

THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST: A REACTION TO TWELFTH CENTURY HERESY

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THIS essay offers a somewhat novel interpretation of the origin of the major elevation in the Roman liturgy. The question has been gone into rather exhaustively in recent years; several monographs and numerous articles in the reviews¹ have dealt with the history of the rite, and a reexamination might seem superfluous. But it so happens that none of the explanations so far offered by the liturgical historians is particularly convincing. Ingenious as have been some of the reasons proposed for the introduction of the rite, all of them leave pressing questions unanswered. More peculiar still, none of the liturgists who have dealt with the problem has recognized any connection between the elevation and the heresies that flourished contemporary with its introduction into the Mass. That omission, in view of the high importance of the rite as a liturgical phenomenon, would seem to justify a further inquiry into the matter.

The lifting of the host at the moment of consecration in the Roman Mass to such a height that it became visible to the congregation, what we call today the major elevation, seems to have originated either in France or, less probably, in the

¹Cf. Herbert Thurston, S.J., "The Lifting of the Host," "Showing the Host," "Seeing the Host," *The Tablet*, 110 (1907), 604-5, 643-4, 684-6; "The Origin of the Elevation," *The Month*, 148 (1926), 254-8; art. "Elevation," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, V, 380. F. Cabrol, *Dict. de Archéologie Chrétienne et Liturgie*, IV, 2662 ff. E. Magenot, *Dict. de Théologie Catholique*, IV, 2320 ff. Cabrol and Magenot follow Thurston. For another theory cf. Edouard Dumoutet, *Le Désir de Voir l'Hostie* (Paris, Beauchesne, 1926), and Peter Browe, S. J., "Die Elevation in der Messe," in *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, IX, 20 ff. The only complete treatise in English on the subject, T. W. Drury's *Elevation in the Eucharist, its History and Rationale* (Cambridge, 1907), suffers from a number of inaccuracies and is already out of date. It would be too long to cite here all the recognized authors who touch on the subject, but it may be noted that in general all writings after 1907 and before 1926 follow Fr. Thurston. After 1926 they follow Dumoutet with the exception of Eisenhofer in his *Handbook für Katholischen Liturgik* (Freiburg, Herder, 1933), II, 183-5.

Rhineland, early in the twelfth century.² A simple extension of the primitive rite of lifting the host to the breast before the consecration took place, it was to play a singularly important part in shaping the devotional life of the Church in the later Middle Ages. The impetus it gave to Eucharistic worship is felt even today; in its own time its effect was even more profound. In the externals of worship, in the attitude of Christians toward the Blessed Sacrament, it worked a revolution. In the ninth and tenth centuries the moment of consecration in the Mass is not so much as thought of by Western ritualists, nor do we find among the faithful that devotion to the Host which became a characteristic of later ages.³ The Sacrament had been regarded for centuries as an element in the sacrifice; the reservation of the Host as a benefit almost exclusively intended for the dying. Now for the first time a "ceremonial and public fixation" of the moment of consecration focused the attention of the faithful upon the Sacrament, leading on to what was almost a new cultus of the Eucharist, a new fervor in worship that seemed determined to atone in a brief space for the comparative indifference and neglect of earlier times. There was, of course, no question of a new belief in the Real Presence; the evidence for that faith is too clear in the whole Christian tradition, and in the unanimity with which the twelfth century rejected the disbelief of Berengarius.⁴ Novelty lay rather in the realization of what that moment meant to man, and in the departure it marked from ancient liturgical practices.

Indeed, the elevation of the Host may be regarded as a touchstone of the Western liturgical spirit. Since the late fourth

²Cf. Mabillon, *Commentarium Praevium in Ordines Romanos*, Migne, P.L. 78,877, who places the origin in France in the late eleventh century.

³Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1918), p. 9, and in appendix to R. H. Connolly, O.S.B., *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 93, 128-9; cf. also Dr. Pius Parsch, *The Liturgy of the Mass* (tr. F. C. Eckhoff St. Louis, Herder, 1937) p. 235, and André Wilmart, O.S.B., "La tradition littéraire et textuelle de l'Adoro Te Devote," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, I (1929), 31.

⁴B. J. Otten, S.J., *A Manual of the History of Dogmas* (St. Louis, Herder, 1917), II, 310 ff.

century there has existed between East and West a profound difference in attitude toward the Eucharistic sacrifice, the eastern divisions of Christendom emphasizing the awe and reverential fear, amounting almost to dread, they felt appropriate to Divine worship. That attitude, as Mr. Edmund Bishop has pointed out, was not primitive; first propagated by St. John Chrysostom it seems to owe its origin to a peculiarity of the East-Syrian mentality.⁵ Rome and the West in general insisted upon reverence, to be sure, but a reverence tinged with a degree of intimacy that became the sons of God, with rarely if ever a reference in the West to the spirit of fear and awe. The difference was apparent in the mystery surrounding the eastern altar; there a *quasi-disciplina arcani* was maintained in the iconostasis, which, first mentioned sporadically in writers of the fifth and sixth centuries, gradually became a fixed feature of most oriental liturgies, spreading in step with the spirit of devotional fear.⁶ The West early put away the altar veils and jubés (rood-screens) where these had become common and exposed the liturgy to the gaze of all. That divergence of spirit was even more vividly externalized by the elevation.

With that rite there was introduced into what had always been regarded, East and West, as a whole, a single action, the canon or anaphora, a pause, a static moment in a dynamic movement, an element of contemplative adoration in the heart of the active sacrifice.⁷ It was a change made notable in that for centuries the faithful of the West had been used to the silent recital of the canon;⁸ here was an action that spoke more

⁵Bishop, *Lit. Hist.*, pp. 22-6 and 441-2, n; *Narsai*, pp. 10-11, 92 ff.

⁶Bishop, *Narsai*, pp. 88 ff.

⁷Wilmart, *loc. cit.*; also Dumoutet, "Aux origines des saluts du saint-sacrament," *Revue Apologétique*, 52 (1931), 410-1, and Adrian Fortescue, *The Mass, a Study of the Roman Liturgy* (2nd ed. London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1937), pp. 323-8.

