vines and make their fruit into wine. He then proceeded to get drunk and, as a consequence, naked. His son Ham found him and laughed at his nakedness. Within the Bible it is not Noah who is condemned for his actions, but Ham. (Gen. 9:21-23) Christian commentators, however, still felt the need to excuse Noah's behavior, which demonstrates uneasiness with the effects of wine. Early commentators, most notably Origen (c.185 – c.284), pardoned Noah by stating that, as the “inventor” of wine, he was unaware of its potency. In the late fourth century, St. John Chrysostom elaborated on this explanation by agreeing with Origen that Noah's drunkenness was caused by ignorance, not intemperance.<sup>141</sup> Theodoret, a fifth-century exegete, then adds that Noah did not know to mix his wine with water, which was the practice in the classical world.<sup>142</sup>

We can also see later medieval commentators, for example Peter Comestor (c. 1179), struggling to come to terms with the symbolism of the story of Noah.<sup>143</sup> As Hanneke Wilson explains, “Noah was a type of Christ, and allegorically his drunkenness signified the

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<sup>141</sup> St. John Chrysostom, *The Fathers of the Church, Volume 74: St. John Chrysostom Homilies on Genesis*, Trans. Robert C. Hill, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985).

<sup>142</sup> There is considerable debate over how often and in what proportions wine was mixed with water in the Middle Ages. Wilson does an excellent job of discussing the primary sources that mention mixing wine (Wilson 2003, 100-157). However the overall conclusion is quite vague. It seems that there were many different perspectives from different people at different times. Considering that there is a significant amount of contemporary debate, it must have been practiced sometimes, but as some commentators disagree with the practice, the only conclusion I can come to is that there was no unified practice in the medieval world.

<sup>143</sup> Wilson (2003), 8.

Eucharistic joy. Of course this is not an invitation to communicants to get literally drunk, for we are to follow Christ, not Noah.”<sup>144</sup> Parallels are also drawn by medieval exegetes between Noah’s story and the fall from the Garden of Eden, with respect to both the unwise consumption of fruit and the state of nudity.<sup>145</sup> However, God did not forbid Noah to drink wine, providing an ambivalent and confused scriptural message on drinking.<sup>146</sup> Consequently, an allegorical understanding of Noah’s drunkenness became the norm, a second kind of drunkenness that “fills the drinker with virtue and with the spirit.”<sup>147</sup>

By the end of the Classical era, literal drunkenness had moved from being explained away to being a threat to society.<sup>148</sup> This shift expresses the tension that exists between the positive and negative aspects of wine, for it was a necessity in church services, at least for the clergy and sometimes for the laity. Communion taken in wine, by way of its symbolic (and literal)<sup>149</sup> connection with blood, rebirth, and the resurrection of Christ, leads to forgiveness of sin, but wine in its literal capacity leads to sin. Could this ambivalence be part of the

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<sup>144</sup> Wilson (2003), 152. Auerbach gives an excellent analysis of the typological symbolism typical of Medieval literature. Essentially he argues that Medieval writers see a relationship between their own time and biblical stories that dispenses with chronology by finding common meaning. Thus Noah can be intrinsically connected to Christ which can be in turn connected to contemporary practices because they share a necessary common meaning. (Eric Auerbach, "Typological Symbolism in Medieval Literature," *Yale French Studies* 9 (1952): 3-10.)

<sup>145</sup> For example, by Origen in his commentary on Genesis. (Origen, *The Fathers of the Church, Volume 71: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, Trans. Ronald E. Heine, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964))

<sup>146</sup> For example, in the letters of St. Cyprian "He makes mention of the Chalice of the Lord and says 'Your chalice which inebriates, how excellent it is' [Ps. 22.5] But thus the Chalice of the lord inebriated as Noe drinking wine in Genesis also was inebriated...[But it is] not such as the inebriation coming from worldly wine." (St. Cyprian, *The Fathers of the Church, Volume 51: St. Cyprian Letters*, Trans. Sister Rose Bernard Donna, (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1964), 209-210)

<sup>147</sup> Wilson (2003), 14.

