

Etiam reges, Even Kings

By William Chester Jordan

*To Michael Curschmann, John Fleming,
Robert Hollander, and the memory of Kenneth Levy,
all of whom inspired me along the way.*

“He could not believe that the army had been brought so far, through so many dangers, only to fail at the last.”¹ With these few words Joseph Strayer grasped the essence of Louis IX’s feelings during the critical phase of the king’s first crusade and the French defeat in Egypt in the spring of the year 1250. The king’s captivity at the hands of his Muslim adversaries followed soon after the French disaster. My aim in this paper is to suggest and explore some consequences of Louis’s experiences in this period, an undertaking that is, I think, historically significant inasmuch as many people over the centuries have idealized the king’s rule as the purest form of Christian governance. In large part my story is a tale of what might have been if the king had accomplished the three central goals he set for himself after 1250: his own purification, his kingdom’s purification, and the assurance that this purified realm would perdure beyond his lifetime. In an essay of the present length I cannot be comprehensive or even review the considerable recent scholarship on the king’s reign and the periods immediately before and after that are relevant to my aims, a daunting task that Sean Field and Cecilia Gaposchkin have made an excellent, if, by their own acknowledgment, partial attempt at accomplishing,² but I do hope to show that there is much still to be learned from pursuing research on the effects of the defeat in Egypt; much to be learned, that is to say, both about the underlying motivations of the king’s modes of governance and about his vision of the kingdom’s future if these modes of governance were adopted and rigorously pursued by his successors.

The run-up to the crusade can be summarized in a few sentences.³ Louis had put down a short-lived rebellion in Poitou in the early 1240s, which enjoyed the support of King Henry III of England (1216–1272). Henry had hoped the

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¹ Joseph Strayer, “The Crusades of Louis IX,” in *Medieval Statecraft and the Perspectives of History*, ed. John Benton and Thomas Bisson (Princeton, 1971), 175.

² Sean Field and M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, “Questioning the Capetians, 1180–1328,” *History Compass* 12 (2014): 567–85.

³ For the detailed research that underlies the following summary, see Jean Richard, *Saint Louis, roi d’une France féodale, soutien de la Terre sainte* (Paris, 1983), 171–204; Peter Thorau, “Der Kreuzzug Ludwigs des Heiligen: Planung—Organisation—Durchführung,” in *Staufzeit—Zeit der Kreuzzüge* (Göppingen, 2011), 124–43, at 126–34; William Chester Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton, 1979), 3–110; and Dirk Reitz, *Die Kreuzzüge Ludwigs IX. von Frankreich 1248/1270* (Münster, 2005), 57–175 (on Reitz’s work, see Thorau, “Der Kreuzzug,” 138 n. 3).

rebellion and his own invasion would redeem the territorial losses suffered by his father, John (1199–1216), and himself more than two decades before. The twin failure of the English king and the French barons gave Louis IX a wonderful opportunity. His men demanded and received seemingly innumerable oaths of submission from local notables implicated in the uprising. Yet, in the wake of his triumph, the French king fell ill (this in late 1244) and was expected to die. He prayed for a return to health and vowed to take the cross if he did so. Soon afterward he did recover. His mother, Blanche of Castile, was dismayed, however, that he intended to go on crusade at all. She had lost her husband, Louis's father, Louis VIII, to sickness during the Albigensian Crusade in 1226. But even though her son accepted her argument that his oath, sworn in dire illness, might not be binding, he reswore the oath and spent three and one-half years preparing for the expedition. It was a masterfully planned undertaking. He arranged truces with potential enemies in Europe, successfully encouraged many recently fractious aristocrats, including former rebels, to accompany him, and amassed the money, the ships, arms, horses, and other supplies necessary to sustain a massive invasion. Departing France in the summer of 1248, the king continued to gather forces and equip his invasion force in Cyprus, especially with landing craft deemed appropriate to an amphibious assault in the Nile delta.

The careful planning paid off in 1249 during the first phase of the war when, with the king in command and actively engaged in battle, the invaders captured the Egyptian port of Damietta.⁴ After this success, there was a many months' delay, partly to await reinforcements, before resuming major operations. The capture of Damietta was regarded as divinely sanctioned and was expected to be permanent. One of the first orders of business was the rededication of its chief mosque as a Christian church consecrated to the Virgin Mary. When the army at last commenced its advance from Damietta, however, the campaign went sour.⁵ Its Muslim adversaries were well supplied and numerous. They, too, had used the interval while the crusaders were in Damietta to prepare for the renewal of the war. A failed French attack on the fortified town of Mansura, led by Louis IX's brother, Robert of Artois, who died in the assault, was the beginning of the end, although the crusaders managed to fend off total defeat for several weeks thereafter. In April 1250, however, the king and the remainder of the army surrendered and went into captivity.

Interest in Louis IX's captivity has generated a recent increase in scholarly publications. Megan Cassidy-Welch uses the stories of the king's "incarceration" as a memory map to exemplify how a shameful failure (being captured) could be transformed through multiple retellings into a metaphor of (divine) testing and spiritual growth.⁶ Cecilia Gaposchkin, in a close look at the sources and a nearly comprehensive review of previous scholarship on the captivity, also addresses the transformation of what might have been an episode that undermined Louis IX's

⁴ Richard, *Saint Louis*, 218–20.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 221–29, 232–34.

⁶ Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Imprisonment in the Medieval Religious Imagination, c. 1150–1400* (Basingstoke, UK, 2011), 107–23.

kingship in his subjects' eyes into one that seemed to exalt it.⁷ The first news of his capture, indeed, stimulated perhaps thousands of young Frenchmen—shepherds, the sources call them—to commence their own rescue effort. This Crusade of the Shepherds, vilified in some elite circles (“raging Fury propelled the band of shepherds”⁸), raised fears by its violence in France. Although authorities brutally suppressed it, the movement’s rallying cries and the Shepherds’ targets while traveling through the kingdom testify to the fact that Louis IX’s capture aroused regret, sympathy, anger with Jews (the enemy within), outrage at those able-bodied nobles who had not accompanied the king overseas, censure of apathetic clerics, and popular willingness for further sacrifice, but not any lingering sense of despair or crippling unwillingness to face up to the situation of the king’s forced submission.⁹

It is remarkable that so much is owed to the captivity, since it was short in duration, exactly a month, 6 April to 6 May 1250. Yet, it had all the elements that allowed for a splendid captivity narrative, and poets and playwrights have exploited this fact and built ornate fictions on it for centuries.¹⁰ The episode was marked by the physical illness of the king—almost to death—and, not surprisingly, his psychical anguish. At the time of his capture he was suffering from dysentery, “severe diarrhoea.” He was so distressed that he “fainted several times . . . and because of his severe diarrhoea, he went down to the latrines so often that it was necessary to cut the seat from his breeches.”¹¹ Meanwhile, disputes among his Muslim captors made the political situation volatile, as did threats and uncertainties in the disorganized hours and days right after his capture.¹² The situation remained uncertain even during negotiations for the king’s and his army’s release, although eventually an agreement was reached that promised the return of Damietta (the king’s ransom) to Muslim control and the payment of a huge sum, indeed most of the ransom money, for those who survived from the crusading forces.¹³

Much mischief has been done—and from a relatively early date—by equating the king’s ransom with the monetary outlay for his forces. Already in 1360 administrators attempting to raise money to redeem the French king, John II, from English captivity in the Hundred Years’ War invoked not only abstract customary law principles but precedent as justification for a levy. They claimed that an *aide*

⁷ Cecilia Gaposchkin, “The Captivity of Louis IX,” *Quaestiones Medii Aevi novae* 18 (2013): 85–114.

⁸ Paul Marchegay, “Fragments inédits d’une chronique de Maillezais,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 2 (1840): 162.

⁹ Studies of the Shepherds’ Rising of 1251 include Gary Dickson, “The Advent of the Pastores (1251),” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 66 (1988): 249–67, and Malcolm Barber, “The Crusade of the Shepherds in 1251,” *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French Historical Studies* 10 (1984): 1–23.

¹⁰ William Chester Jordan, “Saint Louis in French Epic and Drama,” *Studies in Medievalism* 8 (1996): 177 and 181, reprinted in Jordan, *Ideology and Royal Power in Medieval France: Kingship Crusades and the Jews* (Aldershot, UK, 2001).

¹¹ I quote from the translation of Jean de Joinville’s *Life of Saint Louis*, in *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. Caroline Smith (London, 2008), 221, section 306. Section numbers replicate those in Jacques Monfrin’s edition of the text and his modern French translation, *Vie de saint Louis* (Paris, 1995).

¹² *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 225–31, sections 320–47; Richard, *Saint Louis*, 234–36.