⁸With regard to the silent recital Bishop points out that Novella 137 of Justinian [in *Corpus Juris Civilis* (ed. Mommsen; Berlin, Weidmann, 1895), III, 695-9] is meaningless if recital aloud were not the correct practice in the sixth century. (*Narsai*, pp. 121 ff.). Certain decrees of the synods of Sarum (1217) and Worcester (1240) in Mansi, *Amplissima Collectio Conciliorum*, 22, 1119 and 23, 528-9, would seem to indicate the persistence of the audible recital of the canon well on into the thirteenth century in the Sarum rite.

loudly than words its inner meaning. It revolutionized the externals of the Mass; genuflection, hitherto unknown in the western rites where the proper reverence of the priest was the profound bow, was introduced in the thirteenth century, though its practice did not become widespread until the fifteenth.⁹ Bells began to be used to warn the people of the approaching consecration; candles were introduced to mark the solemnity of the moment.¹⁰ Devotion found expression in the feast of *Corpus Domini* (1264), processions of the Blessed Sacrament (1320-5), permanent exposition, known first at Dantzic in 1395, and the benediction service that grew out of it, and, at a later date, Communion outside Mass.¹¹ In brief, the elevation initiated the last great cycle of liturgical development in the Latin Church.

To account for that innovation is the problem. Were it a matter of refinement of dogma we should have a simple task, for its history would have been reflected in the records of theological debate. But it is not a question of belief, but of a manifestation of a faith as old as the Church itself, and of a manifestation that grew seemingly without episcopal direction, for in the earliest notices of the rite it is spoken of as though it were a custom of long standing; only a century later does authority intervene to regulate it. That the theological speculation on the Eucharist which began with the Berengarian heresy late in the eleventh century and continued unabated through the twelfth contributed in some degree to the interest in and devotion to the Host and, consequently, to the elevation can hardly be disputed. What is questionable is the position now generally held by liturgists, that to these disputes and their settlement by ecclesiastical authority, as Thurston and his school holds, or to the disputes and the interest they aroused in the popular mind, as Dumoutet and

⁹Cf. note 47, *infra*.

¹⁰Thurston, "The Bells of the Mass," *The Month*, 123 (1914), 389; Browe, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-3.

¹¹For the later development cf. Dumoutet, *Le Désir*, pp. 54-87, 99-104; and Browe, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-66.

his followers would have it, may be assigned the origin of the major elevation. Those solutions may not be entirely excluded, but a more proximate and more cogent explanation may be found, I believe, in *popular* reaction to the twelfth century heresies.

That a good case can be made for the anti-Albigensian influence as a major factor in the origin and growth of the elevation will be seen in the course of this paper. One wonders, however, why none of the older historians of the Eucharist and the liturgy has taken the Albigensian heresy into consideration as a possible factor in the development of the rite. Even on *a priori* grounds one would have expected that a heresy which denied the Real Presence in a peculiarly vicious manner would have had some influence in determining the growth of a rite designed to emphasize that dogma. The explanation of the puzzle lies in the fact that the liturgical historians have tended in the past to treat their subject as a matter divorced from other influences. Again, the medieval Manicheans have come to be associated almost exclusively in the popular mind with certain very peculiar views on marriage; that their fiercest invective was launched against the Eucharist has been lost sight of. More important, however, is the fact that the man who first explored the history of the elevation with any degree of exhaustiveness, Fr. Herbert Thurston, S.J., seized rather too hastily upon an obscure debate concerning the moment of consecration, a debate not even remotely connected with the Albigensians, as the complete explanation of the origin of the rite. On the other hand, the writer whose views on the subject have displaced Thurston's and are now generally accepted as satisfactory and very nearly definitive, Abbé Edouard Dumoutet, has had his chief success in demonstrating the antiquity of the elevation, and has somewhat too readily assumed that the devotion of the pious faithful was the chief if not the exclusive reason for its introduction. However surprising their omission, it must not be forgotten that to the researches

of these men we owe nearly all our precise knowledge of the elevation and the developments that followed on its introduction during the latter middle ages.

Before going on to a consideration of the Albigensian influence a brief review of the older theories will be in order. Previous to Thurston's publication of a series of articles on the elevation in *The Tablet* for 1907,¹² liturgists had followed the lead of Claude de Vert who, without evidence other than an unverified tradition, assigned the origin of the elevation to the Roman synod that condemned Berengarius in 1079.¹³ De Vert's own theory had supplanted an earlier, uncritical opinion that the rite was definitely primitive; the Berengarian origin was accepted universally for want of a better explanation. Thurston supplied what had been wholly lacking in the past, a well documented hypothesis that recommended itself as eminently reasonable, and his theory was given temporary canonization by its inclusion in the *Dictionnaires* and Encyclopedias of Theology.

Thurston had been impressed by the coincidence between a controversy in the University of Paris during the last quarter of the twelfth century that concerned the precise moment of consecration, and the first synodal decree regarding the elevation which was passed by a diocesan council under Odo, bishop of Paris (1196-1208), the exact date of the council being unknown. He saw in the close relation of the two events in point of time, and the intimate nexus between an elevation that presumed the Real Presence and a theory that denied that Presence at the moment when the elevation of the Host now

¹²To be noted is Thurston's refutation of the suggestion that the elevation was inspired by the Grail legends. Cf. *The Month*, 110 (1907), 617-632, and *Le Désir*, pp. 27-8. It is enough to observe that the elevation clearly antedates the legends by a century, and if any interconnection exists, it is rather the elevation that inspired the legends than the reverse.

¹³Claude de Vert, *Explication des cérémonies de l'Eglise* (Paris, 1713), IV, c. 27, quoted by Thurston, *The Tablet*, 110 (1907), 604; cf. Dr. Ludwig Eisenhofer, op. cit., II, 183. Dumoutet, in *Le Désir*, p. 47, notes that a tradition exists at Vercelli to the effect that the elevation was instituted by the council that condemned Berengarius there in 1050. It would seem apocryphal. The *acta* have been lost. Cf. Mansi, 19,773-5, 779.

takes place, a highly satisfactory explanation not only of the cause, but of the date of origin of the elevation.