<sup>148</sup> "Drunkenness did not particularly bother the primitive civilization that wrote on the story of Noah, but it troubled the Fathers of the Church a great deal." (Wilson 2003, 20-21) Later, Andreas Capellanus in 1185 makes the dangers of wine clear, claiming all women are drunkards. Also, Chaucer's Wife of Bath considers wine to be the cause of adultery. (Unwin 1991, 178)

<sup>149</sup> Although there was some medieval debate, the official stance of the Church was that when the wine was blessed for the sacrament, it physically became the blood of Christ in the process of transubstantiation.

reason why the laity stopped taking communion in wine? Was its disappearance from the liturgy an effort on the part of the clergy to safeguard the laity from a possible avenue of sin? The influence of this symbolic ambivalence will be discussed in Chapter IV below.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Explaining the Absence of the Chalice**

By presenting the problem of the absence of the chalice as not only a religious issue, but also in relation to the social and economic spheres, I have sought an integrated answer. Although I have endeavored to present my conclusions as a synthesis, the nature of the evidence rather has led me to come to several distinct conclusions. While, individually, certain pieces of the puzzle have traditionally been interpreted in strictly religious, economic, or social terms, they all work together with an almost surprising coherency, demonstrating a push-pull factor that both pulled the Church and the laity away from sacramental wine and pushed them towards secular wine and the elevation of the host.

### **Cost**

Beginning with wine as a physical substance and a commodity, the specialization of wine production and the resultant increase in quality and status led to wine of good quality becoming an expensive item. Biblical connections show that the Church had reason to prefer this high quality and expensive wine over wine of lower quality. Perhaps, with the rising cost of high quality wine, smaller churches could not afford, or chose not to provide, wine of good quality for the laity.

The key to the importance of the cost of wine is the change in the offertory. As mentioned above, early orthodox Roman practice included an offertory procession, where the congregation gave offerings of bread and wine, which were then blessed and given back to



the congregation as communion.<sup>150</sup> Because the various qualities and types of wine that must have been brought by the congregation were mixed in a large vessel, the quality of wine cannot have been an issue.<sup>151</sup> However, around the eleventh century, the offertory changed to an offering of money.<sup>152</sup> This was partially because it became obligatory to use specifically created unleavened bread in the Eucharist. The laity could no longer bring the bread they had at home.<sup>153</sup> This practice seems to have originated in monasteries and eventually to have become widespread.<sup>154</sup> The decline of the offertory, like the disappearance of the chalice and the crystallization of the doctrine of transubstantiation, seems to be part of the complex of devotional changes that are generally explained with reference to larger trends within the Church, without significant reference to the secular world. The shift towards the standardized, unleavened host deserves further exploration.

Presumably, with the shift from offerings in bread and wine to the monetary offertory, the donated money paid for the host used in the Eucharist. Why should it not have paid for the wine as well? Indeed, it seems that it did, since in the private mass celebrated by priests, they took communion in wine only.<sup>155</sup> However, the amount of wine required for an individual priest to celebrate a private mass was much less than the amount needed to provide sacramental wine to a congregation of communicants. The cost of providing wine for the congregation must have grown prohibitively high for many churches.

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<sup>150</sup> Klauser (1979), 14.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. 65.

<sup>152</sup> Thompson (1965), 44.

<sup>153</sup> Klauser (1979), 110.

<sup>154</sup> H. Leclercq, "Host," *The Catholic Encyclopedia Online*, Transcribed by Herman F. Holbrook, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07489d.htm> (Accessed February 26, 2008)

<sup>155</sup> Klauser (1979), 104.

It is very difficult to get an accurate idea of the cost of wine. If we look at the Customs of the Guild of Saint-Omer (ca. 1100), we find that the fine for drinking wine at the guild sponsored drinking festival without paying was five shillings, whereas the fine for dishonest dealing in bidding for merchandise resulted in a two shilling fine.<sup>156</sup> The comparatively greater fine for violations involving wine indicates the greater importance and cost of wine. In the cartulary of Pontigny in the year 1234, a certain Renaud Big Nose (*Renaudus Grandis Nasus*) sold one and a half arpents of grape vines to the abbey for 80 livres tournois.<sup>157</sup> In the twelfth century, there is some indication that the price of one measure of wine (exactly how much this measure consists is unclear) cost between 20 and 25 sous.<sup>158</sup> By the early fourteenth century, a laborer might make a maximum of 2 livres (40 sous) per year, whereas a chantry priest might make upwards of 4 livres a year.<sup>159</sup> If the funds available to a smaller church meant that they paid their priests only four livres a year, the cost of 25 sous for a measure of wine would not be a small expenditure. It is understandable that they may have been happy to rid themselves of the expense of purchasing wine for the congregation.