¹³ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 231–41, sections 348–88.

from royal subjects had been raised to pay Louis IX's ransom. This was patently untrue, but in making the claim, the authors of the administrative instructions I am referring to even misidentified where the royal crusader had been taken captive, substituting Tunisia for Egypt: "les subgés doivent aide [*for traditional causes*], et ce cas pareil et lieu quant saint Loys roy de France fut prit en Thunes et fut racheté de très grant raançon."¹⁴ The regional error is perhaps trivial, maybe even a slip of the quill, but the elision of Damietta is more troubling, for, as we shall see later, the city played a major part in what at least one scholar, Megan Cassidy-Welch, has called the "crusading imaginary."¹⁵

In any case, the duty of a commander to ransom his soldiers, sailors, and support personnel was inscribed in the moral code of thirteenth-century warfare, as evidenced, for instance, in quasiliturgical poems and songs.¹⁶ Louis's fulfillment of this duty was based on, but not a mere reflex of, a general Christian injunction to have compassion for prisoners, *any prisoners*, one interpretation of the proof text Matthew 25.34–40.¹⁷ Indeed, there is very little evidence that the king thought it was a moral duty to succor those held captive in the prisons of his own day and in his own realm.¹⁸ Prisoners in France were justly incarcerated, unlike the early Christian martyrs, athletes of Christ, who suffered in imperial custody and deserved compassion, to whom medieval exegetes traditionally applied the text. For them, a visit from a fellow believer was highly meritorious, for such an expression of solidarity was itself dangerous—dangerous to the visitor—during periods of persecution. Another relevant proof text was Luke 21.12.¹⁹ Just so, crusaders were God's own holy warriors. They risked their lives for his holy name and deserved better, if they were taken captive, than to waste away in the holding pens that were prisoner-of-war camps.²⁰

A few points need to be mentioned about the king's period of captivity. First, as Louis IX's fellow crusader, the seneschal of Champagne, Jean de Joinville, represents it and as historians have largely accepted, this was an interval in which certain of Louis's actions foretold a distinctive penitential turn in his rulership.²¹

¹⁴ Rémy Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2013), 186.

¹⁵ See the abstract to Megan Cassidy-Welch, "'O Damietta': War Memory and Crusade in Thirteenth-Century Egypt," *Journal of Medieval History* 40 (2014): 346. And for further discussion, below text to nn. 26–32.

¹⁶ William Chester Jordan, "'Amen!' Cinq fois 'Amen!': Les chansons de la croisade égyptienne de saint Louis, une source négligée d'opinion royaliste," *Médiévales* 34 (1998): 83–87.

¹⁷ On the passage in Matthew and two others in Hebrews, 10.34 and 13.3, as proof texts for the ransoming of captives, see Carolyn Osiek, "The Ransom of Captives: Evolution of a Tradition," *Harvard Theological Review* 74 (1981): 367–68.

¹⁸ Priscille Aladjidi, *Le roi, père des pauvres (France XIIIe–XVe siècle)* (Rennes, 2008), 294–98.

¹⁹ Osiek, "The Ransom of Captives," 368–86, documents extrascriptural sources for this concern in the time of the imperial persecutions.

²⁰ Gaposchkin, "The Captivity of Louis IX," 96 and 105–6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 97 and 109–10; Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris, 1996), 873–75; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 127–33; Jordan, "Saint Louis in French Epic and Drama," 176. Hans-Joachim Schmidt's effort to "normalize" Louis IX's behavior by seeing specific aspects of it—but never the whole bundle—in other rulers' actions does not persuade me; "La dévotion de Louis IX,"

Spiritual anguish certainly did not disappear,²² but the series of anecdotes told by Jean emphasize instead Louis's unyielding commitment to Christianity in general and the Christian cause in the Near East in particular. It is, for example, in the captivity narrative part of his book that the king's friend mentions Louis's making the sign of the cross with his whole body, prostrate on the ground and in the presence of his adversaries, whenever he left his lodgings.²³ It is here also, toward the end of the captivity narrative, that Jean recalls the visit of a Frenchman who had come to Egypt years before, converted to Islam, and married.²⁴ Now wealthy, the convert admitted he was swayed by base urges to do what he had done yet was too afraid of the consequences of renouncing his new faith to undo it. Louis's disgust with the man for betraying the religion into which he had been baptized may properly be read as a reaffirmation of the king's own faith. And in Jean's book it is soon after the description of this encounter that he reminds his readers in a coda to the captivity narrative that the king resolved to continue his work in the Holy Land.²⁵

This resolution was expressed in a vigorous way for the first time after the king's release, which he had secured, as noted, by conceding the port of Damietta, taken early in the war.²⁶ In negotiations with his captors he had left it to the queen, Marguerite of Provence, who was in Damietta, to turn the city over to the Muslims, with the curious caveat, *if she chose to do so*.²⁷ I do not know what Louis expected, except that the statement ("quip," Gaposchkin's preference, does not seem to me to capture the character of the utterance²⁸) may betray an acute sense of failure on his part. Was he thinking that his redemption was not worth Marguerite of Provence ceding such a prize?²⁹ However that may be, she did cede the city, and what we also know for certain is that the loss was a major motif in written texts documenting contemporaries' memories of the crusade.³⁰ Damietta had been gained and lost once before in an earlier crusade (1219–21), and now three decades later the scenario was reenacted. For the Christians this unhappy parallel was a crippling psychological—or, perhaps better, a crippling spiritual—blow.³¹ The many deaths of their companions compounded the agony of the survivors as it did of the families and loved ones of the fallen. The grief gave rise to extraordinary commemorations of their sacrifice. Psalm 78 (AV 79), Amnon Linder has shown, was the key text, laden as it was with allusions to

in *La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris: Royaume de France ou Jérusalem céleste? Actes du colloque*, ed. C. Hediger (Turnhout, 2007), 35–59.

²² Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Henry Luard, 7 vols. (London, 1872–83), 5:466.

²³ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 236, section 367.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 242–43, sections 394–96. Gaposchkin, "The Captivity of Louis IX," 97, notes the importance of this encounter.

²⁵ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 249, section 419.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 182–90, sections 146–83.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 230, section 342.

²⁸ Gaposchkin, "The Captivity of Louis IX," 97.

²⁹ Gérard Sivéry, *Marguerite de Provence: Une reine au temps des cathédrales* (Paris, 1987), 99–100, offers a mixed bag of interpretations, none of which is definitive.

³⁰ Cassidy-Welch, "O Damietta," 346–60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 353–58.

the slaughter of God's army, the Israelites' repentance, and the promise of divine mercy, including the comforting of the children of the slain.³²

And yet when the king first arrived in the Holy Land after his release he was greeted with a procession full of joyous people.³³ Soon, judging from Jean de Joinville's description of his own filthy and sickly condition, the extent of the crusaders' defeat in Egypt was made vivid to observers in the arriving survivors' very bodies. Even so, hope did not fade entirely among the inhabitants of the Latin Kingdom. This remnant of the Crusader States was figuratively up against the wall, and it was good to have Louis IX there. It was wonderful that he would stay and reestablish regular ties to France that would bring cash and support for much-needed work—rebuilding ruined fortifications, for example, and raising a strike force that could help defend the truncated realm. A great work of salvage was foreseen—and ultimately accomplished, though insufficient in the long run to fend off collapse.³⁴

Jean de Joinville's description of Louis IX's decision to remain in the Holy Land after his release is interesting in another respect. According to the seneschal, these were something like the king's *ipsissima verba*: "My lords, my lady the queen, my mother, has informed me and begged me as earnestly as she can that I should go to France."³⁵ According to Jean, Queen Blanche, the king's mother, wrote her son, making reference to the unsettled state of relations in Europe, including the expiration of the truce between England and France. She tried to persuade him as emphatically as she could that the situation would benefit from his return, but Louis weighed his concern for the Latin Kingdom against his putative duty to France. He thought or said he thought that France was safe enough, despite his mother's alarm. As he judged the matter, therefore, he could not be accused of willfully abandoning his threatened realm to an uncertain but potentially unfortunate fate by staying in the Latin Kingdom. Nonetheless he wanted support for his intended decision. He sought advice on the subject, and he gave his councilors some time to formulate their opinions. Here it is worth pointing out again that Louis had originally gone on crusade despite his mother's opposition, and now he was casting the possibility of his remaining in the Holy Land after his defeat once more in opposition to her wishes.

Perhaps one ought not to make too much out of this parallel. One would not want to become "almost monocausal" in the interpretation of Louis IX's actions by overstressing the mother-son conflict, as my first foray into the field has been described by one scholar.³⁶ But the Franciscan theologian, Eustache d'Arras, who preached a number of sermons at Louis IX's court after the latter's return to France, a return that was delayed four years once the king made his decision, did

³² Amnon Linder, "*Deus venerunt gentes*: Psalm 78 (79) in the Liturgical Commemoration of the Destruction of Latin Jerusalem," in *Medieval Studies in Honour of Avrom Saltman*, ed. Bat-Sheva Albert et al., Bar-Ilan Studies in History 4 (Ramat-Gan, 1995), 155.