Briefly, the controversy centered on the question whether the consecration of the Host took effect immediately, or whether it became efficacious only after the consecration of the chalice was completed. Peter Cantor (†1197) and Peter Comestor (†1178), theologians of the University, held the latter view, contending that the efficacy of the first consecration necessarily waited upon the second when the two took effect *per modum unius*; without the blood the body of Christ could not well be present, so they argued.¹⁴ The great Cantor, now only a footnote within the tomes, was far from denying the meaning of the words of consecration. His was merely a difficulty as to the precise moment when the words took effect, and he seems to have attracted very few partisans.¹⁵ He was answered sufficiently well by William of Auxerre and by Praepositivus, the chancellor of the University in Odo's time, who pointed out that, since there could be no question of the body of Christ being present *per conversionem* after the first consecration, for that was the faith of Christendom, the blood of Christ was necessarily present as well, but *ratione consecutionis* as William put it, since the conversion of the wine had not yet taken place.¹⁶ William, be it noted, did not use the term *transubstantiatio*, in all probability because Comestor himself had invented the word.¹⁷ And though Innocent III expressed some doubt on the matter privately,

¹⁴*Le Désir*, pp. 38-40; *The Tablet*, 110 (1907), 603; Browe, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

¹⁵Caesar of Heisterbach, *Dialogus Miraculorum*, IX, 27 (ed. Strange; Cologne, 1851; II, 185), says, "Magister Petrus Cantor et sequaces ejus," and "multi doctorum contradicere videntur in suis scriptis." Dumoutet suggests Maurice de Sully and perhaps Robert de Courçon, *Le Désir*, p. 41.

¹⁶Praepositivus became chancellor of Notre Dame in 1206. He argued that since the soul of Christ is present in the body by reason of the first consecration, so also the blood. Anselm had long since explained the doctrine of concomitance. Cf. P.L. 159,255, and Otten, *op. cit.*, II, 314. For Praepositivus and William see *Le Désir*, pp. 52-3.

¹⁷*Conversio* is the older term for *transubstantiation*. Otten, *op. cit.*, II, 317, assigns the latter word to Comestor, though Mabillon saw no difficulty in attributing it to Hildebert of Lavardin (†1133), P.L. 171:776.

Bonaventure and Thomas half a century later could consider the question closed.¹⁸ Indeed, it died with Cantor.

Now Thurston professed to find Odo's practical answer to the theories of Cantor in a canon of the synod of Paris referred to above. Mansi gives it as follows:¹⁹

Praecipitur presbyteris ut cum in canone Missae incoeperint, *Qui pridie*, tenentes hostiam, ne elevent eam statim nimis alte, ita quod possit ab omnibus videri a populo, sed quasi ante pectus detineant, donec dixerint: Hoc est corpus meum (Matt. 26): et tunc elevent eam, ut possit ab omnibus videri. . . .

According to Thurston, the elevation began with this decree; in his controversy with Dumoutet he questioned somewhat arbitrarily the evidence for an elevation antedating Odo's synod.²⁰ This much must be granted him, that in Odo's decree we have the first mention of a major elevation *after* consecration. But that there was no major elevation of the Host *before and during* consecration antedating the Paris synod by nearly a century can hardly be conceded in the light of Dumoutet's investigation. For one thing, Cantor's theory had no popular support, which is precisely the objection Thurston brought against the Berengarian origin of the rite.²¹ Hence an elevation can scarcely be considered an apposite reply to Cantor's objection, particularly since the controversy had already received its quietus in the lecture halls to which it had been confined. What is more convincing still, the wording itself of the decree stands against Thurston: the phrase *ne elevent eam statim nimis alte* is meaningless, as Dumoutet has pointed out, save in the hypothesis that a custom of elevating the Host

¹⁸Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio*, P.L. 217: 868-9; Bonaventura, *In lib. IV Sent.*, dist. 9, pt. 1, q. 4, *ad* 4; Aquinas, *Summa Theol.* III, 78, 6; III, 76, 2, *ad* 3. The matter was defined by the Council of Trent, Session 13, *cap.* 3. cf. Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (ed. 14, Freiburg, Herder, 1922), p. 286, n. 876; Otten, *op. cit.*, II, 474.

¹⁹Mansi, 22,682, n. 28. Thurston assigns the council to 1197, the year of Cantor's death, but without evidence. cf. *The Month*, 123 (1914), 392.

²⁰Cf. *The Month*, 148 (1926), 257.

²¹*The Tablet*, 110 (1907), 603.

to full view prior to the consecration was already widespread in the Paris diocese.²²

Dumoutet's interpretation of the decree recommends itself as eminently reasonable. If we follow him in accepting a major elevation already well established in France before the end of the twelfth century, then the reason for Odo's regulation becomes apparent and the phrase *ne elevent* falls into place. Such an elevation exposed the faithful to the danger of idolatry, for those at a distance from the altar were unable to tell at what moment the consecration had taken place, and hence could well be worshipping an unconsecrated wafer. We shall see in the course of this paper that Paris had good reason to fear precisely such idolatry at the turn of the century. And later synods, such as that of London (1215) and Freising (1337), in adopting the Paris regulation, give that danger as the motive for their action.²³

That a major elevation, preceding and continuing through the consecration of the Host, existed from the early years of the twelfth century must be considered proven by the evidence Dumoutet has marshaled from the missals, councils, and miracle stories of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Scholars such as Browe and Wilmart consider his demonstration unassailable.²⁴ One of the earliest of these stories is found in the treatise *De Pignoribus Sanctorum* by Guibert de Nogent, who died in 1124, and concerns a boy's vision of the Christ Child in the Host:

Cumque tempus Eucharistiae conficiendae accideret et puerulus omnium inscius sub praesentia matris a tergo sacerdotis consisteret . . . vidit in medio altaris dum res divina geritur infantulum omni specie pulchriorem inter manus sacerdotis erigi. . . . Post paululum autem cum post elevationem demitteret sacramentum operiret sindone, rursus inclamitat: ecce, ait, albo panno involvit eum. . . .²⁵

²²*Revue Apologétique*, 43 (1926), 37-8; and *idem*, 52 (1931), 409-410 for an excellent summary of his position.