## Status

If we look at the growth in specialization and quality of wine and, concurrently, its growth in status as a luxury item, we can see that the lack of wine can be explained not only by its rising price, but by the growing gap in status between laity and clergy. This gap between the clergy and the laity, as discussed above, was a result of several changes in the

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<sup>156</sup> "Customs of Saint-Omer." (1986), 87-88.

<sup>157</sup> "Cartulaire de l'Abbaye Cistercienne de Pontigny." (1981)

<sup>158</sup> N.S.B. Gras, "The Origin of the National Customs-Revenue of England," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 27: 1 (1912), 138. n. 1. There are 20 sous in one livre.

<sup>159</sup> Hodges (2002).

twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The elaboration of the clerical hierarchy put more distance between the upper echelons of the Church and the laity. The growth of guilds and fraternities in towns and cities provided alternative devotional opportunities for members of the laity. Finally, the practice of private mass, as well as whispering the words of the Eucharist, created distance between the clergy and the laity.

The difference in status between clergy and laity in the thirteenth century was sometimes expressed with reference to wine. Although habitual drunkenness and drinking to excess was frowned upon, the consumption of wine was very much a part of clerical life. The difference between how a clergyman ought to consume wine and how a layman might consume wine is measured both in the quantity of wine a cleric ought to drink and its quality. The legend of Blessed Jordan of Saxony (mid thirteenth century) shows a distinct connection between high quality wine and clerics, as well as between low quality wine and a sinful member of the laity. According to the legend, “a devout French lady” invited Master Jordan to her home. Her disapproving husband decided he would serve soured wine to the unwelcome guest. However, when the servant brought the soured wine to the table, they found it of very high quality, changed by the presence of the holy man.<sup>160</sup> Although this might appear to be primarily a very typical miracle associated with an account written in an hagiographical style, it is important to note the presence of wine. The particular choice of wine, and specifically wine quality, as a device to demonstrate the holiness of Jordan of Saxony speaks to the distinct connection between wine of good quality and clerics of high status.

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<sup>160</sup> “The Legend of the Blessed Jordan of Saxony,” *Lives of the Brethren of the Order of Preacher 1206-1259*, Trans. Placid Conway, O.P. Ed. Bede Jarrett, O.P. (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1955), <http://www.domcentral.org/trad/brethren/breth04.htm> (Accessed January 12, 2008), XXIII.

Evidence from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries also shows reluctance on the part of clerics to serve wine of high quality or of full potency to the laity. In his “Confession,” the Archpoet makes clear his distaste for the wine served by the Church: “Nothing beats a tavern wine – / it renders me more zealous / than the stuff they water down / in your Lordship’s cellars.”<sup>161</sup> The Archpoet’s evidence shows that, when wine was served to the laity, it was watered, indicating an unwillingness on the part of the Church to serve good, unwatered, wine – a luxury, high status item – to the laity.

The Church was unwilling to serve sacramental wine; however, it may have occasionally served unconsecrated wine to wash down the host.<sup>162</sup> This fact might, on the surface, seem to show willingness on the part of the clergy to serve wine to the laity in spite of its cost and status. But, on further investigation, the practice of serving unconsecrated wine shows their reluctance. While we have seen that churches and clerics valued wines of high quality and generally ensured a good supply for themselves, the wine that was served to the laity was not of high quality, nor was it served at its full strength.<sup>163</sup> Consecration creates a close connection between the wine and the Church. Unconsecrated wine, then, is not as closely connected to the Church, so any moral ambivalence concerning the wine that was being administered to the laity would be one step removed from the purity of the ritual. Also, the unconsecrated wine served by the Church was described by the Archpoet as watered. This may suggest that watered wine was chosen to cut cost, or that, since water was often polluted, watered wine was intended to prevent spreading illness. Thus, the Church was

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<sup>161</sup> “The Archpoet’s Confession,” (1986), 13.

<sup>162</sup> Wilson (2003), 157.

<sup>163</sup> It seems likely that the archpoet refers to unconsecrated wine served to wash down the host. As the document comes from the thirteenth century when the chalice had disappeared from the Eucharist, it is highly unlikely that a Bishop would be serving wine in any other fashion.

unwilling to serve wine of high quality or to consecrate that wine for the laity, because they were increasingly removed from the laity in terms of status and sacredness.

### **The Elevation of the Host**

If cost and status can give us some indication of why the chalice disappeared from the Eucharist in the thirteenth century, they certainly do not show the complete picture. Let us return to the central issue connected to the absence of the chalice: why eliminate wine and not bread?