³³ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 246, section 407.

³⁴ The principal repertory of material on these efforts is in Jean de Joinville's description of the king's sojourn in the Latin Kingdom; *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 246–99, sections 406–615; Richard, *Saint Louis*, 252–53.

³⁵ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 249, section 419.

³⁶ Cf. Reitz, *Die Kreuzzüge Ludwigs IX. von Frankreich*, 34.

make something of it. According to Brother Eustache, who addressed the king's captivity in one of his quodlibets, from which this observation comes, it was a moral duty to support the Christian host in the Holy Land, as Louis IX did, even over the demands of family. Perhaps Eustache was also and more generally criticizing those who invoked family as an excuse not to go on crusade or to help resupply the king after the end of the captivity. Even so, he was setting up Louis IX as the exemplary lord who did not let family (his mother's desires) stand in the way of doing his Christian duty in the Holy Land.³⁷

According to Jean de Joinville, Louis IX's Muslim captors threatened to torture the king with an instrument that French speakers called the *bernicles* in order to elicit greater concessions than the king was willing to give to ransom himself.³⁸ Whether Jean's evidence on the threats is creditable or not, his description of the *bernicles* has fascinated scholars. Designed to fracture the ankle and foot bones and inflict excruciating pain, the *bernicles* was supposedly of fairly simple construction: two long pliant pieces of wood lashed together at one end and with spikes pointing inward at the other end. The victim was to be laid on his side between the two pieces of wood, with the spikes above and below the ankles and feet. A torturer was designated to perch himself on the device so that the spikes would penetrate the skin, flesh, and bone. Three days later, the limbs having swollen around the wounds, the torture was supposed to be applied again.

The great scholar, Charles du Fresne, sire du Cange, wrote one of his many *dissertationes*, or extended notes, "On the Torture of the Bernicles."³⁹ As I discussed in my first book, what is attention grabbing about Du Cange's *dissertatio* on the *bernicles* is not his interest in medieval instruments of torture, common enough when he wrote and still now, but his claim that Louis IX during his time in the Holy Land ordered the striking of coins that would recall the threat, some of which bore the emblem of the *bernicles* and others, representations of manacles or fetters and a tower, signifying his incarceration under restraint.⁴⁰ It is true that during his extended stay in Palestine, the king minted coins, just as he supported one or more ateliers for the production of devotional manuscripts and a scriptorium for administrative purposes and established many other bureaus appropriate to his work as a lord who needed to maintain relations with the local notables, neighboring principalities, and correspondence with the regency government back home.⁴¹ Like most professional scholars subsequent to du Cange, however, I

³⁷ Sophie Delmas, *Un franciscain à Paris au milieu du XIIIe siècle: Le maître en théologie Eustache d'Arras* (Paris, 2010), 271–72.

³⁸ *Vie de saint Louis*, ed. Monfrin, 344–45, sections 340–41; *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 229–30. I presume that Caroline Smith uses *barnacles* to be consistent with the earlier Penguin version. The Old French, which I shall use throughout, has *bernicles*, and referring to the device in this way avoids unproductive imaginings of it as goose- or shellfish-like.

³⁹ Charles du Fresne, sire du Cange, "On the Torture of the Bernicles," in *Memoirs of John Lord de Joinville*, 2 vols., trans. Thomas Johnes (Pwllpeiran, Wales, 1807), 2:164–65.

⁴⁰ Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 126 n. 141; Elizabeth Brown, "A Sixteenth-Century Defense of Saint Louis' Crusades: Étienne le Blanc and the Legacy of Louis IX," in *Cross Cultural Convergences in the Crusader Period: Essays Presented to Aryeh Grabois on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Goodich et al. (New York, 1995), 31–32 n. 22.

⁴¹ On coinage, the production of manuscripts, diplomatic initiatives, and archival practices, including the documentary registers and fabrication of a new seal (the one the king brought with him had

expressed doubts as to the reliability of this reading of the symbols on the coins that the mint produced. I did so even though the greatest of all scholars of Louis IX's reign, Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, du Cange's contemporary, did not dismiss the possibility out of hand.⁴² Of course, du Cange and anyone else of the time might have misunderstood the rubbed images on small coins by then already four hundred years old. Even after reading du Cange's *dissertatio*, Tillemont confessed that he could not quite recognize the *bernicles*.⁴³

Moreover, a very limited number of such coins would have been struck, because most of the types introduced by Louis IX along with the reforms he imposed (such as banning certain Islamo-Arabic inscriptions) ceased to be minted after he left Palestine.⁴⁴ So, if "torture" coins were really struck, not many were, and few survived to the seventeenth century (facts that are true for several other well-attested contemporary crusader coin types as well⁴⁵), and none has surfaced since. Nevertheless, Tillemont also reported being informed about an inscription on certain of the coins, *etiam reges*, and it is not likely that he or his informants, learned antiquaries all, would have misread a simple Latin phrase.⁴⁶ The alleged inscription, "even kings," indeed, might have persuaded him, given the seemingly obvious chord it strikes, that something like a torture device was appropriate for the associated and by then faint figural representations.

That Louis IX was sensitive to the legends on coins that were associated even indirectly with his lordship is clear from the reforms just alluded to and to his other attempts to Christianize or suppress imitation Islamic coinage, which a number of Catholic potentates struck to ease financial transactions.⁴⁷ He approved, for example, the replacement of a long Arabic inscription on one crusader coin type with the following in the same language. It was interlaced with representations of the cross and may be regarded as an attempt, in Louis Blancard's opinion, at *propaganda fidei*: "One God + Father Son and Holy Spirit + Struck at Acre 1251 since the Incarnation of Christ" R: "+ And of the resurrection and through him we are saved and loved + We glorify ourselves by the choice of our Lord Jesus

been lost), see Étienne Cartier, "Remarques," *Revue numismatique* 12 (1847): 140; Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, from the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291* (Cambridge, 2005), 243-48, 269, 282-95, 359-60; A. Giry, *Manuel de diplomatique* (Paris, 1894), 753.

⁴² Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 126 n. 141.

⁴³ Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, *Vie de saint Louis, roi de France*, ed. J. de Gaulle, 6 vols. (Paris, 1847-51), 3:350.

⁴⁴ Paul Balog and Jacques Yvon, "Monnaies à légendes arabes de l'Orient latin," *Revue numismatique*, 6th ser., 1 (1958): 138-39.

⁴⁵ But not always for the same reason. Only three crusader gold bezants, dated c. 1253, were known to Philip Grierson, "A Rare Crusader Bezant with the *Christus vincit* Legend," *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 6 (1954): 169-78. Others may have been melted down for their value, though still others may yet be sequestered in private collections precisely because of their rarity and preciousness.

⁴⁶ Tillemont, *Vie de saint Louis*, 3:386.

⁴⁷ Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 139-40, especially n. 30, and the references below in the next paragraph.

Christ in whom is our salvation and our life + And our resurrection and to whom we owe our redemption and our sustenance.”⁴⁸

It seems obvious to me, as it did to my seventeenth-century predecessors, that, if accurately reported, the legend *etiam reges* alludes to Louis IX’s self-abasement before Providence, a sentiment fully in keeping with the mood of the failed crusaders. Different and more hopeful evocations of this sentiment are represented by other images (the Lamb of God Triumphant, for example) and other legends (like the *Christus vincit, christus regnat, christus imperat*) also impressed on coins produced in this period in the Latin Kingdom.⁴⁹ But specifically to fortify this justification for the use of *etiam reges*, it would benefit a scholar to find the source that the king or the men around him had in mind when they authorized the use of the legend. This might give a hint of its significance—and in the case before us might confirm that the legend evokes a sense of resignation in the king, one that may have been pervasive in the royal circle at this time.⁵⁰ Finding a source might also give further credibility to the seventeenth-century antiquaries’ readings: if the phrase showed up in a vaguely similar ancient context, it would have been a reasonable choice for a motto, a catchphrase, an adage, an emblem—or, yes, the legend on a contemporary coin. Unfortunately, *etiam reges* never appears in the sources to which Louis IX or his advisers would ordinarily turn for proverbial wisdom, like the Bible or the writings of the fathers.⁵¹

Moreover, the few classical usages of the phrase in non-Christian sources, in the works of Cicero and Tacitus specifically, have little or no relevance.⁵² Cicero denounces the hubris of the Catiline conspirators, who wanted to put themselves in the place of the existing rulers of the Roman Republic or even make themselves kings (*etiam reges*) by resurrecting the defunct form of government that the establishment of the Republic displaced. Tacitus alludes to ancient laws going back to the sixth king of Rome, Servius Tullius, whom he likens to archaic Greek legislators (Minos, Lycurgus, Solon) and to earlier Roman rulers as well (Numa, Tullus, Ancus). Servius Tullius’s decrees, Tacitus wrote, even commanded the observance of kings (*etiam reges*).