²³Browe, *Jahrbuch*, pp. 26 & 28, nn. 30 & 54.

²⁴Browe, p. 24; Wilmart, *Recherches*, I (1929), 30-1; Pierre Batiffol, *Leçons sur la Messe* (Paris, Lecoffre, 1927), p. xxviii.

²⁵P.L. 156:616, quoted by Dumoutet, *Le Désir*, p. 46.

It is a charming tale. The boy stood behind the priest and beside his mother in the body of the church; his cries of surprise drew the attention of all. But what interests us is the double reference to an elevation which Guibert gives without any intimation of unfamiliarity with the rite. The context points to a major elevation taking place during the consecration; it would be difficult to draw another meaning from the words *tempus Eucharistiae conficiendae* and *dum res divina geritur*.

That story is a common one of the period. A similar event is said to have taken place at Braine in 1153, when a Jew beheld an infant in place of the Host at the moment of elevation.²⁶ Browe cites a still earlier reference from the life of St. Elphegus, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1012; he had become so emaciated through fasting that light shone through the palms of his hands when he lifted them on high with the Host, *cum manus cum sacramento tensas in altum porrigeret*.²⁷ The passage can hardly refer to the minor elevation at the end of the canon, which is of great antiquity, dating from the sixth century *Ordo Romanus I*.²⁸ It is true that the lifting of the Host at the end of the canon did grow into a major elevation in later times, but not until the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when we find a number of elevations practiced in certain dioceses of France, at the *omnis honor*, the *Pater*, and the *Agnus Dei*, some of these rites lasting on into the early eighteenth century at Lyons, Vienne, and Nevers; all of them were extensions of the primitive minor elevation, and were seemingly inspired by the major elevation at consecration.²⁹

There is a less striking reference to an elevation in the history of St. Elizabeth of Schönau (†1155) which has so far gone unnoticed:

²⁶*Le Désir*, p. 47, from J. Corblet, *Histoire . . . du Sacrement de l'Eucharistie* (Paris, 1883), I, 468; cf. Caesar's *Dialogus*, IX, 2 (ed. Strange, II, 168).

²⁷P.L. 149,378; in Browe, p. 22.

²⁸P.L. 78,945, repeated in O.R. II and III, *ibid.*, cols. 974 and 981.

²⁹J. Wickham Legg, *Tracts on the Mass* (Henry Bradshaw Society, 27; London, 1904), pp. 241-3, 263-4, and Browe, pp. 61-3. Legg concludes, quite unjustifiably, that the Host was shown to the people at the end of the canon from the sixth century on.

Et dum sacerdos canonem diceret, et calicem in conspectu Dei exaltaret, vidi supra calicem Dominum Jesum, quasi in cruce pendentem, et de latere ejus et pedibus sanguis in calicem defluere videbatur.³⁰

The tense of the dependent clause excludes the possibility that Elizabeth was speaking of the minor elevation at the end of the canon. The fact that a major elevation of the chalice did not become widespread until the end of the fifteenth century might seem to rob this passage of its evidential value. Still, *calicem in conspectu Dei exaltaret* would suggest a major elevation, and rubrical freedom being what it was, the incident cannot be called improbable. Moreover, Hildebert of Tours (†1133), describing the consecration in his *Carmen de officio Missae*, says of the priest *Altior et quiddam maius uterque gerat*.³¹ And the twelfth century *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiae* gives this rubric for the consecration: *sacerdos tollit alte utrumque*, referring to Host and chalice.³²

Two other stories are worth recounting, both from the twelfth century, and both implying a major elevation before and during consecration. In the life of St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln (†1200), there is the record of a miracle in which the Infant appeared to an English cleric at Mass, *cum ad eum locum pervenisset ubi elevatam in altum hostiam benedicere moris est in Christi Corpus sanctificatione mystica convertendam*.³³ The words clearly indicate that consecration of an elevated Host visible to the congregation was established as a custom at the time the life was written. In the *Dialogus Miraculorum* of Caesar of Heisterbach it is a nun, Richmude, to whom the vision appears. She was standing behind the priest when she saw the Host glowing with light as though it was a

³⁰P.L. 125,147.

³¹P.L. 171,1186.

³²P.L., 177,370. Hugh died in 1142. Mabillon ascribes the work to Robert Pullus (†1184). The chalice elevation was, in general, introduced much later for reasons of congruity; earlier chalices by their very shape forbade the lifting, cf. Browe, *Jahrbuch*, p. 29 ff. It is first mentioned in *Ord. Rom.*, XIV, of the fourteenth century, but omitted in O.R. XXV; P.L. 78,1166, 1188-9, and 1295, 1362.

³³*Magna Vita Hugonis ep. Lincolnensis*, V. 3, in *Rerum Brit. medii aevi script.*, 37 (London, 1854), 236; in *Le Désir*, p. 42.

crystal shot through with light from the sun. Caesar's comment on the event bears out Dumoutet in a striking manner: *nec impediabant pollices sacerdotis quibus hostiam tenebat. . . . Necdum tamen factam ibi fuisse transsubstantiationem puto.*³⁴ The passage hardly needs comment. It was *in elevatione* that the Host was seen, an elevation which left Caesar in doubt as to whether the consecration had yet taken place when the miracle appeared, and one that in all probability began at the *Qui pridie*. Elsewhere he attests that the elevation visible to the people was a custom of the Church, rejecting Cantor's theory on the grounds that it was not only absurd but opposed to this custom.³⁵ He tells us too that Cardinal Guido, legate to Cologne in 1201 or 1202, instituted for the people of that city the custom of kneeling *ad elevationem hostiae*, but whether at an elevation preceding or following consecration he does not say.³⁶ He seems to be wholly unacquainted with the Paris reform. Caesar died in 1223.