The issue of the host in the twelfth and thirteenth century is closely connected to the issue of the chalice. Whereas the chalice disappears from the Eucharist, the host becomes exponentially more important. The popularity of the host likely stems from the doctrine of transubstantiation declared in the Fourth Lateran Council. According to this doctrine, the host contained the real presence of Christ in the same way that relics contained the real presence of the saint from whom they came. The growing importance of the host manifests itself in several ways. First, the creation of the host became a ritualized procedure. No longer simply bread brought by congregants as an offering, the unleavened host was made by clerics and lay brothers. Strict rituals were observed in its creation, including absolute silence broken only by psalms. Great care was taken so that none of the host would be lost or impiously treated. The practice of having the celebrant place the host into the mouth of the congregant gains prominence in this period.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Leclercq (1910).

Second, also abundant at this time are records of “host miracles,” that is, the host behaving in similar ways to relics. A great many contemporary sources refer to the sacred power of the host, as well as the reverence with which the laity treated it. In his *Dialogue on Visions and Miracles* (c. 1220-1235), Caesarius of Heisterbach records a number of such “host miracles.” Caesarius records the story of a certain Adolph, who saw the host become the Virgin Mary, the Christ child, and lastly the crucified Christ.<sup>165</sup> Other records of host miracles underscore the importance of the sacredness of the Eucharist and the purity of the communicants. For example, Caesarius tells the story of a priest who felt doubt about the principle of transubstantiation. In order to ensure his faith in the real presence of Christ, the priest was then shown, rather than the pure elements of the Eucharist, a hunk of raw flesh in the place of the host. Caesarius related another tale in which a priest who did not swallow the host, but held it in his mouth, was barred from leaving the church. As a final example, he tells the story of a woman, possessed by the devil, who nefariously used the host to fertilize her garden; she was then struck with paralysis. These stories reflect the concern for proper treatment of the elements of the Eucharist. They also appear shortly after the Fourth Lateran Council, where the doctrine of transubstantiation was confirmed. Many of these miracles describe a penalty for disbelief in the real presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist. In this way, they explain and defend the principle of transubstantiation for a lay audience.

### **The Absence of the Chalice**

Some scholars use the prominence of the host outlined above to help explain the absence of the chalice. They argue that, with the increasingly sacred character of the Eucharist, the laity

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<sup>165</sup> Caesarius of Heisterbach, “Miracles of the Eucharist,” *Medieval Popular Religion 1000-1500: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Trans. H. von E. Scott and C.C. Swinton Bland, Ed. John Shinnars, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2007), 104.

needed a *visual* symbol of the physical presence of Christ on which to focus their devotions. This does not seem to be a valid explanation. One need only look to surviving examples of chalices from the Middle Ages to see that there was certainly a significant visual element to them as well.<sup>166</sup>

The elevation of the host and the disappearance of the chalice during the same period cannot be coincidental. However, it seems that the preference for the host over the chalice had more to do with isolation versus contamination than any question of visual importance. While the host was a distinct item, being produced by the Church, specifically sacred in character even before consecration, and used only in the Eucharist, wine was not. Wine only became sacred during the ritual of the Eucharist. Because of this duality of purpose, wine could not be isolated from outside influence in the same way that the host could. Although wine used in the Eucharist may have come from vineyards possessed by the Church, this does not necessarily mean that there was clerical influence in the production of the wine. Vineyards often were obtained by a church or monastery through lay donation. Thus, the vineyard would not necessarily be contiguous or even relatively close to the church or monastery. Also, if we look at the cartulary of Poitigny, we can see that many donations of vineyards were made over time.<sup>167</sup> The result was that a church or monastery was likely to have a great number of disparate tracts of land, each of which may have been a reasonable distance from the church or monastery. It seems improbable that any church or monastery would be able to provide the manpower to tend to such a large and scattered expanse of land

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<sup>166</sup> For example, the Calice du Sacre Tau, dating from the twelfth century, part of the treasure of the Cathedral of Reims. (Fig. 2)

<sup>167</sup> "Cartulaire de l'Abbaye Cistercienne de Pontigny." (1981).



Figure 2: Twelfth Century Calice du Sacre Tau, Cathedral of Reims

Source: Vassil. "Calice du Sacre Tau." Wikimedia Commons. March 15, 2007.  
<[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Calice\\_du\\_sacre\\_Tau.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Calice_du_sacre_Tau.jpg)>.



without depending on tenant farmers.<sup>168</sup> Also, as we saw above, the wine used by the Church may not even have originated from monastic or clerical vineyards.<sup>169</sup> The host, then, could attain the ideal of sacredness, being untouched by the secular world, whereas wine was very much involved with and often a product of secular culture.