I acknowledge that my failure to find a plausible source should trouble me. (I suppose I should continue to hope.) And yet, more than any other phrase I have come across, this two-word legend, if legend it was, accurately heralds a new beginning and just as accurately evokes an enduring conviction in the life

⁴⁸ Louis Blancard, *Le besant d’or sarrazines pendant les croisades: Étude comparée sur les monnaies d’or, arabes et d’imitation arabe, frappées en Égypte et en Syrie, aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles* (Marseille, 1880), 24, 26–27 (this is my rendering of Blancard’s French translation).

⁴⁹ Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 206–7.

⁵⁰ Cf. Tillemont, *Vie de saint Louis*, 3:386.

⁵¹ I did a standard search of the Patrologia Latina, the Vulgate, and a wider Google search as well to establish this point. For good measure, I searched a few appropriate databases for the French version of the phrase *même les rois*. I also looked for comparable Greek phrases, like καὶ αὐτοὶ βασιλεῖς, suggested to me by my Byzantinist colleague, Professor John Haldon, in the Patrologia Graeca, on the assumption that a local man (or woman) who was a native Greek speaker might have made a remark in French or Latin, which someone in the king’s circle picked up on. But to no avail.

⁵² *Second Oration of Cicero: In Catilinam I–IV*, ed. J. F. Stout (Bristol, 2009), 2.9.19 (p. 41); *The Annals of Tacitus, Book 3*, ed. A. J. Woodman and R. H. Martin (Cambridge, 1996), 3.26.4 (p. 37).

and rulership of Louis IX. True, there may have been a misreading. Yet, *mêmes les rois* or some such thought must have run through Louis IX's mind—over and over again. As Geoffrey of Beaulieu, his confessor, put it, reflecting on his friend's recollection of captivity, “it testifies to the commendation of his humility, that often, freely and without shame, indeed in a most pleasant fashion, he would relate to us how he had been taken prisoner at Mansura by the Saracens, and what he did with them at that time, and how he came to be set free.”⁵³ Even kings, *etiam reges*—I think the phrase could be Louis's own. It needs no external source.

Queen Blanche died toward the end of 1252; and after the heartbreaking news reached the king,⁵⁴ he decided to return to France, but without rushing. He deliberately set about planning his departure and making arrangements to maintain a standing force to help protect the Latin Kingdom.⁵⁵ It was not until mid-1254 that he took ship. After brief but uncomfortable stages in the voyage, his ship made landfall in Provence in July.⁵⁶ From Provence Louis proceeded in a generally northern direction but with many twists and turns in a long and quite stately journey that provided him with opportunities to assure his subjects of his paternal devotion.⁵⁷ At every stage he was greeted with processions characterized by a combination of solemnity and joy. These multiple receptions in town after town disturbed him. He did not quite see his return as an occasion of joy.⁵⁸ Psychologically these moments of welcome and exuberance seemed to conjure in his mind, I suppose, the sense that he did not deserve the good feelings that were being expressed.

Finally the king reached Paris, where word must have preceded his arrival as to what by then had been established as the regular mode of greeting him. Parisians intended to outdo all others. Louis entered the great city and “was received with such honorific rituals [that] he was displeased by the many honors of immense and superfluous expense which he saw. And for this reason, in order to flee and diminish the follies of dances and sumptuous splendors and vanities of this sort that he knew were being prepared for that evening throughout the streets of Paris, to the wonder of many, after he dined he left the city and spent the night at his manor in Vincennes.”⁵⁹ This passage from the *Life* of Saint Louis by his friend and confessor Geoffrey of Beaulieu is not found in the most common printed edition, but has been recovered by Cecilia Gaposchkin and Sean Field from a slightly different manuscript, contemporary to that on which the standard edition until now has been based.⁶⁰ The psychological portrait the passage paints

⁵³ *The Sanctity of Louis IX: Early Lives of Saint Louis by Geoffrey of Beaulieu and William of Chartres*, ed. M. Cecilia Gaposchkin and Sean Field, trans. Larry Field (Ithaca and London, 2014), 79, section 10.

⁵⁴ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 296, sections 603–4; *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 104–6, section 28.

⁵⁵ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 297–99, sections 609–15; Richard, *Saint Louis*, 265–67.

⁵⁶ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 300–309, sections 617–55; *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 107–8, section 30.

⁵⁷ Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 135–41.

⁵⁸ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 108, section 30bis.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 178–80.

perfectly reflects the sentiment Matthew Paris attributed to the king on his return: his frank acknowledgement that his sins lay behind the failure of the crusade and his concern that his failure precipitated the whole Catholic world into a mood of uncertainty.⁶¹

Let us here return to the theme of captivity. Louis IX came to interpret his captivity, which he frequently recalled during the rest of his reign, as a productive metaphor for how to live his life.⁶² We find the figure of Joseph the Patriarch embedded in many of the texts produced in the royal circle from 1254 to 1270, most elaborately in the psalter the king commissioned after the crusade. A recent effort to redate and reattribute the psalter seems to me unpersuasive, based as it largely is on one scene in the *Beatus* initial and wholly ignoring the remarkable seventy-eight full-page prefatory illustrations of the book.⁶³ In fourteen of these prefatory illustrations, the artist(s) and scribe(s) dramatically retold the story of Joseph's sale into slavery in Egypt, his imprisonment on a false charge, and his ultimately triumphant liberation and even reconciliation with those, his brothers, who had sold him into slavery in the first place.⁶⁴ This use of the story of Joseph in Egypt as a straightforward exemplum of God's testing and then God's reward for the subject bearing the test manfully and in hope was fairly commonplace but never more elaborately depicted than in Louis's psalter. However, the story could be deployed to other purposes. In a sermon of the Franciscan preacher Bertrand de La Tour preached in the early fourteenth century, for example, which may draw on an earlier use of the metaphor, he spoke of part of the story as a way to understand purgatory.⁶⁵ Some of his listeners, he told his audience, would go to purgatory. But they should not lose hope. Just as Joseph and Jacob were buried in Egypt before being taken to the Promised Land, it was necessary that his listeners should go through purgatory before being admitted into heaven.

Conceptualized either as a simple test or as a purging, Louis's captivity and, in Geoffrey of Beaulieu's words, the "saintly and new comportment with which he returned from the Holy Land" presented the possibility of a triumphant culmination of the king's life.⁶⁶ He had been tried in the fire of calamity, and though a good and decent young man before the trial, he was better thereafter. It was like a transformation, Geoffrey wrote, of silver into gold.⁶⁷ This king would now be an exemplary lay leader, supported by the church and God. This point was made in the psalter, too, where the story of Moses was artfully developed over several folios, quite different from a mere casual simile, to emphasize the potential

⁶¹ Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, 5:466. Discussed in Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 133; and Richard, *Saint Louis*, 271.

⁶² *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 79, section 10.

⁶³ Patricia Stirnemann, "Quand le programme fait fausse route: Les psautiers de Saint-Alban et de Saint Louis," *Cahier du Léopard d'or* 12 (2011): 168–81.

⁶⁴ William Chester Jordan, "The Psalter of Saint Louis (BN MS Lat. 10525): The Program of the Seventy-Eight Full-Page Illustrations," *ACTA* 7 (1980): 65–91.

⁶⁵ David D'Avray, *Death and the Prince: Memorial Preaching before 1350* (Oxford, 1994), 54 and 166.

⁶⁶ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 109, section 31.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

of such leadership.⁶⁸ Inevitably, leadership so patterned would be rigorously moralizing, that is to say, rooted in a program to remake society, to bring social life, metaphorically, from a condition of lesser metal to that of the most precious.