But it is not merely from such records that proof may be drawn to bolster Dumoutet's position. The spread of the Paris rite was slow; various synods were still initiating it well on into the fifteenth century.³⁷ What is notable is that all of them take an already existing elevation for granted, while many of them are at pains to forbid the old rite of lifting before the consecration lest the people fall into idolatry. Three of them, strangely enough, those of Salisbury (1217), Oxford (1222), and Worcester (1240), while decreeing genuflection for the faithful, or the ringing of bells at the elevation, do not specify whether that rite should take place before or after consecration.³⁸ The Oxford decree rather seems to point di-

³⁴Caesar, *op. cit.*, IX, 27 (II, 189). Caesar was personally acquainted with Richmude as appears from the following chapter.

³⁵Browe, p. 24, n. 19.

³⁶Dialogus, IX, 51 (II, 206): *Praecipuit enim ut ad elevationem hostiae omnis populus in ecclesia ad sonitum nolae veniam peteret, sicque usque ad calicis benedictionem prostratus jaceret*. Other early references to the elevation may be found in Honorius of Autun (†1136), *Sacramentarium*, P.L. 172,793; Stephen of Autun (†1140), *Tractatus de Sacramento Altaris*, P.L. 172,1292; Radulphus Ardens (†1100), *Homilia*, P.L. 155,1836; Hugo. abp. of Rouen (†1164), *Contra Haereticos*, P.L. 192,1276.

³⁷Browe, pp. 24, 26; *Le Désir*, p. 37.

³⁸Mansi, 22,1119, 22,1176, 23,528.

rectly to the major elevation during consecration as an approved rite, an approval that would be especially odd were the original Paris decree directed against Cantor, for the Archbishop of Canterbury under whose presidency that synod met was Stephen Langton, theologian of the University of Paris in Odo's time, and an avowed opponent of Cantor's theory.³⁹ Honorius III, writing to the Irish bishops in 1219 with regard to the elevation, shows the same indifference to the question whether it should precede or follow consecration.⁴⁰ The conclusion is unescapable that a major elevation antedated the Paris reform by many years.

The missals of the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries offer an interesting confirmation of Dumoutet's thesis. Many of them contain the rubric of the pre-consecration elevation only. So in a German missal of the thirteenth century we find: *bic cape hostiam . . . et quantum potes eleva dicens . . . Accipite.*⁴¹ A Reims missal of the early fourteenth century has *Hic accipit hostiam. Qui pridie . . . dedit discipulis suis dicens. Hic elevat. Accipite et manducate. . . .*⁴² Rubrication is, of course, rare in all twelfth century liturgical books; the fashion had not yet begun. Its absence in the present instance does not, however, stand against the case for a twelfth century major elevation, for, as Bishop has pointed out, rites were already long established in the middle ages before they found their way into the missals and manuals.⁴³ And the temper of that time was adventurous. It was a period of great freedom from rubrical exactness that would not end until the application of the Pian missal of 1570 to the Western Church in 1606.⁴⁴ Perhaps nothing illustrates the attitude of the clerics of that time better

³⁹According to Caesar, quoted by Browe, *Jahrbuch*, p. 24, n. 19.

⁴⁰Browe, p. 26.

⁴¹From Gerbert, *Vetus Liturgia Alemannica* (Saint-Blaise, 1776), I, 362, in *Le Désir*, p. 44.

⁴²V. Leroquais, *Les Sacramentaires et les Missels Manuscrits* (Paris, 1924), II, 241; also I, 315, and II, 70, 71, 129, 156, 202, 224; and Dr. Adalbert Ebner, *Quellen und Forschungen, Iter Italicum* (Freiburg, Herder, 1896), pp. 315-350 *passim*.

⁴³*Liturgica Historica*, p. 241.

⁴⁴Magenot, *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, IV, 2324; cf. Legg, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

than a little known letter of Abelard to Saint Bernard in which he protests against the saint's adherence to custom. To support his point he quotes a letter of Gregory I to Augustine whom Gregory had sent into England. Augustine, says Gregory, is not to consider himself bound by Roman practice, but is to feel free to adopt from other rites whatever he deems fitting.

Novit, inquit, fraternitas tua Romanae Ecclesiae consuetudinem, in qua se meminit nutritam, sed mihi placet sive in Romana, sive in Gallicana, seu in qualibet Ecclesia aliquid invenisti, quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere, sollicitè eligas, et in Anglorum Ecclesiam, quae adhuc fide nova est, institutione praecipua, quae de multis Ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas. Non enim pro locis res, sed pro bonis rebus loca emendas. Ex singulis ergo quibusque Ecclesiis, quae pia, quae religiosa, quae recta elige, et haec quasi in fasciculum collecta apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem deponere.⁴⁵

Abelard was not the only one to know of Gregory's letter. An attitude such as his toward established usage, the variation in the ordinals and sacramentaries of the greater churches and their absence in the poor country parishes combined to foster freedom and the growth of local custom. Rome was concerned only with keeping the liturgy free from heresy, as in her examination of the Mozarabic rite in the ninth century.⁴⁶ Where unity lay was in the canon of the Mass, and notably in the consecratory prayers which are, with slight variations, entirely scriptural. And the words of those prayers, *Qui pridie . . . accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas . . . benedixit, fregit*, themselves make necessary an imitative rite that cannot but be of primary antiquity. What the rubrics fail to give us is the precise height to which the Host

⁴⁵Abelard's letter, P.L. 178,338-9, Gregory's, P.L. 77,1187. To what extent that freedom was carried may be seen in the late medieval practice of an imitative rite at *fregit* preceding the consecration; Legg, *Tracts*, pp. 244, 259-261, and Archdale King, *Notes on the Catholic Liturgies* (London, Longmans, 1930), p. 83; also in the double elevation prescribed by a fifteenth century missal of Rennes at the *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas*, Leroquais, *op. cit.*, III, 69.