### **Preservation of the Sanctity of the Eucharist**

The increased anxiety over the ideal of a perfectly sacred Eucharist in the thirteenth century also reflects a growing divide between ideal and reality. If the Eucharist was being perfectly observed, there would be no need to write about it. The concern for preserving the purity of the Eucharist is well expressed in an account of the riot in the town of Chartres in 1210. Reacting against clerical control of the town, the citizens rose up against the cathedral. The clergy reacted by, among other things, immediately refusing communion to the townspeople “in order to preserve the Eucharist.”<sup>170</sup> Eventually the King (Phillip II Augustus, 1180 – 1223) required the townspeople to make amends (in cash) for the “violation of the cloister.” The great concern for the purity of the Eucharistic elements is re-enforced by Canon 20 of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. This canon required that the Eucharistic elements be kept under lock and key lest someone use them for “impious and blasphemous purposes.”<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Unwin (1991), 148.

<sup>169</sup> See p. 20 above.

<sup>170</sup> “The Cathedral Chapter of Chartres: The Riot of 1210,” *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Ed. Paul Halsall, (Fordham University, October 1998), <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1210chartres.html> (Accessed April 3, 2008).

<sup>171</sup> “The Fourth Lateran Council,” *Medieval Popular Religion 1000-1500: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Trans. H.J. Schroeder, Ed. John Shinnors, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2007), 10.

The Church was very much concerned with preserving the sanctity of the Eucharist by eliminating any connections with irreligious, lay practices. We can see the Church's worry over the piety of the priest who performed the sacrament already in the twelfth century. John Capgrave, in his fifteenth – century work on St. Gilbert of Sempringham (1083 – 1190), discusses the characteristics of a good parish priest. One key element is that a parish priest, like St. Gilbert, ought to instruct his parishioners in good behavior, including, as St. Gilbert taught, engaging in no “insolent drinkings,” so that they might properly receive the sacrament and, ultimately, salvation.<sup>172</sup> By contrast, in the thirteenth century we see Odo of Rigaud complaining about the bad habits of priests in Normandy: “he [the priest of Wanestanville] plays at dice and drinks too much; he frequents taverns...”<sup>173</sup> This evidence shows that wine was not only abused outside the Church, but within it as well. The Church was not impermeable; clerics were just as susceptible to abuse or pollute the sacramental wine as the laity.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of reform energies directed at members of the clergy can be found in the Fourth Lateran Council. Pastoral care was a central focus of the council. In Canon 15, the anxiety over drunkenness receives specific attention:

All clerics shall carefully abstain from drunkenness. Wherefore, let them accommodate the wine to themselves, and themselves to the wine. Nor shall anyone be encouraged to drink, for drunkenness banishes reason and incites to lust. We decree, therefore, that that abuse be absolutely abolished by which in some localities the drinkers bind themselves in their manner to an equal portion of drink and he in their judgment is the hero of the day who outdrinks the others. Should anyone be culpable in this matter, unless he heeds the warning of the

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<sup>172</sup> John Capgrave, “A Model Parish Priest: St. Gilbert of Sempringham,” *The Portable Medieval Reader*, Ed. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 74-75.

<sup>173</sup> Odo of Rigaud, “The Habits of Priests in Normandy,” *The Portable Medieval Reader*, Ed. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 78-79.

superior and makes suitable satisfaction, let him be suspended from his benefice or office.<sup>174</sup>

Clearly, there is concern over the drunkenness and drinking games that had been occurring among the clergy. It is also significant that the canon specifically references wine. In this way, the anxiety over the abuse of alcohol is not only a general concern, but it highlights the dangers associated specifically with wine; namely, the corruption of the Eucharist.

There is a clear desire to set clerics apart from the laity. Canon 16 of the Fourth Lateran Council states that: “Clerics shall not hold secular offices or engage in secular and, above all, dishonest pursuits.”<sup>175</sup> Included in the list of secular activities that clerics must not indulge in is frequenting taverns. Canon 15 specifically prohibits drunkenness (an important part of the life of the laity, as discussed above). Wine and drunkenness, then, fits within the larger separation of the clergy from the laity. Drinking wine and getting drunk are recognized to be elements of the lay world, and thus clerics, who were expected to uphold high moral standards, should remove themselves from these things.