The king lived the transformation in his asceticism, which extended to simple dress, austere devotional practices, including flagellation, frequent fasting, modest eating and drinking when he was not fasting, abstention from sexual activity on days discouraged by the church, and the like.⁶⁹ (As an aside, when the king was intent on abstaining from intercourse, he still experienced erections in his wife's presence, which he regarded as a failure of virtue on his part; he would walk briskly around the room until his member went flaccid.⁷⁰) He distanced himself from characteristically aristocratic pleasures that smacked of violence, like hunting, or of frivolity, like games of chance, or of frivolity *and* violence, like tournaments.⁷¹ And he also lived the virtuous life in charitable practices that exceeded those of his contemporaries in cost and number.⁷² His gestures often challenged the normal sensitivities of human beings. A poor sick man with suppurating ulcers on his hands received food from him, ate as much as he wanted, and the king, to the revulsion of bystanders, finished the plate in solidarity with the sufferer. Another filthy pauper seeking alms came for a foot washing, having no idea that the king would carry out the task. When Louis performed it more in a ritual way than as a genuine act of cleansing, the pauper complained that he should do more and get the grime out between his toes. Again bystanders were aghast that the king did so rather than reprimand the pauper for addressing him disrespectfully.⁷³

In the same vein, well known are the stories of the king burying the putrefying dead with his own hands on crusade, helping monks build churches in freezing weather, directly caring for lepers and in particular those who were most afflicted, thus most repulsive to sight, smell, and touch.⁷⁴ And the king further augmented his virtue—virtue as he understood it—by making it possible for others to live as he lived or according to other admired contemporary models of Christian devotion. Hence, the level of his support for beguines, monks, and friars.⁷⁵ The

⁶⁸ William Chester Jordan, "The 'People' in the Psalter of Saint Louis and the Leadership of Moses," in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Jeremy Duquesnay Adams*, ed. Stephanie Hayes-Healy, 2 vols. (New York, 2005), 1:13–28. For the sort of casual, that is to say less developed, allusions to Moses and other figures I refer to, see Peter Kovac, "Die Dornenkrone Christi und die Sainte Chapelle de Paris: Der wahre Preis der Dornenkrone Christi, Konsekrationsdatum der Kapelle und festliche Beleuchtung der Sainte-Chapelle," *Umeni* 59 (2011): 472–73.

⁶⁹ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 858–86; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 127–29.

⁷⁰ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 79, section 11.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 96, section 21; Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 595–641.

⁷² William Chester Jordan, "The Representation of Monastic-Lay Relations in the Canonization Records for Louis IX," in *Religious and Laity in Western Europe, 1000–1400: Interaction, Negotiation, and Power*, ed. Emilia Jamrozik and Janet Burton (Turnhout, 2006), 229; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 183–90.

⁷³ These two anecdotes are recalled in William of Chartres's *Life of Louis; The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 144–45.

⁷⁴ Jordan, "The Representation of Monastic-Lay Relations," 232–35; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 128.

⁷⁵ Tanya Stabler Miller, *The Beguines of Medieval Paris: Gender, Patronage, and Spiritual Authority* (Philadelphia, 2014); 14–34; William Chester Jordan, *Men at the Center: Redemptive Governance*

somewhat later report, brought to scholars' attention by Elizabeth Brown, that Louis IX "carried on his person" a relic, a small piece of the True Cross, further testifies symbolically, if the report is faithful to the historical reality, to his *living* the Gospel:⁷⁶ "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."⁷⁷

There were reprobates and foot draggers, of course. And as much as Louis IX probably would have preferred that the model he provided and the opportunities he offered for others to achieve good behavior would suffice, he was aware that the blemishes of his society were not going to disappear without the moral disciplining that was in theory the accepted counterpart of the ideology, though not always an element of the practice of governance. But for Louis, practice had to mirror ideology. Most rulers bemoaned prostitution, but opted to regulate it and make money from licensing it in brothels.⁷⁸ Louis IX worked tirelessly to extirpate it.⁷⁹ Most rulers denounced blasphemy, then basically only punished egregious cases with fines, although the sanctions in the law codes grew somewhat worse in the later Middle Ages.⁸⁰ Louis IX forbade it by *ordonnance* in 1263 (or perhaps initially in 1260) and branded the lips that uttered blasphemous oaths.⁸¹ Most rulers disliked Jews and the usury which they were said to extort, but within generous limits they let them extort it nonetheless—and raked off profits from the Jews' profits.⁸² Louis IX banned usury (interest) outright and, with intensity after his return from crusade, ceaselessly targeted those who he found did not bend to his will.⁸³ Even secular love songs, with their sexual innuendo, he found, as several earlier and contemporary churchmen found, so distasteful as to be worthy of wholesale denunciation in a program of moral reform looking forward to their disappearance.⁸⁴ Yet as much as the king disliked these kinds of songs, he loved

under Louis IX (Budapest, 2012), 30–33; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 188–90.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Brown, "The Testamentary Strategies of Jeanne d'Évreux: The Endowment of Saint-Denis in 1343," in *Magistra Doctissima: Essays in Honor of Bonnie Wheeler*, ed. Dorsey Armstrong et al. (Kalamazoo, 2013), 241 n. 25.

⁷⁷ Matthew 16.24 (Douay-Rheims). See also Matthew 10.38, Mark 8.34, and Luke 9.23.

⁷⁸ Hanna Zaremska, *Les bannis au Moyen Âge*, trans. Thérèse Douchy (Paris, 1996), 80; James Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005), 343; Trevor Dean, *Crime in Medieval Europe, 1200–1550* (Harlow, UK, 2001), 86–90.

⁷⁹ Keiko Nowacka, "Persecution, Marginalization, or Tolerance: Prostitutes in Thirteenth-Century Parisian Society," in *Difference and Identity in Francia and Medieval France*, ed. Meredith Cohen and Justine Firnhaber-Barker (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT, 2010), 185–86.

⁸⁰ On the general point, see Trevor Dean, *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2007), 123. The town of Metz and blasphemy policy and repression there from the twelfth century to the modern period has been the subject of a useful recent case study that illuminates Dean's point; André Brulé, *Blasphème et sacrilège devant la justice de Metz (XIIe–XVIIe siècles)* (Paris, 2009).

⁸¹ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 90–93; Brulé, *Blasphème et sacrilège*, 23, 287.

⁸² Joseph Shatzmiller notes the practice, for example, in Aragon in *Shylock Reconsidered: Jews, Moneylending, and Medieval Society* (Berkeley, 1990), 57–58.

⁸³ William Chester Jordan, *The French Monarchy and the Jews from Philip Augustus to the Last Capetians* (Philadelphia, 1989), 148–50.

⁸⁴ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 22–29. For parallel clerical opinions, see *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century*, ed. and trans. R. Morris (Millwood, NY, 1975), 148–49: "We should bewep the sins and woes of each other, and forsake laughter and idle songs (*idele songes*)." Within Louis

to hear and to sing religious music.⁸⁵ And, probably like his mother, he helped compose at least one inspiring and stunningly complex song.⁸⁶ As much as he must have disapproved of many of the pictures in romances, he would have loved those, as in his psalter, which were spiritually uplifting. This was no period of wholesale *répression artistique*, despite Patricia Stirnemann's blanket claim.⁸⁷ *Répression morale*, Jacques Le Goff's quite apt term to describe the regime's zeal,⁸⁸ does not equate with the spurning of numinous art. Or, in Meredith Cohen's words, "after 1254, Louis IX contributed to more than five times the number of institutions in Paris than he did during the first two decades of his reign."⁸⁹ And these institutions, I might add, were in no wise artistic wastelands.

The king made his views known in his laws, of course. But he did not stop there. He found and employed men who shared his unwavering moral vision to carry out his plans, a process I have written about at some length recently.⁹⁰ He exhorted young religious in sermons to do their proper part.⁹¹ He spent considerable time in educating his children in this mode.⁹² Vincent of Beauvais, the Dominican encyclopedist, who was a friend, wrote a piece on how royal children ought to be raised, and in it he may be reflecting the practices he observed or at least heard about in Louis's family. For in this work he stressed the father's, rather than the mother's, role in their offspring's education.⁹³ And, as is well known, the king late in life completed the drafting of two sets of lessons, one for his heir and one for a daughter, Isabelle, which preserved his thinking about how a virtuous prince and princess should comport themselves, and in the case of the former how he should rule.⁹⁴ These were precepts any prince could learn from and emulate, but they were particularly appropriate, as Louis himself intimated, for a king anointed after the French fashion with oil from heaven.⁹⁵

IX's circle, besides Robert of Sorbon, treated in *Men at the Center*, one may also note Eudes Rigaud, archbishop of Rouen, who ordered the incarceration, cuts in food allotments, and the whipping of monks who sang dissolute songs; *The Register of Eudes of Rouen*, trans. S. Brown and J. O'Sullivan (New York and London, 1964), 118, discussed in Cassidy-Welch, *Imprisonment*, 32.

⁸⁵ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 80–81 and 96–97, sections 13 and 21 (from the *Life* written by Geoffrey of Beaulieu), and 132–33 (from the *Life* written by William of Chartres).

⁸⁶ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 6, 22–29.

⁸⁷ Stirnemann, "Quand le programme fait fausse route," 176.

⁸⁸ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 425.

⁸⁹ Meredith Cohen, *The Sainte-Chapelle and the Construction of Sacred Monarchy* (Cambridge, 2014), 171, and more generally, 171–78.

⁹⁰ Jordan, *Men at the Center*.