⁴⁶King, *op. cit.*, pp. 260-3.

was carried before the major elevation was introduced. Since the priest consecrated while standing erect and made his reverence afterwards with a profound bow, the genuflections in the Mass not coming into widespread use until the fifteenth century,⁴⁷ the Host in the ancient rite must have been held shoulder high.⁴⁸ From that position it was but a step to the showing of the Host, which was, as Cabrol has pointed out, merely an extension of the imitative rite.⁴⁹

It remains to consider the motive that brought about this extension of the ancient rite into the major elevation. As we have noted, Dumoutet assigns popular interest, aroused by theological controversy, as the reason for the introduction of the rite. But the evidence he can bring to justify his position is almost wholly inferential. Popular interest existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as he has demonstrated, and he justly infers that it existed as well in the twelfth. To explain that interest, however, he must postulate an awareness on the part of the people of the issues involved in the university debates, a point that really calls for demonstration. At the same time he excludes the possibility that the ecclesiastical authorities might have had a reason for encouraging the elevation other than that furnished by the discussion in the schools, a reason such as was offered by the Albigensians.

It is only when we come to examine that onslaught in contemporary records that we realize how deeply it must have moved the popular mind, what concern it must have aroused among ecclesiastics, and how much greater must have been the part it played in the origin of the elevation than the debates in the lecture halls of Paris or the more remote heresy of Berengarius. Not only was it an attack on the foundations

⁴⁷Batiffol, p. 246; King, p. 45; Legg, p. 254. According to King, p. 67, the Carthusians still retain the bow. So also *Ordo Romanus* XIV, P.L. 78,1166, and an ordinary of Constance (1557) in Legg, p. 62.

⁴⁸Cf. a late fifteenth century Charterhouse ordinary, an *Indutus Planeta* of 1507, and a thirteenth century Sarum ordinary in Legg, pp. 101, 182-3, and 223; also various rubrics directing the priest to lift the host, but not to bow, as in the following, from a fourteenth century Franciscan missal: *Levat eam dicendo Qui pridie, et teneat eam usque Simili modo*, Leroquais, *op. cit.*, II, 224.

⁴⁹Cabrol, *op. cit.*, IV, 2667.

of society and of the state, it was also an utter denial of the entire ecclesiastical and sacramental order. Even the less extreme among the rebels shared with the more violent an anti-sacerdotal and anti-Eucharistic creed.⁵⁰ At the risk of some tedium I should like to emphasize the gravity of the problem they presented, for the utter disappearance of the heresy, and the almost complete destruction of what documents it produced, make it difficult for the modern man to appreciate fully the meaning of that movement to its contemporaries. Caesar's opinion is grave enough, and he was in a position to judge: *si non fuit gladius fidelium repressus, puto quod totam Europam corrupisset*,⁵¹ an opinion in which Lea, the rather inaccurate historian of the Inquisition, concurs.⁵²

What is needed is a projection of the historical imagination, a sense of the impact of the Albigensian movement (I use the term in its widest sense, to embrace not only the Albigensians or Cathari properly known under half a hundred names, Bugomiles, Tisserantes, Patarini, but the Waldenses and Henricians as well)⁵³ upon the Europe of its time. One might safely compare its extent in the latter half of the twelfth century with that of the Protestant movement in the mid-sixteenth. Its incidence was as broad; it had had two centuries in which to grow and mature,⁵⁴ it was occult, and so escaped persecution, conforming externally to Catholic practice and having to bear only the sporadic rioting of outraged burghers;⁵⁵

⁵⁰Cf. e.g., Bonacursus, *Vita Haereticorum*, P.L. 204,775-792 and Jean Guiraud, "The Religious Crisis in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *European Civilization* (ed. Edward Eyre; London, Oxford Press, 1935), III, 360.

⁵¹*Dialogus*, V, 21 (I, 301).

⁵²Quoted by Christopher Hollis, "Religious Persecution," *European Civilization*, IV, 674.

⁵³A. S. Turberville, "Heresies and The Inquisition in the Middle Ages," *Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1929), VI, 702-4; C. J. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris, 1913), V, 1262, 1272-6, the latter an excellent summary of the sect's history; F. Vernet, art. "Albigois" in *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, I, 677; also the list in the Third Lateran, Mansi, 22,232.

⁵⁴Turberville, *op. cit.*, VI, 701-2; Hollis, *op. cit.*, IV, 675; Guiraud, *op. cit.*, III, 360-3, 366-8.

⁵⁵On occultism see Eckbert of Schönau, *Sermones adversus Catharos*, P.L. 195:15, 84-5, 90, and Bernard, ep. 261, P.L. 182,434; Turberville, *op. cit.*, VI, 715-6 on beginning of persecution.

it enjoyed the patronage of the lesser nobility who saw advantage to themselves in its condemnation of the ecclesiastical ownership of property.⁵⁶ Its adherents were to be met with over all the Christian West, but especially in Lombardy, the valley of the Rhine, and the south of France. It had a strong hierarchical organization, men whose austerity contrasted favorably with that of the Catholic clergy; it had schools for the young nobility in expropriated monastic establishments. Indeed, whole monasteries had gone over to its tenets, and eminent churchmen were found who were tainted with its doctrine. In Milan and Florence they outnumbered the Christians at the end of the twelfth century, and in the county of Toulouse most of the noble families belonged to the cult. It had so far consolidated its position in those districts from the time its presence was first noted in the West (1017) that it was able to convoke an international council at Toulouse, in 1167, without molestation.⁵⁷ It differed in this from the sixteenth century movement, apart from its divergence in doctrine, that it met not a Peace of Westphalia but the catastrophe of Muret, when Simon de Montfort fell on the host which Peter of Aragon was leading to the relief of Toulouse in 1213 and utterly destroyed it.