Wine, as we have seen, is an integral part of secular culture, especially town culture. By contrast, sacramental wine – which, under the principle of transubstantiation, has undergone a physical change – is very much associated with the clergy. There is a distinct contrast between the ideal of perfectly sacred wine used in the Eucharist and the profane nature of wine in popular culture. Unlike the case of the host, there is no distinct process of

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<sup>174</sup> “The Fourth Lateran Council.” (2007), 9.

<sup>175</sup> “Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council.” (1991), 219.

procurement or creation that allows the sacramental wine to be separated or insulated from secular wine.

Indeed, from a lay point of view, wine, and activities connected with wine, are often discussed in direct relation to its sacred purpose. A good example of this can be found in the debate between wine and water in the *Carmina Medii Aevi*. Within the same poem, wine is described in terms both of its social role: “Unless you bring wine, dinner will be bitter/ The greedy man and the pauper rejoice little in you/ But the inebriating cup is oh so excellent!”<sup>176</sup> and its religious role: “[wine] of which God said: this is my blood.”<sup>177</sup> In a French drinking song from the early twelfth century we can see a lay connection to the importance of quality wine: “who has good wine should flagon it out/ and thrust the bad where the fungus sprout.”<sup>178</sup> The penultimate line, “I thirst for a sup; come circle the cup,” may even be drawing on imagery associated with communion. The use of the singular cup may indicate a communal drink, while the reference to circling the cup seems an unlikely practice outside of the Christian ritual

Additional evidence for concern over both clerical purity as well as clerical – lay separation comes from the rule of the University of Paris, 1215. Students at the University of Paris trod a thin line between clerical and lay status. Although all students had to be members of the minor orders, they did not engage in clerical practices. University students had a

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<sup>176</sup> “Sine vini traduce cibus fit amarus:/ tuo gaudet poculo pauper et avaris,/ sed calyx inebrians est o quam praeclarus!” ( “*Cum tenerent omnia.*” 1883, 74-76)

<sup>177</sup> “De quo dixit Dominus: hic est sanguis meus.” ( “*Cum tenerent omnia.*” 1883, 68.)

<sup>178</sup> “This song wants drink,” *The Portable Medieval Reader*, Ed. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 509.

reputation for unruliness,<sup>179</sup> and we can see that part of the effort to keep them in line was to forbid drinking during classes or important meetings. “In the *principia* and meetings of the masters and in the responsions or oppositions of the boys and youths there shall be no drinking.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Alvarus Pelagius (1999), 272.

<sup>180</sup> “Rules of the University of Paris,” *The Portable Medieval Reader*, Ed. James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 594-595.

## CONCLUSION

The conflict between ideal and reality, between the sacred and secular nature of wine, comes to violence with various late medieval heretical movements, such as the Hussites in the fifteenth century, and the Reformation in the sixteenth. Protestant Churches made a particular point of giving their members communion in both kinds.<sup>181</sup> The absence of the chalice seems to provide a flashpoint for heretics and Protestants – both groups were looking to define themselves as somehow other than the Roman Catholic Church. It is telling of the concern felt for the absence of the chalice that they chose to focus on the presence of wine in the Eucharist.

In many ways, the absence of the wine in the Eucharist was precipitated by the Church. The growing cost of wine put the provision of large quantities to the congregation beyond the means of smaller churches. Moreover, the growth in the status of the clergy, concurrent with the growth in the status of wine, meant that the clergy were unwilling to share a symbol of their status with the laity. The ambivalent biblical message concerning wine, as well as wine's growing importance in the lay world, also meant that its presence in the ritual jeopardized the sanctity of the Eucharist, which was a particular concern of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The absence of the wine is also explicable from a lay perspective. The Church was not alone in its concern for the sanctity of the Eucharist. The laity, especially those in towns,

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<sup>181</sup> The Catholic Church returned to the practice of offering communion in both kinds only after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican council in 1965.

saw wine as an important part of social culture. Its secular and sacred roles could no longer be separated.

Social, economic, and religious pressures pushed the provision of wine in the Eucharist out of practice. The elevation of the host, a substance that could be isolated from lay pollution and was not an expensive, high status item, pulled the laity towards new devotional practices. This was thanks to both its comparability to relics, which the laity was accustomed to revere, and its purely sacred character. Theologically justified by the principle of concomitance, the absence of the wine did not attract much attention until the fifteenth century. As the status, sanctity, and lay separation of devotional practices came under question, the absence of wine in the Eucharist, which was a function of these issues, became a focal point for reform energies. The fact that as recently as 1961 the Catholic Church still debated the issue of the Chalice indicates its importance.

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