⁹¹ William Chester Jordan, "Louis IX: Preaching to Franciscan and Dominican Brothers and Nuns," in *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming*, ed. Michael Cusato and Guy Geltner (Leiden, 2009), 219–35.

⁹² *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 80–81, section 13.

⁹³ Rebecca Jacobs-Pollez, "The Role of the Mother in Vincent of Beauvais' *De eruditione filiorum nobilium*," *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* 38 (2010): 15–27. See also Astrik Gabriel, *The Educational Ideas of Vincent of Beauvais* (Notre Dame, 1956).

⁹⁴ David O'Connell, ed., *The Teachings of Saint Louis: A Critical Text* (Chapel Hill, 1972); O'Connell, ed., *The Instructions of Saint Louis: A Critical Text* (Chapel Hill, 1979). See also O'Connell, compiler, *Les propos de saint Louis* (Paris, 1974).

⁹⁵ O'Connell, *The Teachings of Saint Louis*, 56–57, no. 15.

Putting it all together one arrives at a portrait of a king engrossed by his moral initiatives—and I have not even mentioned his anticorruption campaigns, his foreign policy initiatives (including his arbitrations of international disputes), and his comprehensive coinage reforms in France.⁹⁶ The downside of this nearly all-consuming effort was the explicit and covert attempts of his subjects to subvert it. Louis IX represented his regime as contributing to his people's salvation. Perhaps many agreed, but many also experienced features of it with hostility. A good many nobles were unhappy with the restraints put on their exercise of disciplinary justice. Other aristocrats bemoaned the public use of the death penalty when their kinfolk were found guilty of transgressing the laws. Bourgeois similarly lamented the harshness of social discipline, most especially perhaps the resort to the death penalty for members of their class found guilty of theft and the branding of others for swearing foul oaths, as much as, in the abstract, they may also have detested theft and hated filthy language.⁹⁷ And the Jews despised a king who effectively cut off their livelihood in his multiple attempts to persuade them to “voluntarily” convert.⁹⁸ This is the Louis IX, the darker side, that moderns, who value and sometimes privilege personal freedom, love to hate.

To shift the emphasis briefly, although the point, I hope to show, is related, Louis IX was physically often a very sick man.⁹⁹ The illness that led to his first crusade vow was almost fatal.¹⁰⁰ His illness on crusade nearly killed him.¹⁰¹ And he had several bouts of serious illness in the period after his return to France. He reached out to his friend, the archbishop of Rouen, Eudes Rigaud, to travel to his side more than once when he feared that his death might be near.¹⁰² Impeded by ailments, the king found himself unable on occasion to carry out the devotions he so loved to undertake after the crusade, like washing the feet and hands of the poor, distributing alms to them, and serving them at table.¹⁰³ No one who has read Jean de Joinville's memoir will forget his description of the king, too weak late in life from his maladies or from excessive devotions to mount his horse or ride in a carriage. The seneschal lifted him up in his arms and carried him to the residence where the king needed to be on that occasion.¹⁰⁴

Did the king ever think this was too much for one man to endure? One way out for Louis—the road not taken—was to abdicate and institutionalize his penance by suspending sexual relations in his marriage, with his wife's blessing, for it

⁹⁶ William Chester Jordan, “Anti-Corruption Campaigns in Thirteenth-Century Europe,” *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 208–14; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 158–81, 195–213; Jordan, “A Border Policy? Louis IX and the Spanish Connection,” to appear in a festschrift for Teofilo Ruiz. Cf. Marie Dejoux, “Gouverner par l'enquête en France, de Philippe Auguste aux derniers Capétiens,” *French Historical Studies* 37 (2014): 279–88.

⁹⁷ For examples of these reactions to Louis IX's policies, see Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 62–63, 81–83, 86, and 91–94.

⁹⁸ Jordan, *French Monarchy and the Jews*, 139–40, 150, and 165.

⁹⁹ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 864–67.

¹⁰⁰ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 173, sections 106–7.

¹⁰¹ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 222, section 310; *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 102–3, section 25.

¹⁰² *The Register of Eudes of Rouen*, 382.

¹⁰³ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 77–78, section 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 329, section 737.

would have been necessary (although it was not a blessing she was willing to give).¹⁰⁵ He might then have become a friar or something similar. Did he toy with the idea in a serious way? He spoke of his attraction to the religious life and bemoaned and sometimes jested at the difficulty of choosing between the Dominicans and Franciscans.¹⁰⁶ If his temptation were grave, then we might very well imagine a tragic figure of Shakespearean dimensions plagued by continuing self-doubt, an exaggerated portrait imputed to my early work by at least one scholar.¹⁰⁷ (I do not say his criticism was misplaced.) But I am inclined to believe now that there remains something to be learned from the king's musings. In any case, if anointment obliged all French kings to do their duty, as he would say, then it obliged him, too.¹⁰⁸ But there was another possibility.

The king's hopes were pinned on his eldest son, Prince Louis. He saw him as a potential instantiation of the ideal ruler to which he himself aspired, a morally fit young man to whom he was willing to cede his kingship when he came of age—as he expressly said.¹⁰⁹ And now I will venture to place in print some speculation that has been bubbling in my mind for several years. I believe that Louis IX was thinking of associating his eldest son with him in his kingship. I do not make this statement only because the king loved his son dearly and thought well of his mind and virtue, but because his own health was so precarious that he could imagine being incapacitated or dying before Prince Louis was of age. This raised the prospect of a regency headed by his wife, Marguerite. In Louis IX's view she was no Blanche of Castile. His wife, in his reckoning, would exercise too much authority and would not exercise it well, if her son were not already an anointed king who was used to giving orders and having them obeyed. Certain of the political activities in which Marguerite engaged and certain of her sentiments, which were too generous for his taste, would have inclined him against vesting the regency in her—that is, if the worst happened with his health—as his father had vested his in Queen Blanche. Marguerite had already had to be restrained from taking an active political role before the crusade, one that might have placed her in opposition to royal policy.¹¹⁰ She was also perceived by the king as overly compassionate when she sought leniency in a judgment of his that condemned a confessed murderess, an aristocrat who killed her husband, to public death by burning.¹¹¹ Clement a ruler should be, but, as Louis's colleague and biographer William of Chartres pointed out in his portrait of the king, when “it came to higher

¹⁰⁵ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 80, section 12. On the concept and history of chaste marriage, see Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, 1993).

¹⁰⁶ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 332.

¹⁰⁷ Patrick Boucheron, “Saint Louis, comédien et martyr: L'écriture d'une vie,” *Médiévales* 34 (1998): 75.

¹⁰⁸ On Louis IX's sensitivity to the unction, see Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 582–84, 832–34.

¹⁰⁹ *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 80, section 12. See also Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 268; Jordan, “A Border Policy?”

¹¹⁰ Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 5–6.

¹¹¹ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 81–83.

transgressions . . . leniency (could) have no place without divine offense . . . no matter what the rank of the offender.”¹¹²

Associative kingship would avoid the problems Louis IX foresaw, and in his reign it was not a practice recalled from ancient history. His grandfather, Philip II, was crowned in 1179 during his father’s lifetime under circumstances that are uncannily evocative, Louis VII’s final illness. Philip was crowned a second time in 1180 after his father’s death.¹¹³ It was perhaps the case that Philip II abandoned associative kingship, a firm principle since the year 987 that was meant to assure a smooth succession, because it inevitably recalled the early vulnerability of a usurping dynasty, the Capetians, who had displaced the Carolingians.¹¹⁴ But Louis IX, though he respected his grandfather, was a very different man.¹¹⁵ Devoted as he was to apprehending God’s plan in history, he did not, as it were, try to erase knowledge of the dynasty’s usurpation, but to represent the time since the usurpation as a phase—a kind of trial—whose success was evidenced by its return to the rootstock (*reditus ad stirpem*) of the second dynasty (*deuxième race*), the Carolingians, by marriage, thus confirming its legitimacy, which was pleasing to God and promised future blessings.¹¹⁶ The king endorsed the contemporary rearrangement of the royal tombs at the Abbey of Saint-Denis to emphasize the fulfillment of the return,¹¹⁷ and the polymath, Vincent of Beauvais, elaborated and defended the theory of the return in his works.¹¹⁸ Not all of Louis IX’s successors, Elizabeth Brown has reminded us, were so enamored of framing the dynasty’s legitimacy in a way that emphasized the original rupture in succession even more, I might add, than associative kingship did.¹¹⁹ And, in any case, there were competing interpretative historical (or, as moderns might say, mythical) frameworks available within which to counter the charge of the dynasty’s illegitimacy, like the alleged Capetian descent from the Trojans.¹²⁰

¹¹² William of Chartres’s “On the Life and Deeds of Louis IX,” in *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 143, section 25.

¹¹³ John Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus* (Berkeley, 1986), 3, 15–16.