Everywhere its attack was directed against the churches, the Mass, the Eucharist, the priesthood. If Christ was an apparition in the neo-Manichean creed,⁵⁸ much more was the Eucharist a sham and a deceit. Radulphus Ardens, who died in 1100, knew their attitude when he wrote *Haeretici Manichaei . . . sacramentum vero altaris purum panem esse dicunt*.⁵⁹ According to Eckbert of Schönau, a convert Catharist, told Count Arnold, Archbishop of Cologne, *omnia quae creditis,*

⁵⁶Turberville, VI, 712-4; Hefele, V, 1271; and Celestine's letter to the Count of Toulouse on church property, P.L. 206,1155.

⁵⁷Turberville, VI, 704.

⁵⁸Mansi, 22,809; Guiraud, *European Civilization*, III, 356; Vernet, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹*Sermo in Dom. 8 post Trin.*, P.L. 155,2011.

*omnia quae agitis in Ecclesia, illi falsa et inania esse judicant.*⁶⁰ And Alan of the Islands protests, *non tamen est ibi praestigium vel deceptio: hoc enim non fit ad decipiendum sed in sacramentum.*⁶¹ The attack was a bitter one. According to de Ghellinck what are now the stock objections against the Eucharist were first proposed by the Albigensians. So Peter of Vallium Cernarii writes, *Sacrosancti corporis Christi hostiam a pane laico non differre publice dogmatizarent, simplicium auribus hanc instillantes blasphemiam, quod Christi corpus, etsi magnitudinem Alpium in se contineret, jamdudum consumptum a comedentibus et annihilatum fuisset.*⁶²

They did not, however, confine themselves to theoretical denial. They were accused of desecrating the Host in secret, and of receiving the Christian Communion hypocritically. Moreover, the Cathari had in their *benedictio panis* a ceremony that to pious Christians was a travesty of the Mass and of Viaticum. There is something peculiarly revolting in their doctrine as Eckbert describes it:

Corpus Domini et sanguinem nullo modo nostra consecratione fieri, aut a nobis per communicationem percipi posse credunt; se autem solos in mensis suis corpus Domini facere dicunt. Sed in verbis illis dolum habent; non enim verum illud corpus Christi significant, quod de Virgine natum fuisse credimus, et quod passum est in cruce; sed sui ipsius carnem corpus Domini vocant, et in eo quod sua corpora nutriunt cibus mensae suae, corpus Domini se facere dicunt . . . sapientiam vestram audivi: Corpus vestrum Domini est, et corpus Domini facitis quando panem vestrum benedicitis, atque ex eo corpus vestrum reficitis.⁶³

Holding as they did that personal sanctity conferred the full powers of the priesthood, they claimed for their followers the ability to consecrate as well as to confirm, preach, and ordain. In this the Waldenses were at one with the Cathari. "They

⁶⁰P.L. 195,84, 92-3; and Alan de Insulis, *Contra Haereticos Libri Quatuor*, P.L. 210,359-365, for a similar indictment.

⁶¹*Theologicae Regulae*, P.L. 210,678-9; also Caesar, *Dialogus*, V, 21 (I, 302-3).

⁶²*Historia Albigensium*, P.L. 213,546-7. So Eckbert, P.L. 195,92.

⁶³P.L. 195,15; cf. Vernet, I, 680; Guiraud, III, 364-5; Hefele, V, 1269.

persuade themselves," says St. Bernard, "that they have the power to consecrate daily at their tables the body and blood of Christ."⁶⁴ And as a result they visited upon the Eucharist the vituperation common enough at a later date. In the Dialogs of Caesar occurs this significant passage: *Novicus: Quid est quod haeretici hoc sacramentum tam vehementer persequuntur? Monachus: Quia fideles illud ante omnia venerantur, idcirco haeretici idem sacramentum illis in odium maxime execrantur.*⁶⁵

To what extent the common people were aroused by this vicious anti-sacramentalism is difficult to judge. Only this is certain, that on no point of Catholic doctrine will popular fervor concentrate when once its implications have been appreciated as on the Eucharist, a fact sufficiently attested by the unbounded devotion of the late middle ages to the Host. In the growing antagonism toward the Albigensians at the end of the twelfth century the indictment bore no less upon the sacramental implications of their doctrine than upon the social consequences of their abandonment of marriage. While modern historians have emphasized the latter aspects of the problem, the apologists, the synods of the time, and the third (1179) and fourth (1215) of the Lateran councils manifest even more concern for the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist.⁶⁶ It is clear that the authorities recognized the vital danger to the faith that lay in the denial of the Real Presence.

Now it would not be difficult to make a case for the origin and growth of the elevation as an instrument of reaction against heresy on *a priori* grounds. The illation is clear. In the Church reaction always takes the form of emphasizing and throwing in bolder relief the doctrine attacked. What better way of arousing popular devotion to the Host, of shouting its inner meaning for the world to hear, and of answering the accusations of mummery and occultism, than by extending the primitive rite of the *Qui pridie* and allowing

⁶⁴Sermon 65, P.L. 183,1090-3. On the Waldenses see Guiraud, III, 365-6.

⁶⁵*Op. cit.*, IX, 52 (II, 207), and V, 21 (I, 302-3).

⁶⁶Hefele, *op. cit.*, V, 1270 ff.

the faithful to view the consecration *in fieri*. But fortunately we need not rely on deduction alone. Two at least of the apologists who wrote defending the sacraments against the heretics recognize the connection between the Manichaeian denial and the elevation.

Eckbert of Schönau, one of the leading antagonists of the Cathari, concludes his exposition of the Eucharist with the story of the famous miracle of Gregory the great, an *exemplum* that was certainly not lost sight of in the middle ages. He drives home the connection between sixth and twelfth century Manichaeism, leaving no room to doubt that he believed the very sight of the Host a compelling refutation of heresy.

Legitur quod accidit aliquando ut haec infidelitas de corpore Christi qua vos irretiti estis, etiam in populo Romano increvisset, et magnam partem civitatis occupasset tempore Gregorii papae, qui cum oraret pro infidelitate populi et inter missarum solemnias secundum consuetudinem obtulisset super altare Dei panem et vinum, et solitas benedictiones fecisset, hoc precibus a Deo obtinuit, ut appareret ibi caro Dominica sicuti erat, et ostenderetur his qui aderant in specie carnis, quae prius illic fuerat in specie panis, sicque liberatus est populus ab infidelitate hac.⁶⁷

Gregory's miracle, a favorite theme of medieval illuminators, took place not during the canon, but after communion, and in answer to the incredulity of a rather silly Roman matron. In the two accounts we have of the incident, in the *vitae* by the deacons Paul and John, there is no mention of Manichaeian influence, as Eckbert supposes.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, the passage is valuable for it illustrates Eckbert's opinion that the showing of the Host was a sovereign remedy against the denial of the Real Presence. Caesar of Heisterbach was of the same opinion. For him the Host was the only efficacious means of confounding the claims of certain of the Cathari to miraculous powers. He tells of how a priest caused a number of those heretics who were demonstrating their ability to walk on water to sink by

⁶⁷P.L., 195,93-4.

⁶⁸P.L., 75,52-3 and 103.

dipping the Host in the river where the event took place.⁶⁹ Peter the Venerable, in his *Tractatus contra Petrobrusianos*, states that the sight of the Host is an effective aid in recalling the passion and death of Christ.⁷⁰

Even more striking is a passage in the *Contra Haereticos Libri quatuor* of Alan of the Islands. He flatly asserts that the miraculous manifestations at the elevation to which we have already referred were a Divine answer to the heresies, and were understood as such by contemporaries. *In horum haereticorum confusionem, in pluribus ecclesijs celebratur miraculum, quo in hostia species carnis visa est. Longum etiam esset referre miracula, quae propter infirmitatem quorundam fiunt circa eucharistiam.*⁷¹ Alan was in a position to judge, for his life, ending in 1203, covered the whole span of the twelfth century.

We should perhaps prefer stronger testimony. Yet what we have, especially the passages from Eckbert and Alan, is eminently suasive. And it is to be noted that no contemporary attributes the elevation to the piety of the faithful or to interest aroused by discussion in the schools. We are left to infer that the elevation was inspired by the miracles that occurred at the consecration, miracles which came in answer to Manichaean disbelief, and that it was propagated to refute that heresy in other localities.

One other point of some importance has been neglected by the historians of the elevation. The synod of Paris which passed the first decree regulating the rite was but one of a series of councils, beginning with that of Reims in 1049 and including the third and fourth ecumenical councils of the Lateran, called to deal with the Albigensian threat.⁷² They were concerned almost exclusively with the sacraments, and particularly with the Eucharist and all that pertained to it, Mass, the care of churches and altars, the safeguarding of the reserved Host against profanation, and the abuses that brought

⁶⁹*Dialogus*, IX, 52 (II, 207).

⁷⁰P.L. 189,812.

⁷¹P.L. 210,365.

⁷²Cf. lists in de Ghellinck, *Dict. de Théol. Cath.*, V, 1243; Tuberville, *CMH*, VI, 701-2, 715-6; and Hefele, V, 1275 ff.

the priesthood into contempt. The schema of one synod is copied almost in its entirety by another in some instances.⁷³ The point may not be over-emphasized, for we have no evidence to show that the synod of Paris necessarily considered its regulation of the elevation a measure against Manichaeism, and de Ghellinck, while recognizing the place Paris held among the anti-Albigensian councils, considers the elevation decree an exception to the general trend of the synodal measures.⁷⁴ His opinion, however, is unsupported by evidence, and would seem to arise from his acceptance of Thurston's theory.

It is much harder to explain that decree as a liturgical foible than as the regulation of a rite whose value as a counter-irritant to infidelity could not fail to be appreciated, but which, in its earlier form was open to the danger of idolatry. Our liturgists have overlooked the fact that in the Paris of that day more than sufficient reason existed not only for the regulation but the preservation of the lifted Host. There Amaury de Bene (†1204), theologian of the University, was teaching a form of pantheism that ended in a denial of the efficacy of consecration, holding that Christ was no more present in the Host than in all other bread.⁷⁵ In 1210, the year that the council of Sens, meeting in Paris, condemned Amaury's doctrine, a group of heretics were burnt in the capital for holding that Christ was present in the Host before consecration, possibly a variant form of Amaury's teaching, but typical Catharist doctrine.⁷⁶ In 1201 the Chevalier d'Evrau was handed over to the secular arm for Bulgarism, a common name for Albigensianism, by a council of Paris, possibly the same that regulated the elevation.⁷⁷ And in 1198 or 1199 Innocent III was writing to Odo instructing him to incarcerate Raynald, abbot of St. Martin of Nevers, who had been convicted, to-

⁷³Hefele, V, 1178, 1219, 1223.

⁷⁴*Loc. cit.*

⁷⁵de Ghellinck, *op. cit.*, V, 1241; Hefele, V, 1303-4.

⁷⁶Mansi, 22,809.

⁷⁷Mansi, 22,740; Hefele, V, 1229.

gether with the dean of Nevers, of heresy (Manicheism), adultery, and usury.⁷⁸ Assuredly the Paris of that day was not a safe ground for liturgical experimentation. But, knowing the twelfth century genesis of the elevation, we can appreciate the crying need for regulation the Paris authorities must have felt at that time. Indeed, if they did not recognize the value of the elevation as an answer to the spreading Manicheism it is difficult to see why they did not abolish the rite as a dangerous innovation, instead of regulating and preserving it.

In fine, then, in the congeries of influences that worked to establish the major elevation, theological speculation, liturgical freedom, the consecration miracles, and the reaction to heresy, the latter two closely connected in the minds of twelfth century men, we may safely conclude that reaction played the major role. Any other explanation limps from failing to take the heresies, and the reaction they aroused, into consideration; no other coheres so well with the data we possess on the growth of the rite, or recommends itself with so high a degree of intrinsic probability. Certainty in the matter would be highly desirable, of course, but in the present state of our knowledge it cannot be entertained without hazard.

⁷⁸Mansi, 22,691; Hefele, V, 1219-20.