¹¹⁴ William Chester Jordan, “The Historical Afterlife of Two Capetian Co-Kings Who Predeceased Their Fathers,” to appear in a collection tentatively titled *Louis VII and His World*, ed. Michael Bardot and Laurence Marvin.

¹¹⁵ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 706–8.

¹¹⁶ Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 347; Serge Lusignan, “Le temps de l’homme au temps de monseigneur saint Louis: Le *Speculum historiale* et *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*,” in *Vincent de Beauvais: Intentions et réceptions d’une oeuvre encyclopédique au Moyen Âge*, ed. Monique Paulmier-Foucart et al. (Montreal, 1990), 496–97.

¹¹⁷ William Chester Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries: Westminster and Saint-Denis in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, 2009), 115–16.

¹¹⁸ Monique Paulmier-Foucart, *Vincent de Beauvais et le “Grand miroir du monde”* (Turnhout, 2004), 82–83; Robert Schneider and Richard Rouse, “The Medieval Circulation of the *De morali principis institutione*,” *Viator* 22 (1991): 189, 210–13; Elizabeth Brown, “Vincent of Beauvais and the *reditus regni francorum ad stirpem Caroli imperatoris*,” in *Vincent de Beauvais*, ed. Paulmier-Foucart et al., 167–87.

¹¹⁹ Brown, “Vincent of Beauvais and the *reditus regni francorum ad stirpem Caroli imperatoris*,” 187–88.

¹²⁰ There is a rich secondary literature on this, referenced in and nicely added to by Elizabeth Morrison, “Linking Ancient Troy and Medieval France: Illuminations of an Early Copy of the *Roman*

Louis IX, however, was, I am suggesting, rather focused on associative kingship. Intimately bound up in this speculation of mine is the coronation ordo known as the Ordo of 1250.¹²¹ The date is actually flexible; perhaps the manuscript dates from slightly after the crusade and is a pastiche at one or more removes from any “official” text or project in the making.¹²² The chief reality it testifies to, in fact, is not any accurate past description or future blueprint of a royal consecration. That idea has been most savagely rejected—and rightly so—by Hervé Pinoteau.¹²³ But it does testify to continuing consideration in high circles about the appropriate ceremonial for coronations. To be sure, one might ask, why formulate a new ordo when there was no one to be crowned (a question pointedly raised in a conference by Patricia Stirnemann a few years ago, and now raised by her in print)?¹²⁴ But if Louis IX was thinking about the possibility of reviving associative kingship and using an ordo that stressed, as Le Goff has explained, the harmonies of governance (the alliance of church, state, and people), idealized also, I should point out, in the Moses sequence of the psalter, would not this particular ordo testify to that possibility?¹²⁵ There is no certainty on this matter, of course, but, to repeat, associative kinship was not an ancient practice, it was a recent practice, still written about in circles close to the king’s heart, such as the monastic community of Saint-Denis.¹²⁶

If there is any truth to this scenario, Louis IX’s hopes were dashed in 1260 with the death of the sixteen-year-old heir, Prince Louis, months before the prince’s scheduled marriage, which might have made an appropriate moment for his coronation as co-king. The Ordo of 1250 also has an abbreviated description of a queen’s coronation at the end of the manuscript, which, if I catch his meaning correctly, seemed otherwise a little puzzling to Le Goff.¹²⁷ An undated sermon of the Franciscan Eustache d’Arras for the Feast of the Assumption (15 August) in an unknown year rhapsodizes about the festival quality of a king’s coronation. He then adds that when a queen is newly arrived thereafter, there, too, is a great banquet in her honor, much as when the Queen of Heaven ascended into the skies, where until then there was no *regina coelestis*.¹²⁸

de Troie,” in *Medieval Manuscripts, Their Makers and Users: A Special Issue of “Viator” in Honor of Richard and Mary Rouse* (Turnhout, 2011), 77–102.

¹²¹ Richard Jackson, ed., *Ordines coronationis Franciae*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1995–2000), 2:341–66.

¹²² On questions of dating, see Le Goff, “La structure et le contenu idéologique de la cérémonie du sacre,” 34–35. On the peculiarities of the manuscript, see Jackson, *Ordines coronationis Franciae*, 2:341–42.

¹²³ Hervé Pinoteau, “Le roi très chrétien, les insignes et le ciel,” in *La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, ed. Hediger, 16.

¹²⁴ Stirnemann, “Quand le programme fait fausse route,” 177–78.

¹²⁵ On the *ordo* and its ideological content, see Jacques Le Goff, “La structure et le contenu idéologique de la cérémonie du sacre,” in *Le sacre royal à l’époque de saint Louis* (Paris, 2011), 20, 34; and Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, 584–85. On the analogy with Moses, see Jordan, “The ‘People’ in the Psalter of Saint Louis,” 13–28, especially 19 and figure 6.

¹²⁶ Jordan, “The Historical Afterlife of Two Capetian Co-Kings.”

¹²⁷ Le Goff, “La structure et le contenu idéologique de la cérémonie du sacre,” 24–25.

¹²⁸ Delmas, *Un franciscain à Paris*, 277.

The direct relevance of Friar Eustache's sermon to Capetian family nuptials has been argued by Sophie Delmas.¹²⁹ She could not associate it with Louis IX's own nuptials, since the Franciscan had no association with the court at the time of the king's marriage to Marguerite de Provence in 1234, and the king married in May, not in August or soon after. His son Philip married for the first time in 1262, but also in May. Delmas therefore inferred that the friar was alluding to festivities for Philip III's second marriage on 21 August 1274, his first wife having died on crusade in 1270. If Delmas is correct, Eustache had to have preached the sermon on Assumption Day in 1274 or 1275, that is, before his own death, which was no later than the end of the latter year.

Tempting, however, as the foregoing scenario at first appears, there are questions that remain. There is no evidence that Eustache had any attachment to Philip III's court. Moreover, it is reasonable to suggest that he would have felt out of place in the new regime. Like many of the zealots for moral reform who had been close to Louis IX the change in the character of the royal court after his death was unappealing.¹³⁰ For Eustache life at court was attractive while the old king presided. And it is well documented that he participated in court life in the 1250s and 1260s, the era of the penitential monarchy.¹³¹ I suggest that an allusion in an Assumption Day sermon in 1259 to Prince Louis's upcoming marriage, scheduled for 1260, and the festival atmosphere that it would generate would not be surprising—nor would a hint that a coronation of a queen might be in the offing.

I also would not be surprised if plans were in train to bestow knighthood on the prince somewhat before the nuptials took place. There is no provision for dubbing in the ordo itself, but the text seems implicitly to recognize the new king as already a member of the knightly order.¹³² In any case, when Philip became the heir instead, his father, almost from day one, probably long before, knew that heirship itself would not make his son rise to the occasion. In particular Philip pledged himself to obey his mother whatever the future held until he was thirty years old, an oath that outraged Louis IX and, at his request, was quashed by the pope.¹³³ Moreover, events after the king's death in 1270, the same events that transformed the ambience of the court and alienated some of Louis IX's counselors, would prove that Philip, whatever his strong points, was not a man cut from the same cloth as his father.¹³⁴

The pain and grief of Prince Louis's death in early 1260 made his father miserable, almost inconsolable. He had probably written out a short manual of advice for the prince shortly before the latter died, but which he returned to later in life

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 94–95. See also Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries*, 139–48.

¹³¹ Delmas, *Un franciscain à Paris*, 263–65.

¹³² Jean-Claude Bonne, "Images du sacre," in *Le sacre royal à l'époque de saint Louis* (Paris, 2011), 165, clarifying Le Goff's usage in "La structure et le contenu idéologique de la cérémonie du sacre," 31, of *adobement* to describe part of the ceremony.

¹³³ Sivéry, *Marguerite de Provence*, 209–10; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 6.

¹³⁴ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 94–97; Jordan, "The Struggle for Influence at the Court of Philip III: Pierre de la Broce and the French Aristocracy," *French Historical Studies* 24 (2001): 439–68; Xavier Hélary, "Pierre de la Broce, seigneur féodal et le service militaire sous Philippe III: L'Ost de Sauveterre (1276)," *Journal des savants* (July–December 2006), 275–305.

and revised for his new heir. This reconstruction resolves an otherwise puzzling conundrum in Geoffrey of Beaulieu's *Life*. Until now historians have simply assumed that his reference to an earlier advice manual was the result of a confused memory on the hagiographer's part.¹³⁵ On the contrary, this earlier text was part of the preparations the eager father was making for his eldest son's crowning. When the hope of a new coronation died with Prince Louis in 1260, the king not only laid aside the manual, he also transferred the royal diadem with which he had been crowned from the *trésor royal* to the Abbey of Saint-Denis, a transfer formally confirmed in 1261.¹³⁶ The sense of disappointment bordering on despondency is palpable.

Enter Vincent of Beauvais once more. He was dismayed at the king, his friend's, excessive—in the sense of inappropriate—mourning. Upper-class persons, those who had to exercise authority over others, it was widely held, should not show such weakness and incapacity to act.¹³⁷ Vincent authored a little treatise on bereavement at this time.¹³⁸ He wrote it to uplift the king and help him mitigate the public face and inner spirit of his lamentation. Those who read the treatise will discover, if they are like me, that scholastic arguments against grief are hard to swallow for a modern sensibility. For example, grief, beyond a brief decorous display, was tantamount to wishing the departed had not died and therefore that he should still be traveling the pilgrim's road on earth, this vale of tears, when he might have had the rest and peace of heaven (“per mortem liberatus est a presentibus miseriis et periculis”).¹³⁹ I could go on. Vincent provided nine other such reasons to cut short one's grief.¹⁴⁰

But one of Vincent's propositions in particular, though commonplace, is more interesting in context. He argued that if one forced oneself to remember that similar sad events had occurred in the past—and yet good had come of them—one would find it easier to accept the tragedies of the present. What is remarkable to me and I hope will be so to the reader is how he illustrated this argument, in particular the examples he used, which, he averred, paralleled what Louis IX experienced with his own son's death. “Finally the zealous intellect of your noble character [he is addressing the king] ought to consider similar cases or indeed worse and more miserable ones, not only those elsewhere throughout the world but those even in your own kingdom, indeed in your own royal household and which happened in rather recent memory. Was it not, as history reports, a little before your time that Philip, the son of Louis the Fat, a boy recently anointed as king, was riding around Paris on horseback near the church of Saint Gervais?

¹³⁵ Cf. *The Sanctity of Louis IX*, 82 n. 6.

¹³⁶ Pinoteau, “Le roi très chrétien,” 11.

¹³⁷ Ronald Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (New York, 1997), 91.

¹³⁸ Peter von Moos, “Die Trostschrift des Vincenz von Beauvais für Ludwig IX. Vorstudie zur Motiv- und Geistesgeschichte der *consolatio*,” *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 4 (1967): 173–218. The article title page (173) has “Gattungsgeschichte” in place of “Geistesgeschichte,” which is printed on the table of contents (“Inhalt”) page. The former better describes the substance of the article as an excursus into situating Vincent's work in a genre.

¹³⁹ Von Moos, “Die Trostschrift des Vincenz von Beauvais für Ludwig IX.,” 188–89.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 186–93.

A pig by accident getting under the hooves of the horse caused the horse to fall on top of him [Philip] and by his [Philip's] sudden and pitiful death there arose lamentation among the Franks. His brother succeeded him in the kingship, namely Louis [VII], the father of King Philip [II] of our time."¹⁴¹ Strikingly, in other words, Vincent evoked the tale of a co-king who predeceased his father, as a consequence of which France a generation later enjoyed the rule of the illustrious king, Philip II Augustus, Louis IX's grandfather—and this series of events, Vincent reminded the bereft father, was recent history (“satis recenti memoria evenerunt”).

But Vincent went further. “Do you not remember,” he writes, “even in our own times your older brother Philip, of whom something great was hoped? The prevention [of the realization of these hopes] by a youthful death brought on for the many and for great ones enormous sadness. As a result, until this very day you occupy his place in the administration of the realm, with the help of God, and among many adversities you have [also] garnered many benefits of divine grace in various areas. These and recollections similar to these will swiftly soften the vexation of your soul, since, as the poet said, ‘they endure common things more easily.’”¹⁴² The death of his elder brother, in other words, had laid the basis for Louis IX's own accession, and, as far as Vincent was concerned, the king had ruled well. None of this would have transpired if the elder brother had lived. The moral is that the Lord works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. Divine Providence—the Father—knows best.

Louis IX soldiered on, and I use the word deliberately. He was determined to resume his career as a soldier, a crusader.¹⁴³ He had done everything in his power to strip himself and his kingdom of sin. He could not imagine that others would not share his willingness to sacrifice. When the town worthies of Boulogne mistreated his friend and advisor Pierre le Chambellan, whom he had sent to secure a crusade subsidy in 1268, the king did not—perhaps could not—contain himself. The theologian Gilbert of Tournais, who advised Louis IX on educating his children and reflected broadly on his governance, would have encouraged *disciplina*

¹⁴¹ “Denique ingenii vestri nobilis industria considerare debet adversus casus consimiles aut etiam deteriores ac miserabiliores, non solum qui alibi per orbem terrarium assidue contingunt, sed qui etiam in regno vestro, immo in domo vestra regia satis recenti memoria evenerunt. Nonne, sicut refert historia, paulo ante vestram etatem Philippus, Ludovici grossi filius, recenter in regem adhuc puer inunctus, dum in civitate Parisiis equo vehebatur, iuxta ecclesiam sancti Gervasii porcus equi pedibus se fortuito submittens equum super ipsum precipitem dedit et de eius subita ac miseranda morte Francis luctum induxit. Cui successit in regno frater eius, scilicet pater Philippi regis nostri temporis Ludovicus”: Von Moos, “Die Trostschrift des Vincenz von Beauvais für Ludwig IX.,” 183–84.

¹⁴² “Numquid non et temporibus nostris etiam Philippus frater vester maior natus, de quo magnum aliquid sperabatur, a puericia morte preventus multis et magnis ingentem dolorem incussit? Cuius nimirum vices in administracione regni vos usque hodie cum adiutorio dei suppletis et inter adversitates multas et diversis partibus emergentes plurima divine gratie beneficia percepistis. Hec et his similia memorata molestiam animi vestri cicius mitigabant, quoniam, ut ait poeta, *levius communia tangunt*”: Von Moos, “Die Trostschrift des Vincenz von Beauvais für Ludwig IX.,” 184. The poet referred to is Claudius Claudianus; the line appears in “The Rape of Proserpina” (*De raptu Proserpinae*, 3.197), translated by Henry Howard as “Easier to bear is a common lot.” See *Translations from Claudian* (London, 2013).

¹⁴³ Richard, *Saint Louis*, 513–74; Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, 213–17.

potestatum et officialium, righteous anger at the municipal authorities' deeds.¹⁴⁴ He would not have been disappointed. The king, furious at the outrageous affront, suppressed Boulogne's municipal charter and in order to publicize his wrath had the town's seal and the bell in its belfry smashed. He punished them thus for a year, before allowing his nephew, Count Robert II of Artois, to restore the status quo ante. The evidence of his fervid commitment to his people and his crusade had been made clear to anyone who wished to know.¹⁴⁵

Yet, even as he boarded ship in 1270 to set out on the campaign to Tunisia from which he would not return alive, he was concerned that more still needed to be done. His last orders, not to the co-king whom he had once thought he would leave behind to rule, and not to his wife, who remained behind, but to the regents—one lay aristocrat (Simon de Nesle) and one high churchman (Mathieu of Vendôme)—whom he entrusted with governance, were to make yet another attempt to cleanse the realm of prostitutes and blasphemers and all the pollution that continued to threaten the kingdom's spiritual health.¹⁴⁶ Irrespective of whether one judges the crusade on which he died a failure or partial success (I lean toward the latter on the basis of the favorable treaty offered to the king's brother, Charles of Anjou, to end it),¹⁴⁷ Louis IX in the eyes of many in Christendom in his time embodied the quintessential instantiation of the Catholic prince, this as a consequence of his efforts at moral reform.

Yet, the conclusions to which this essay points are, it is hoped, broader than this and raise enduring issues. The question of moral leadership and its proper limits in governance seems to be one of these. Institutionalizing a particular balance in political and social relations to achieve a common purpose—this too is a recurrent, indeed perennial, struggle. And also sobering and a persistent concern in our common history is how little one human being, however committed, can impose the social discipline necessary to achieve transcendent goals. *Even kings*. Despite all these considerations, however, let me leave the reader with this thought. Try to imagine what the history of France might have been had another ruler followed irrepressibly in the old king's path, as he himself imagined that the long-lamented Prince Louis would have done. How extraordinarily, and perhaps how frighteningly, the history of royal efforts at moral reform might well have played out in the medieval kingdom of France and indeed in Catholic Europe writ large.

¹⁴⁴ Frédérique Lachaud, "Filiation and Context: The Medieval Afterlife of the *Policraticus*," unpublished.

¹⁴⁵ Anne-Dominique Kapferer, "Boulogne devient une ville (1113–1339)," in *Histoire de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, ed. Alain Lottin (Boulogne, 1998), 77.

¹⁴⁶ Jordan, *Men at the Center*, 90.

¹⁴⁷ In general, on Louis IX's second expedition, see Reitz, *Die Kreuzzüge Ludwigs IX. von Frankreich*, 179–224.